

Texas Historical Commission

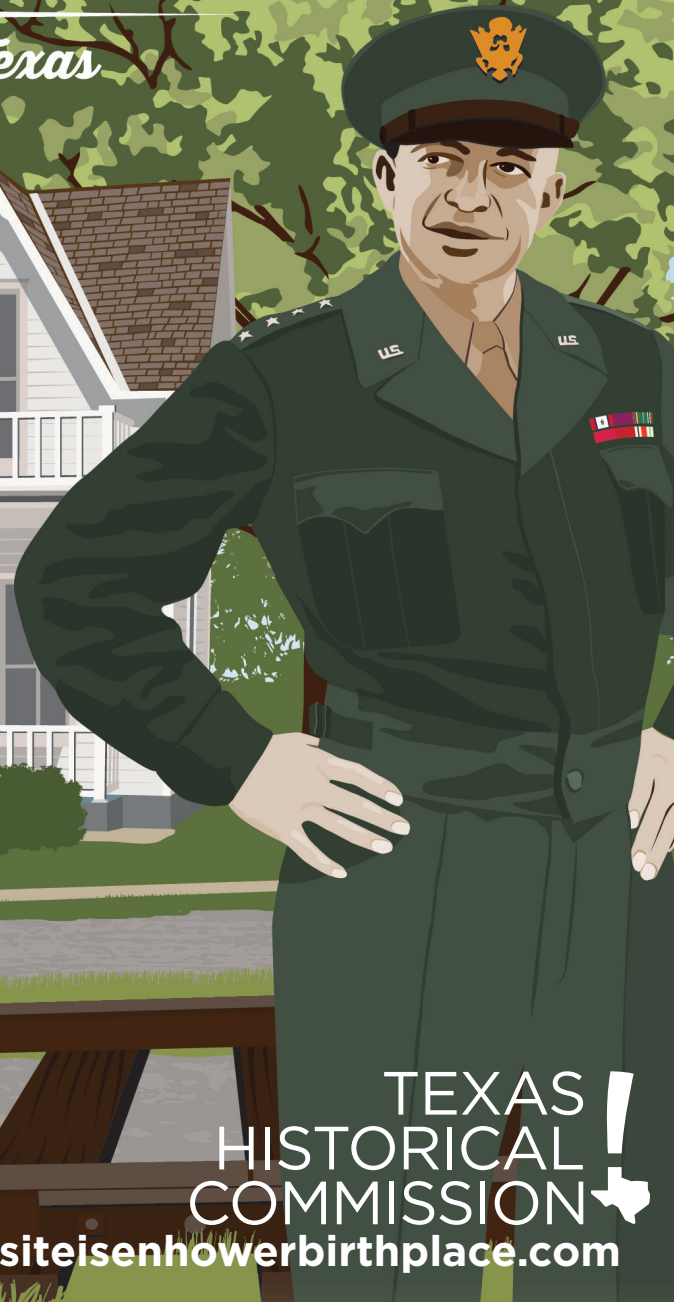
Rationing on the Home Front

Grade 7

EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Denison, Texas



Virtual Field Trip

TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com

Rationing on the Home Front

Overview: Texas and Texans in WWII

In 1942, Texas-born future president Dwight D. Eisenhower was serving as the Assistant Chief of Staff for General George Marshall. The United States was in the middle of World War II. The war required so many resources (weapons, tanks, tents, ships, uniforms, parachutes, food, and men) that citizens in the U.S. were asked to do everything they could to help the war effort on the home front. In May 1942, the U.S. government implemented “rationing” programs, and citizens were asked to limit their personal food and supplies so that factories could manufacture and supply more for soldiers abroad. Citizens on the home front helped fight the war by living with less.

