



A day in the life of a child now and during the war



When war first broke out in 1914, children still got up and went to school, did their homework and played with their friends. However many children were very sad and scared at this time as their brothers and fathers were away at war and they lived in fear of invasion or attack which could also result in them having to move out of their homes. They had no TV's and not many had radios, and food and clothing were scarce. As the war continued everyday life was affected and daily habits and activities changed.

Use this resource to think about what life was like for children during wartime and how life has changed over the century. Fill out each section with the things you do today and see how they compare to a child's daily life during the Great War.



Morning:	Present day	World War 1
What do you do at breakfast time?		Children would often have to make their own breakfast if their mother worked nights and sometimes get their younger brothers and sisters ready for school too.
What/where do you get washed and cleaned in the morning?		Most homes did not have hot running water, so children had to wash in a bowl using a jug of cold water.
What clothes do you wear for school?		Uniforms were only required at public schools where rich families sent children. Boys wore formal Eton collars and girls wore boater hats. At boarding school uniforms were not required. Girls wore plain dresses and skirts often with a pinafore to keep themselves clean. Boys wore flat caps with peaks and clothes from heavy, hard wearing materials like wool.



Morning:	Present day	World War 1
What do you do before school? e.g. go to the shop, walk the dog etc.		Before school, until mothers got back from work children sometimes had to stand in a queue at the butcher's shop, in their mother's place until she arrived to take over. Food was scarce but in high demand.
How do you travel to school?		Children would usually walk to school in the morning with their friends no matter what the weather.

School Day:	Present day	World War 1
What lessons do you have?		As well as ordinary lessons, children would help with war work, including knitting, recycling, or working in the vegetable plot, growing food for school dinners.
What do you do at break time?		Children were given patriotic figures which were intended to encourage them to support the war and they would play with these. They were given English figures (or as they called them Tommies) who were strong and brave, and German figures who were cowardly and ugly. They also read books and magazines. Card and board games were made in support of the war.
What do you have for your school dinner?		Many schools served a midday dinner. These were solid, heavy, belly-filling meals such as bean soup and bread followed by treacle pudding, or toad-in-the-hole. Suet pudding, fish and potato pie and mutton stew were also typical school dinners during this time.



After school:	Present day	World War 1
What do you do for play?		Children would play outside, read, or do jobs around the house but factories stopped making toys during the war so children would play with old toys including wooden hoops, spinning tops, a skipping rope, marbles or a leather football.
Do you play any sports?		Children would often play simple ball games in the street as they were so quiet. Cricket and cycling were also popular.
How do you help your parents around the house?		Children would often get involved in weeding and watering the family's vegetable plot as many families grew their own food to survive. If your family kept chickens it was often the child's job to collect the fresh eggs, feed the chickens and clean them out everyday!

Evening:	Present day	World War 1
What do you have for your evening meal? Who do you have it with?		Mothers had to be inventive in the kitchen, using leftovers to make nutritious meals. Fresh fruit and veg, milk and bread were either expensive or hard to get hold of. Leftovers typically made meals including, potted cheese, fish sausages and potato based pastries.
How do you wash or clean before bed?		During the war families would usually bathe just once a week on the weekends
When is your bed time? Where do you sleep? Do you have a room all to yourself?		Children often had to share bedrooms and sometimes beds, especially in big families.



Weekends:	Present day	World War 1
What do you do on weekends?		<p>If parents could afford it children might go to the cinema on a weekend. It was a real treat.</p> <p>For most families Saturday night was bath night, so everyone would be fresh and clean for church on Sunday. Often poorer families had no indoor bathroom so the family would bath in the warmest room in a tub and share the water.</p>
Do you go on days out or holidays?		<p>During the war it became unpatriotic to take long holidays, although families would still take day trips to the seaside or into the country, most remained in the UK where it was considered safer.</p>
How do you travel?		<p>Posters created during the war encouraged families to visit the countryside by train and bus.</p> <p>Only wealthy people would drive motor cars and there were families using horse and carts.</p>
How do you dress outside school?		<p>Women and girls kept their legs hidden with long dresses or skirts.</p> <p>Men and boys often kept their coats, jackets and ties on and hats were usually worn when outside. Plimsolls were often worn on the feet. Clothing and footwear choice was limited.</p> <p>On Sundays people wore their 'Sunday Best', usually their smartest, cleanest clothes.</p>

Family:	Present day	World War 1
Where do your parents/brothers and sisters work?		<p>In 1914 many men were already a member of the army and many volunteered to join up, the minimum age was 18 years old.</p> <p>Some became soldiers whilst others worked as ambulance drivers, cooks and doctors to name a few.</p> <p>The role of women in work changed in WW1, women took on many roles left by men serving their country overseas including working in offices, factories and on the land.</p>

