

# Edexcel GCSE

## **History A** (The Making of the Modern World) Unit 3: Modern World Source Enquiry Option 3B: War and the transformation of British society, c1931–51

Wednesday 25 January 2012 – Afternoon

**Sources Booklet**

Paper Reference

**5HA03/3B**

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**PEARSON**

## The contribution of women on the home front

### Background information

During the Second World War many women took on war work. By 1943, 57% of the jobs in factories were carried out by women, including dangerous munitions work. In addition, 80,000 women volunteered to work for the Land Army. Some historians believe that women were pleased to do men's jobs. Others suggest that this was not the case.

**Source A:** From an interview in 2007 with Joyce Watts for the online Wartime Memories Project. She describes her experiences as a land girl during the Second World War.

I had to get up at 4.30 in the morning to milk the cows. In the winter my hands became raw and it was very painful when I milked the cows. I came from London and our house had all the modern conveniences. On this farm I had a candle for a light in my bedroom, the loo was outside and water was obtained from a pump. Despite all this, I must say, I had plenty to eat and the farmer's wife was a good cook. The Land Army days were some of the best years of my life. I still have fond memories of the good times that I had.

**Source B:** An official government poster, published during the Second World War.



**Source C:** From an interview with a woman in 1990. She describes her work as a land girl in 1941.

I worked 12 hours a day on a large farm in Lincolnshire. The work was hard and tedious and we received no training. Wages were £1.40 a week but we had to pay £1 for our lodgings. At another farm, we expected to be trained in tractor driving but were made to do odd jobs, including kitchen work for the farmer's wife. The farmer gave us no training and refused to pay us any wages.

**Source D:** A painting by an official war artist, 1943. It shows a woman working in an engineering factory.



**Source E:** From an interview given in 1999 by a woman who worked in a factory during the Second World War. She gave the interview for *Bombers and Mash*, a history book about the home front during the Second World War.

Working in factories was not fun. To be shut in for hours on end without even a window to see daylight was grim. The noise was horrendous and at night when you shut your eyes to sleep all the noise would start again in your head. Night shifts were the worst. The work was very tedious. I think boredom was our worst enemy. The toilets were revolting and the canteen facilities were poor.

**Source F is on page 4.**

**Source F:** From a history of the Second World War, published in 1998.

Many women were pleased to be involved in useful work which helped the war effort. They were earning much more than before the war. However, the attitude of some male workers was not welcoming because they were afraid that unskilled women would start doing skilled, male workers' jobs. In fact, many of the jobs done by women, even if identical to those done by men, were simply renamed so the women could be paid at a lower rate.

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