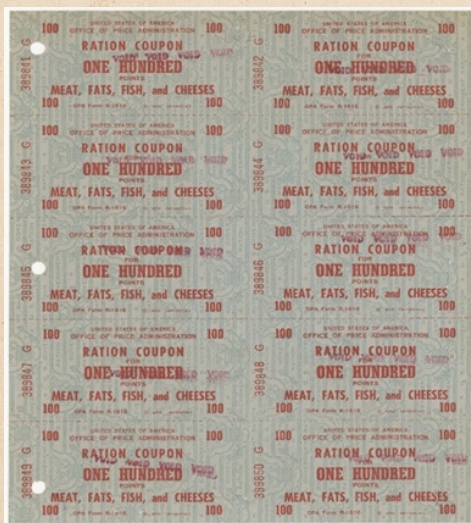


Image courtesy Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site

Objectives

- Demonstrate understanding of the WWI rationing system
- Use budget skills to procure food and supplies within the WWI rationing system
- Reflect on the personal and cultural effects of WWII rationing

Social Studies TEKS

7th Grade: 7.1 A, 7.7E

Resources

- Historical context image resources
- Activities 1, 2, and 3 resources
- Extension Activity Food Chart resources

Vocabulary

home front (hohm frunt) noun: a term applied to a country's civilian population acting as support during a war

rations (RAAH shuns) noun: a fixed allowance of food and/or provisions, especially during a shortage

substitute (SUB stih toot) verb: to replace one food with another in a recipe or diet

Historical Context

For more background on the World War II rationing programs, see these included resources: **Rationing During World War II, Uncle Sam's Food Rules, 10 Rules for Wartime Eating, and Victory Gardens.**

Activity 1: Fighting on the Home Front

To introduce the World War II rationing program, learners participate in a reflection activity before discussing specific content. Review the vocabulary terms then display or distribute the image resources and the **Think About It worksheet**. Have learners analyze each resource individually or in small groups and complete the worksheet. Share responses.

Activity 2: My Meal Log

Distribute the **My Meal Log** activity resource. Explain that learners will record all their meals for a week in preparation for Activity 3. Review the log for any challenges or questions. Have learners complete as much of the log as they can.

Activity 3: Ration Book Shopping

In this activity, learners experience the challenges of using ration coupons and a tight budget to buy food for a week.

- Review what learners know about the rationing program in World War II. If not reviewed previously, display or distribute the historical context resources.
- Distribute these resources to each learner:
 - Red and Blue coupon sheets
 - Ration Book Items lists
 - Items for Sale list
 - Victory Garden resource



- Explain that in this activity, learners will shop for food using their budgeted money and the coupon books, just like all Americans had to do during rationing in World War II. They can buy the foods they recorded on their **Meal Log**, foods selected from the **Uncle Sam's Food Rules activity resource**, or whatever foods they wish to buy.
- Preview each ration book resource and the item list. Point out the \$2.75 budget on the Items for Sale resource. Explain that they have that much money in addition to the red and blue coupons to use for shopping. No food can be acquired without the correct number of coupons. They can also consider growing a Victory Garden for some foods. Once the money and the coupons are gone, they are done shopping. Whatever foods they have selected are what they have to eat for the week.
 - Before the activity begins, suggested discussion questions might include: What challenges do you expect in trying to buy food for a week on a ration system?
 - What foods are a priority for you to buy?
 - What foods do you think you can do without/substitute for?
- After the activity is completed, distribute the **Think About It worksheet**. Share responses.

Extension Activity: Eating Then and Now

In this activity, learners analyze how food guidelines have changed from World War II to now and how those changes would impact rationing systems today.

Distribute or display the **food chart resources** and the **Eating Then and Now worksheet**. Preview each resource for questions. Have learners create a Venn diagram to analyze the similarities and differences among the food charts and then complete the Eating worksheet. Share responses for the diagram and the worksheet.



Resource: Rationing During World War II



Image courtesy of digital.library.unt.edu

During World War II, the U.S. government created rationing programs in order to ensure sufficient supplies for the armed forces. Citizens were required to use ration books to buy limited supplies of food and provisions so that manufacturers could provide sufficient materials for the troops.

Rationing began on May 5, 1942, with a 28-coupon "Sugar Book." Citizens were issued monthly governmental ration books with coupons that were required to purchase food. Rationed foods were either blue point foods (48 stamps per month) or red point foods (64 stamps per month). Red point foods included meat, fish, dairy, and fats. Blue point foods included canned and bottled goods.

Because there were so many troops fighting in Europe and in the Pacific, food requirements were enormous. Sugar, coffee, meat, canned fish, cheese, canned milk, and butter were just some of the foods rationed on the home front. After sugar, coffee was the second food item to be rationed, not because there was a shortage, but because people began hoarding it. Every five weeks, every person over the age of 15 was allowed one pound of coffee. Fluid milk was never rationed, and canned milk was rationed only because it came in a tin can. (Tin was needed for the war effort). Meat was not rationed until 1943. Until then, people could get 2.5 pounds of meat, cheese, and fats per week.

