

# VE Day

Victory in Europe Day is otherwise known as VE Day. It is the day that marks the end of the Second World War. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Germany **surrendered** to the Allied Forces, which included Britain, Russia and France. The day after this, the first VE Day was held. It is now celebrated by many countries in Europe and worldwide.



## What Led Up to the First VE Day?

By April of 1945, the German military had lost their leader. German forces were weakened and the end of the war was approaching. Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower was the chief of the Allied forces and he accepted the full surrender of all German forces on 7<sup>th</sup> May at 2:41 a.m. Germany's surrender was expected and many people in Britain were waiting for the news. Winston Churchill was the prime minister of Britain and he announced that the war had ended in Europe over a type of old-fashioned radio called a wireless on 7<sup>th</sup> May. A news **bulletin** interrupted regular programmes to announce that the following day would be called Victory in Europe Day and would be a national holiday.



Winston Churchill

## What Happened on the First VE Day?

On 8<sup>th</sup> May, there were many celebrations around the country. Many festivities were organised, including parades, church services and street parties. People danced in the streets and shared what food they could. Pub hours were extended, dance halls were open until midnight and bonfires and fireworks were lit up and down the country.

## Winston Churchill's Address

Winston Churchill played an important role in bringing an end to the Second World War. He made a national broadcast at 3 p.m. on VE Day and later appeared on the balcony of the Ministry of Health building. He made an improvised speech to the thousands of cheering people below.



### Did You Know...?

New Zealanders celebrate VE Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May, due to the time difference.



## Royal Celebration

Around 20,000 **revellers** went to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of King George VI. Many people were dressed in red, white and blue. King George VI and his daughters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, came out on the balcony to greet the crowds. It is believed that Princess Elizabeth secretly joined the crowds outside and chanted and shouted for the King. Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II and was known to have said that VE Day 1945 was one of the most memorable days of her life.

### How Do People Celebrate VE Day Today?

VE Day is an important celebration. It is a day where we take the opportunity to remember all of the people who sacrificed their lives or were badly injured during the war. It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace to Europe after a long and difficult six-year conflict. All over the country, people hang up red, white and blue bunting and hold street parties and parades to mark the event.

### What Happened after VE Day?

Although VE Day meant peace in Europe, it was not the end of the war. Many people were still sent to fight in Japan, where the conflict continued until August. The day Japan surrendered is marked by VJ Day. It is celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August in the UK. Even after the war, life continued to be a struggle in Britain. Many people were deeply affected by the terrible loss of life. War was also very expensive so the country had to rebuild and recover slowly.



### Glossary

**bulletin:** A short official statement or broadcast summary of news.

**revellers:** People who are enjoying themselves in a lively and noisy way.

**surrender:** To stop fighting and admit you have been beaten.

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# Questions

1. Which country surrendered in 1945? Tick one.

- Britain
- Germany
- France
- Russia

2. What day is VE Day celebrated in New Zealand? Tick one.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- 8<sup>th</sup> May
- 9<sup>th</sup> May
- 15<sup>th</sup> August

3. How was the first Victory in Europe Day announced?

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4. Read the section titled **Winston Churchill's Address**.

Find and copy a word that means the same as 'on-the-spot'.

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5. How did people celebrate on the first VE Day? Write **two** ways.

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6. Why do you think people were expecting Germany to surrender?

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7. What do you think VJ Day is short for? Explain your reasoning.

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8. Summarise what life was like after VE Day.

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# Answers

1. Which country surrendered in 1945? Tick one.

- Britain
- Germany**
- France
- Russia

2. What day is VE Day celebrated in New Zealand? Tick one.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- 8<sup>th</sup> May
- 9<sup>th</sup> May**
- 15<sup>th</sup> August

3. How was the first Victory in Europe Day announced?

**The first Victory in Europe Day was announced by a news bulletin which interrupted regular programmes.**

4. Read the section titled **Winston Churchill's Address**.

Find and copy a word that means the same as 'on-the-spot'.

