

LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM

Sow for Success

Overview: Have you ever considered the impact of a significant historical event on the world outside your window? Since the start of the Second World War, the UK has suffered the loss of 97% of its wildflower meadows. Wildflowers once formed an integral part of the British landscape. However, wildflower meadows now account for less than 1% of the British countryside. This history-focused lesson will explore the impact of some of initiatives, introduced during WW2, that may have contributed to this dramatic decline; as well as teaching pupils about the importance of wildflowers in relation to our own food security and challenging them to join our campaign to restore wildflowers to our communities.

Who: Year 3-6 History

How long: 3-4 hours (depending on the Main Activity/ Activities that you ask your pupils to complete)

Curriculum links

We have designed these lessons to help teachers cover the following areas of the KS2 History curriculum: KS2 children should carry out a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066- This could include a significant turning point in British history, for example, the Battle of Britain.

Students will:

This lesson enables students to:

- Develop their understanding of significant point in British history- The Second World War.
- Consider the cause and effect of changes to the British landscape brought about as a result of WW2 and the national campaigns related to it.
- Understand the modern-day threat to our own food security.
- Explain how sowing wildflowers can contribute to the health and well-being of UK habitats and help to ensure the food supply for future generations.

Resources

For this lesson, you will need:

- 'Sow for Success' Slideshow (see ppt.)
- Resources for producing required campaign materials. This could include:
 - Poster paper
 - Colouring pens/ pencils
 - Filming/ photography equipment
 - Research material (relating to the importance of wildflower meadows to help make the produced materials more persuasive)

LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM

Getting Started [1.5 hours]

Begin by introducing your pupils to the first verse of the famous poem by William Wordsworth, 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' (Slide 2). Have they heard this before? Do they know what Wordsworth is describing? Take the time necessary to unpick the verse to make sure that you class understands what Wordsworth is describing.

Explain to the pupils that since the time that this poem was written, the 'host of golden daffodils' that Wordsworth is describing (along with many of other species of native wildflowers) are a far less common sight in the British countryside. Can they think why this might be? What sights do they most commonly associate with the countryside?

Explain to the class that the number of wildflowers seen across the British countryside has actually been in decline since the time of the Second World War!

Use Slide 3 to introduce pupils to the Learning Outcomes for the session:

- Understand the cause and effect of changes to the British countryside, brought about by WW2.
- Describe the link between wildflowers, pollinators and food.
- Explain how sowing wildflowers can contribute to the health and well-being of UK habitats and help to ensure food security for the future.

Provide the pupils with more detail about the decline of wildflowers in Britain. Use Slide 4 to give a brief history of wildflowers in Britain since 1930:

- *In 1930, natural wildflower meadows could be seen across the British countryside. There were over 7.5 million acres of wildflower meadows across the nation. That's about the same size as 3,750,000 football pitches!*
- *During the Second World War (1939-1945) over 6 million acres of grassland (approximately 3 million football pitches) was ploughed to grow cereals and vegetables.*
- *Over the 40 years that followed, 97% of the wild flower meadows, that were once a common sight across the country were destroyed.*
- *Today, wildflower meadows account for less than 1% of the British countryside.*

Pose the question: So, why did WW2 cause the destruction of Wildflower meadows?

Use the following four slides (Slide 5, 6, 7 and 8) to introduce pupils to some of the significant factors and initiatives that ultimately contributed to the acceleration of agricultural practices that destroyed nearly all of Britain's wildflowers:

1. Food shortages

The start of World War II in 1939 led to a huge food security issue in Britain. People struggling to get hold of the foods that they were used to eating and, in turn, were struggling to feed their families.

LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM

Just like today, much of the food consumed in Britain before the war, was produced overseas and imported (on ships) to this country. When the Second World War started the ships carrying these supplies became vulnerable to enemy attack. So, far less food was reaching Britain's ports and shops.

Furthermore, to fight the war, military hardware was being shipped to Britain as well and so there was less shipping capacity available for food.

2. Rationing

In January 1940, the British government introduced food rationing. The scheme was designed to ensure fair shares of those foods which were in short supply due to the war. Rationing was overseen by the Ministry of Food which issued every man, woman and child a ration book with coupons. These restricted how much of each rationed food could be purchased each week.

Basic foodstuffs such as sugar, meat, fats (like butter and margarine), bacon and cheese were rationed by the coupons in the ration book.

Some foods such as fish or sausages were not rationed but could be in short supply which led to long hours of queuing, and sometimes disappointment when upon reaching the front of the queue it was only to discover that what you were queuing for had sold out.

3. Dig for Victory

To help with food shortages, The Ministry of Agriculture also introduced the Dig for Victory campaign. This encouraged people to use any available space that they could find to grow food to help feed themselves and their communities during the war effort.

Use the video from the Imperial War Museum website to introduce pupils to the [Dig for Victory](#) campaign. This is important for the Main Activity.

4. The Woman's Land Army

As well as encouraging people to grow their own food, The Women's Land Army (WLA) was formed in the summer of 1939. Women of all ages joined up, and were later conscripted, to help farm the British countryside.

LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM

By the end of the war, 80,000 land girls were working on farms across the UK.

These women undertook all aspects of farm work, including livestock handling, dairy, flax growing (for clothing), hedging, vegetable growing, ploughing and threshing.

Activity 1: Concept Map

Ask pupils to complete a concept map, linking key words associated to WW2 to show how they contributed to the loss of wildflowers in Britain.

Having consolidated your pupil's understanding of the causes of wildflower meadow loss, that can be attributed to the Second World War, use **Slide 10** to introduce your pupils to the importance of wildflowers, particularly in relation to protecting pollinators and food security. Pupils could carry out further research into this when completing the main activity.

Activity 2: Wildflower Food chains/ Food Webs

Ask your pupils to cut out the cards provided and arrange them to make food chains or food webs that show the links between wildflowers and the foods that we eat. They can draw or add additional pictures if necessary.

For the final part of this section, use **Slide 11** to introduce the children to their challenge and to the 'Sow for Success' campaign:

We want you to embark on a 'Dig for Victory' style campaign to encourage people within your community to find available areas to sow wild flowers. We are calling this 'Sow for Success!'

Main Activity [1-2 hours]

Ask you class to complete 1 or more of the following activities relating to 'Sow for Success':

- Lead by example, finding creative ways to sow areas of wildflowers around your school.
- Creating posters, in the style of the WW2 campaign you have seen today, to encourage other people to do the same. This could be done either using a range of art mediums (such as pastels or acrylics) or even done digitally using software like Microsoft Publisher.
- Produce campaign videos (inspired by the Dig for Victory video from the Ministry of Information- see **Slide 7**). This could be done using individual recording devices, such as iPads, and editing software such as iMovie. Children should try and mirror some of the language and persuasive devices used in the video from the Ministry of Information.
- Write letters to influential people in your school's local area (such as your headteacher or local MP) to persuade them of the importance of sowing and growing wildflowers in as many places as possible.



LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM



And Finally [30 minutes]

Depending on the activity/ activities that you have asked your pupils to complete, take some time at the end of the lesson or lessons to showcase their work. If you wish to share the work that they have done with us at the Eden Project, you can email it to our Schools Team or share it with us via one of our social media platforms using one of the following addresses:

Email: education@edenproject.com

Twitter: [@edenschoolsteam](https://twitter.com/edenschoolsteam)