Because many regularly used items were rationed during the war, households often had to make food items "stretch." In order to stretch a limited supply of butter, homemakers whipped it with unflavored gelatin. Tomato gelatins were very popular during this time because they were easy to make and ingredients were readily available. Molasses and corn syrup were regular substitutes for war-rationed sugar. One cup of molasses plus $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda replaced one cup of sugar. Homemakers also used one cup of corn syrup plus $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon baking soda to replace once cup of sugar (reduce liquid in recipe by one third). If the word "Monday" appeared in a recipe title, it usually signaled the use of ground or chopped left-over meat.

As the United States entered World War II, many people were still undernourished from the effects of the Great Depression. Nutrition and nutritional meals became very important to the war effort. Victory Dinner Recipes appeared in booklets published by the government and food industry. A typical recipe ad contained between three and six recipes, and sometimes as many as twelve.



Resource: Rationing During World War II pg 2

Gasoline was another essential that was strictly rationed. Every car was issued a sticker. A sticker entitled the user to four gallons of gas per week. Vehicles essential to the war effort were given B stickers and were allowed eight gallons of gas per week. Doctors, ministers, mail carriers, and railroad workers were given C stickers and were allowed all the gas that was needed to do their jobs.

Other materials that were rationed included tin cans, rubber, and women's stockings. One tin can could make a pair of binoculars and three tin cans could make a hand grenade. Saving tin cans for a month yielded enough tin to make bushings for three machine guns. Under rationing, each U.S. citizen was allowed to own five tires: four for the vehicle and one spare. Any extra tires went to the war effort as did rubber garden hoses, shoes, raincoats, and bathing caps. The silk in women's stockings (hose) of the time was used to make parachutes for the troops.



Image courtesy Library of Congress,
Photographer Ann Rosener



Image courtesy Library of Congress

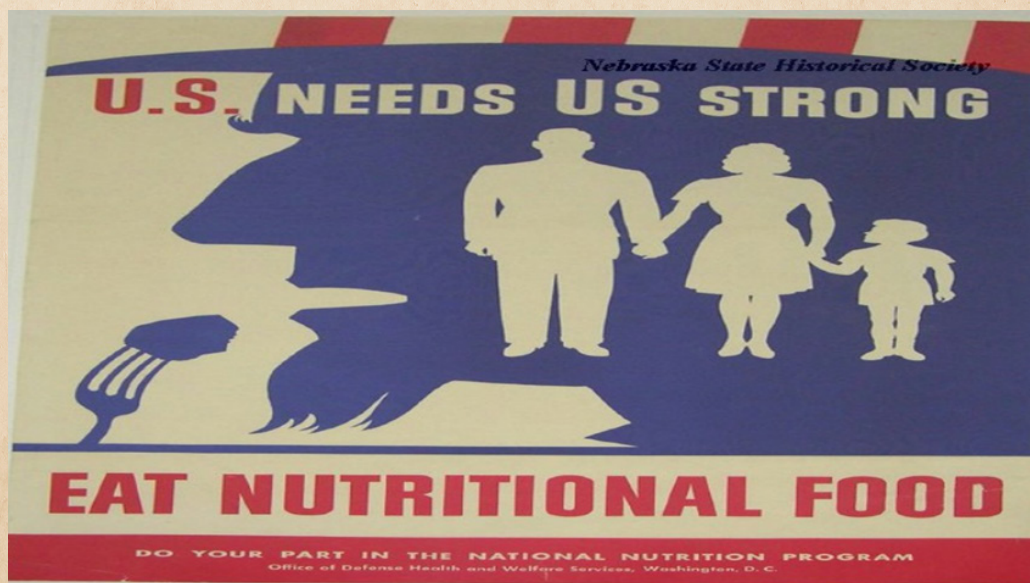


Image courtesy Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

Resource: Uncle Sam's Food Rules

During World War II, it was important to keep Americans strong and healthy so they could participate in and support the war effort. This list of food rules defined the national nutrition program of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services. Image courtesy Nebraska State Historical Society