**improvised**

5. How did people celebrate on the first VE Day? Write **two** ways.

**Accept any two of the following: church services, street parties, parades, dancing until late, dancing in the street, sharing food, fireworks and bonfires.**

6. Why do you think people were expecting Germany to surrender?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think people were expecting Germany to surrender because they had lost their leader and their army was weak.**

7. What do you think VJ Day is short for? Explain your reasoning.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think VJ Day is short for Victory in Japan Day because it marks the end of the conflict in Japan, just like VE Day marks the end of the conflict in Europe.**

8. Summarise what life was like after VE Day.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Life was difficult after VE Day, even though the war was over in Europe. There was fighting still going on in Japan and many people were still upset about the loss of their family and friends in the war.**

# VE Day

Victory in Europe Day, otherwise known as VE Day, is the day that marks the end of the Second World War. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Germany **surrendered** to the Allied Forces, which included Britain, Russia and France. The day after this, the first VE Day was held. It is celebrated by many countries in Europe and worldwide.



## Events Leading Up to the First VE Day

The leader of the German army had died in April 1945. German forces were weakened and the end of the war was approaching. Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower, the chief of the Allied forces, accepted the surrender of all German forces on 7<sup>th</sup> May. The surrender document was signed by the leader of Germany's forces, General Alfred Jodl. Germany's surrender was expected and many people in Britain were waiting for the news. Winston Churchill, the prime minister of Britain, announced that the war had ended in Europe over the wireless, an old-fashioned type of radio, on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> May. A news **bulletin** interrupted regular programmes to announce that the following day would be called Victory in Europe Day and would be a national holiday.



Winston Churchill

## What Happened on the First VE Day?

Understandably, some people didn't wait until 8<sup>th</sup> May to begin to celebrate. Many bonfires were lit and pubs were filled with people until late into the night. On 8<sup>th</sup> May, celebrations were organised around the country. People danced in the streets and shared what food they could. Pub hours were extended and dance halls were open until midnight. Around 50,000 revellers squeezed around Piccadilly Circus in London.

## Winston Churchill's Address

Prime Minister Winston Churchill played an **instrumental** role in bringing the Second World War to an end. He made a national broadcast at 3 p.m. on VE Day and later appeared on the balcony of a ministry building in London. He made an **unscripted** speech to the thousands of cheering people below, in which he stated, "This is your victory!" The crowds replied, "No – it's yours!"

## Did You Know...?

New Zealanders celebrate VE Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May, due to the time difference.

Around 20,000 people went to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of King George VI, who came out on the balcony to greet the crowds. It is believed that Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth, who became Queen Elizabeth II, secretly **mingled** with the crowds outside. Queen Elizabeth II was known to have said that VE Day 1945 was one of the most memorable days of her life.

### Why Should We Still Celebrate VE Day?

VE Day is an important occasion.

It is a day where we take the opportunity to remember all of the people who sacrificed their lives or were badly injured during the war. It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace to Europe after a long and difficult six-year conflict.



### What Happened after VE Day?

Although VE Day meant peace in Europe, it was not the end of the war. Conflict continued in Japan until August. The day Japan surrendered is marked by VJ Day. It is celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August in the UK. Even after the war, life continued to be a struggle in Britain. Many people were deeply affected by the terrible loss of life and, as the war was very expensive, the country had to rebuild and recover slowly.

### Mixed Feelings

VE Day was a difficult day for many people. Those who still had family members fighting abroad or who had been injured in the war continued to feel very anxious. People who had lost loved ones found it very difficult to cope with the cheering and celebrations around them.

### Glossary

- bulletin:** A short official statement or broadcast summary of news.
- instrumental:** Someone or something that is of great importance in making an event happen.
- mingled:** To mix among others and socialise.
- surrender:** To stop fighting and admit you have been beaten.
- unscripted:** Something that is said or delivered without a prepared script.

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# Questions

1. Who was the leader of the Allied Forces in 1945? Tick one.

- Adolf Hitler
- Commander General Eisenhower
- General Alfred Jodl
- Winston Churchill

2. Number the events below from 1-5 to show the order in which they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- Around 20,000 people went to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of King George VI.
- 1 The leader of the German army had died in April 1945.
- The day Japan surrendered is marked by VJ Day.
- Pub hours were extended and dance halls were open until midnight.
- It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace.

3. Who signed the surrender document?

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4. How many people went to Piccadilly Circus to celebrate?

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5. Read the section titled **What Happened on the First VE Day?**  
Find and copy a word which means the same as 'party-goers'.