1. Milk and Milk Products: At least a pint for everyone, more for children, or use cheese, evaporated or dried milk in cooked dishes.
2. Oranges, tomatoes, and grapefruit: At least one of these or substitute raw cabbage or salad greens.
3. Green or yellow vegetables: At least a big helping or more, some fresh, some canned, or quick frozen.
4. Other vegetables, fruits: Potatoes or other vegetables, or fruits in season, fresh, diced, canned, or quick frozen.
5. Bread and cereals: Whole grain products or enriched cereals, white bread, and flour.
6. Meat, poultry or fish: As available, substitute beans, peas, or nuts occasionally.
7. Eggs: At least 3 or 4 a week, cooked as you choose or in recipes.
8. Butter and other spreads: Including "vitamized" margarine, vitamin rich fats, peanut butter, and similar spreads



Resource: Ten Rules for Wartime Eating

This list, created by the Women in National Service, was intended to help homemakers deal with rationing and scarcity when planning meals for their families. *Image courtesy Newspapers.com/Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, Sept. 30, 1943*

1. Keep a list of the seven basic food groups in your kitchen and your purse. Follow it when you plan and when you buy. Substitute within groups.
2. Don't plan to serve meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and cheese all the same day.
3. Start the day off right with a breakfast that counts as a real meal. Make cereal with milk the "main dish."
4. Make a hearty soup, or cereal with fruit and milk, your main dish at lunch or supper at least twice a week.
5. Don't waste. Try foods new to you. Eat fresh foods first. Conserve canned supplies. Use breadcrumbs in stuffing, bones in soups, remnants of meat or vegetables in stews. Cook potatoes in skins.
6. Help your grocer cut down on waste. Don't pinch fruits. Don't mishandle vegetables.
7. Start a clean-plate club in your home. Serve smaller portions. Eat it all.
8. Save fats by serving fewer fried foods and rich pastries.
9. Spread the load. Include different protein foods in weekly meal plans.
10. Don't buy food with ration stamps just for the sake of using up the stamps. Don't trade stamps with your neighbor.



Resource: Victory Gardens

The National Victory Garden Program, developed by the War Food Administration, had five main goals during World War II:

- decrease the demand on commercial vegetable suppliers so they could use their crops for the armed forces,
- reduce the demand for essential materials used in food processing and canning,
- free up railroad transportation for shipping weapons rather than food,
- help American stay healthy and content by working outdoors to grow their own vegetables, and
- preserve fruit and vegetables for future shortages.



The summer of 1943 was the peak of Victory Garden season. Nearly 20 million of these gardens were growing across the United States. These victory gardens were even in Denison, Texas, birthplace of Dwight D. Eisenhower. What were they growing? Just about everything from broccoli to blackberries. Growing food helped supplement supplies that were hard to come by or expensive to buy with money or coupons. Fresh produce was eaten soon after harvesting, but

most of it was canned or jarred. Community canning centers aided in the process of reaching record levels of preserved food. The United States Department of Agriculture estimated that approximately 4 billion cans and jars of food were produced. Uncle Sam Image courtesy National Archives; Canning image courtesy Library of Congress



Image Resource 1: Fighting on the Home Front

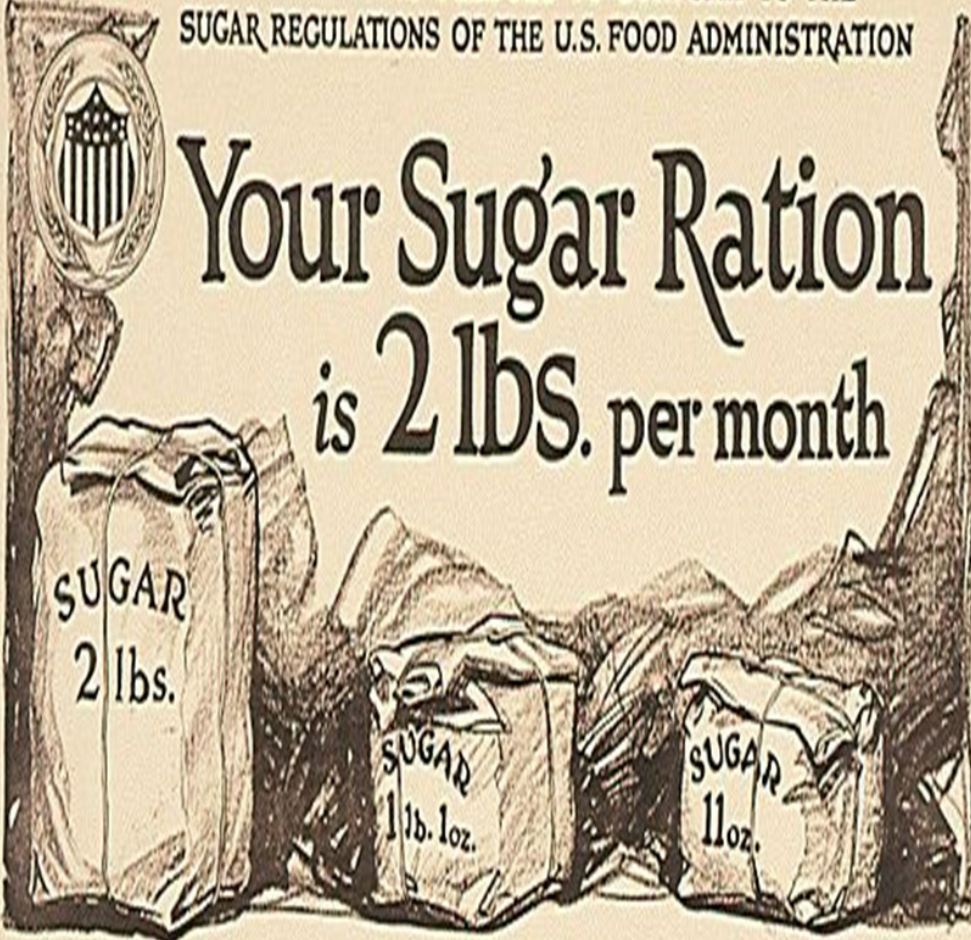


Image courtesy of digital.library.unt.edu

Image Resource 2: Fighting on the Home Front

THIS STORE IS PLEDGED TO CONFORM TO THE
SUGAR REGULATIONS OF THE U.S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

**Your Sugar Ration
is 2 lbs. per month**



AMERICA'S VOLUNTARY RATION
ENGLAND'S COMPULSORY RATION

FRANCE'S COMPULSORY RATION

ITALY'S COMPULSORY RATION

**We must confine our consumption of Sugar
to not more than 2 lbs. per person per month
in order to provide a restricted ration
to England, France and Italy.**

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Image Resource 3: Fighting on the Home Front