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6. If you had heard Winston Churchill's broadcast about the war ending, how do you think you would have felt and why?

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7. Compare the celebrations of Winston Churchill and King George VI. How are they similar and how are they different? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

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8. Explain why there were mixed emotions on VE Day.

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9. Why do you think it is important to celebrate VE Day? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

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# Answers

1. Who was the leader of the Allied Forces in 1945? Tick one.

- Adolf Hitler  
 **Commander General Eisenhower**  
 General Alfred Jodl  
 Winston Churchill

2. Number the events below from 1-5 to show the order in which they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- 3** Around 20,000 people went to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of King George VI.  
 **1** The leader of the German army had died in April 1945.  
 **4** The day Japan surrendered is marked by VJ Day.  
 **2** Pub hours were extended and dance halls were open until midnight.  
 **5** It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace.

3. Who signed the surrender document?

**The surrender document was signed by the leader of Germany's forces, General Alfred Jodl.**

4. How many people went to Piccadilly Circus to celebrate?

**About 50,000 people went to Piccadilly Circus to celebrate.**

5. Read the section titled **What Happened on the First VE Day?** Find and copy a word which means the same as 'party-goers'.

**revellers**

6. If you had heard Winston Churchill's broadcast about the war ending, how do you think you would have felt and why?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would have felt relief and a sense of pride that we had made it through the war and now it was over.**

7. Compare the celebrations of Winston Churchill and King George VI. How are they similar and how are they different? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Winston Churchill and King George VI both appeared on a balcony in front of cheering crowds but Winston Churchill also gave a speech and a radio announcement.**

8. Explain why there were mixed emotions on VE Day.

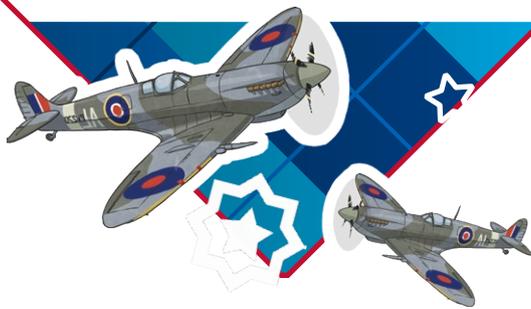
**Pupils' own responses, such as: There were mixed feelings because although it was a day to celebrate as it was the end of the fighting in Europe, lots of people had lost family and friends in the conflict. There was also still more fighting continuing in Japan so the war was not completely over.**

9. Why do you think it is important to celebrate VE Day? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it is important that we celebrate VE Day because we need to remember the sacrifices made by the people who fought in the war. We also need to remember the people who stayed at home and lost loved ones.**

# VE Day

Victory in Europe Day, otherwise known as VE Day, is the day that marks the end of the Second World War. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allied Forces, which included Britain, Russia and France. The day after this, the first VE Day was held. The event is celebrated by many countries in Europe and worldwide.



## Events Leading Up to the First VE Day

The leader of the German army had died in April 1945. Berlin was surrounded, German forces had weakened and defeat was imminent. Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower, the chief of the Allied forces, accepted the full surrender of all German forces on 7<sup>th</sup> May. The document was signed by General Alfred Jodl from the German forces at 2:41 a.m. in Reims, France, the Headquarters of the Allied Forces. Germany's surrender was eagerly anticipated. Winston Churchill, the prime minister of Britain, made the announcement that the war had ended in Europe over the wireless, an old-fashioned type of radio, on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> May.



Winston Churchill

## What Happened on the First VE Day?

Understandably, some people didn't wait until 8<sup>th</sup> May to begin to celebrate. Bonfires were lit on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> May, following the announcement, and pubs were filled with people until late into the night. On 8<sup>th</sup> May, many festivities were organised around the country, including parades, thanksgiving services and street parties. People danced in the streets around Britain and shared what food they could although it was limited. Pub hours were extended and dance halls were open until midnight. Around 50,000 revellers squeezed around Piccadilly Circus in London and social norms were disregarded with people hugging and celebrating with strangers.