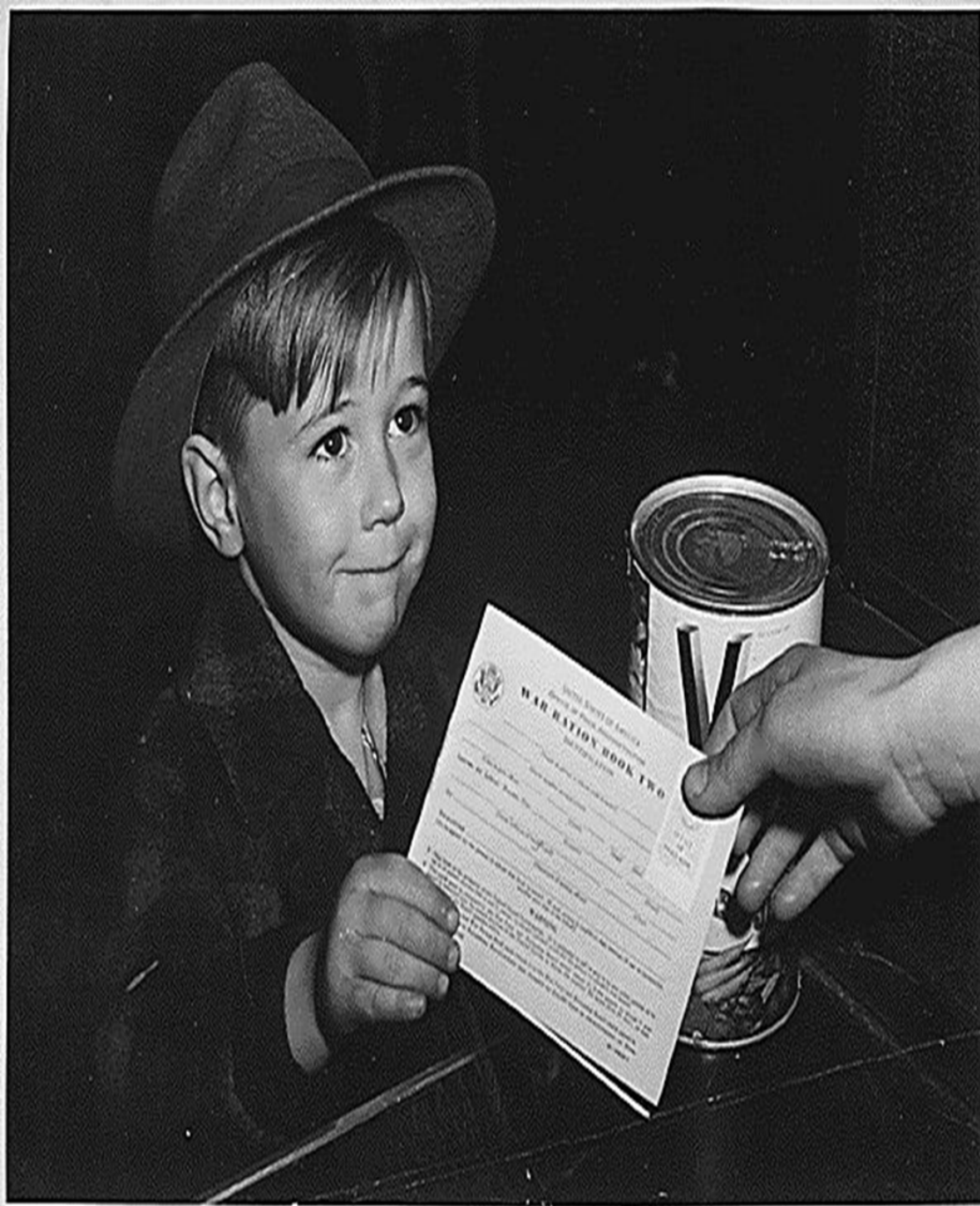


Image courtesy of National Archives

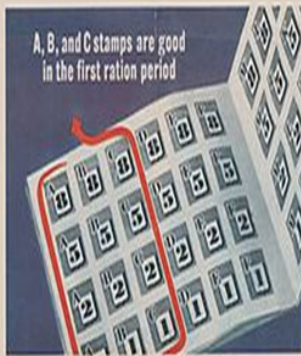
Image Resource 4: Fighting on the Home Front

HOW TO SHOP WITH WAR RATION BOOK TWO

... to Buy Canned, Bottled and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables;
Dried Fruits, Juices and all Canned Soups



1. **USE THIS RATION BOOK.** You may use one or all of your family's ration books when you shop. You may not shop with loose ration stamps.



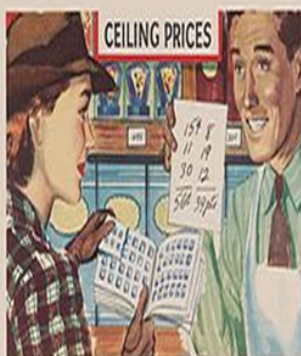
2. **USE BLUE STAMPS ONLY.** All blue point stamps marked A, B, and C are good during the first ration period. They add up to 48 points for each member of the family.



3. **THE NUMBERS SHOW POINTS.** You will not be able to get "change" in point stamps, so save your low-value stamps for buying low-point foods.



4. **LOOK AT THE POINT VALUES** before you buy. Points have nothing to do with prices or quality. Point values will be the same in all stores.



5. **GIVE THE STAMPS TO YOUR GROCER.** Tear out stamps in the presence of your grocer—or tear them out in the presence of the delivery boy.



6. **FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** are not rationed. Use them instead of rationed foods whenever possible. Try out recipes that make your rations go further.

YOUR POINT ALLOWANCE MUST LAST FOR THE FULL RATION PERIOD

Plan How Many Points You Will Use Each Time Before You Shop



Foods are going to our fighting men. They come first! Your ration gives you your fair share of the foods that are left.