## Winston Churchill's Address

Prime Minister Winston Churchill played an important role in bringing the Second World War to an end. He was a charismatic leader who made inspirational speeches that helped to motivate the people of Britain. He was also well known for his military and political decision-making. Churchill made a national broadcast at 3 p.m. on VE Day and later appeared on the balcony of the Ministry of Health building in London. He gave an unscripted speech to the thousands cheering below, in which he proclaimed, "This is your victory!" The crowd replied, "No - it's yours!"

Around 20,000 people went to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of King George VI, who came out on the balcony to greet the crowds with his daughters. It is believed that Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth, who became Queen Elizabeth II, secretly mingled with the crowds outside and joined in with the chanting and shouting for King George VI. Queen Elizabeth II was known to have said that VE Day 1945 was one of the most memorable days of her life.

### How Do People Celebrate VE Day Today?

VE Day is an important occasion. It is a day where we take the opportunity to commemorate all of the people who sacrificed their lives or were badly injured during the war. It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace to Europe after a long and difficult six-year conflict. All over the country, people hang up red, white and blue bunting and hold street parties and parades to mark the event. Retired soldiers often attend these events in uniform and can sometimes be found visiting schools around the country sharing their experiences.

### Mixed Feelings

VE Day was a difficult day for many people. Those who still had family members fighting abroad or that had been injured in the war continued to feel very anxious while others who had lost loved ones found it very difficult to cope with the cheering and celebrations around them.

### What Happened after VE Day?

Although VE Day meant peace in Europe, it was not the end of the war. Many people were still sent to fight in Japan, where the conflict continued until August. The day Japan surrendered is marked by VJ Day. It is celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August in the UK. Even after the war, life continued to be a struggle in Britain. Many people were deeply affected by the devastating loss of life and, as the war was very expensive, the country had to rebuild and recover slowly.



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# Questions

1. Which of these countries was **not** part of the Allied Forces? Tick one.

- Britain
- Russia
- France
- Germany

2. What does the word **commemorate** mean? Tick one.

- forget
- remember
- understand
- discuss

3. Where was the headquarters of the Allied Forces?

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4. What is a wireless?

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5. Read the section called **Events Leading Up to the First VE Day**.

Find and copy a phrase which shows that British people were looking forward to Germany's surrender.

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6. Explain why you think social norms were disregarded on the first VE Day.

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7. Why do you think people claimed VE Day was Winston Churchill's victory? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

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8. Name **two** ways the Royal Family participated in the celebration on the first VE Day.

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9. If you were there on VE Day, how would you have celebrated? Explain your answer.

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10. Summarise how people have celebrated VE Day in recent years in 25 words or fewer.

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# Answers

1. Which of these countries was **not** part of the Allied Forces? Tick one.

- Britain
- Russia
- France
- Germany**

2. What does the word **commemorate** mean? Tick one.

- forget
- remember**
- understand
- discuss

3. Where was the headquarters of the Allied Forces?

**The headquarters of the Allied Forces was in Reims, France.**

4. What is a wireless?

**A wireless is an old-fashioned type of radio.**

5. Read the section called **Events Leading Up to the First VE Day**.

Find and copy a phrase which shows that British people were looking forward to Germany's surrender.

**eagerly anticipated**

6. Explain why you think social norms were disregarded on the first VE Day

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that social norms were disregarded because everybody was so happy and relieved the fighting had stopped. I think people felt united because everyone was celebrating together and lots of people were dressed in red, white and blue, like the British flag.**

7. Why do you think people claimed VE Day was Winston Churchill's victory?

Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that people felt it was Winston Churchill's victory because he was a really important part of the Allied Forces' war effort and the leader of Britain. It says in the text that he played an 'important role in bringing the Second World War to an end'.**

8. Name **two** ways the Royal Family participated in the celebration on the first VE Day.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: King George VI and his daughters appeared on the balcony at Buckingham Palace in front of cheering crowds and it is believed that Queen Elizabeth II (then Princess Elizabeth) mingled secretly with the crowds outside, listening to the cheers.**

9. If you were there on VE Day, how would you have celebrated? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would have joined in one of the parades and thrown streamers and confetti because it sounds like a lot of fun. I think I also would have liked to attend a picnic or barbecue because I think the food would be lovely.**

10. Summarise how people have celebrated VE Day in recent years in 25 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: People have celebrated by hanging red, white and blue bunting (like the British flag), having parties and attending parades.**