Image courtesy of Online Archive of California

Image Resource 5: Fighting on the Home Front

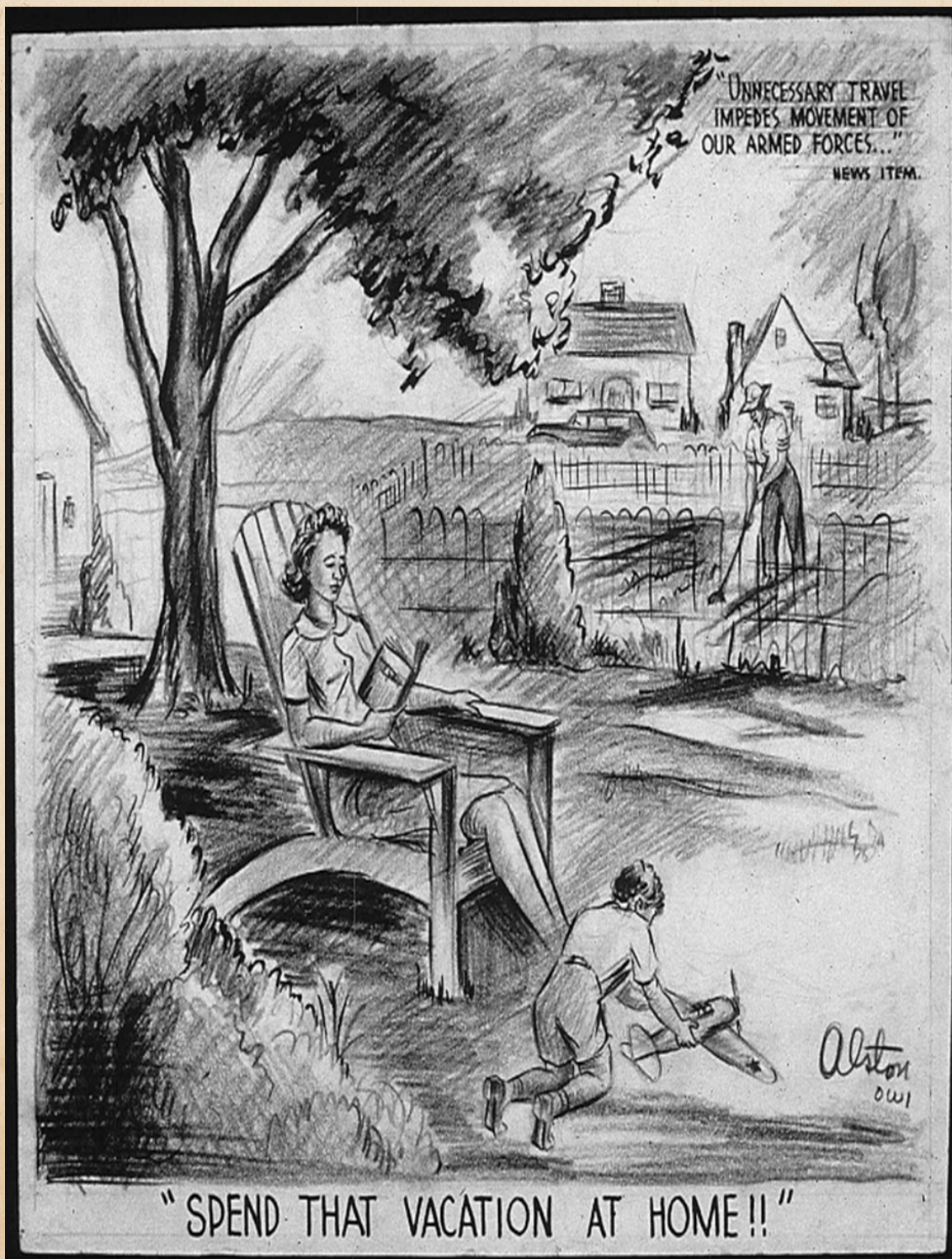


Image courtesy of Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site

Image Resource 6: Fighting on the Home Front



Image courtesy of National Agricultural Library

Image Resource 7: Fighting on the Home Front



Image courtesy of National Archives

Think About It: Fighting on the Home Front

Write your answers to the questions below.

- ★ Why was rationing food and daily supplies important in World War II?

- ★ Was wartime rationing fair to all U.S. citizens? Why or why not?

- ★ If you had been required give up foods during the war, what foods would you have missed most? What foods would you have been happy not to eat?

- ★ What resources (food or other) does the U.S. currently have that you think should be rationed today? Why?

- ★ Media messaging was used across the United States to encourage citizens to see the rationing program as helping the war effort. Which of the **image resources 1-7** do you think is the most persuasive in getting that message across? Why?

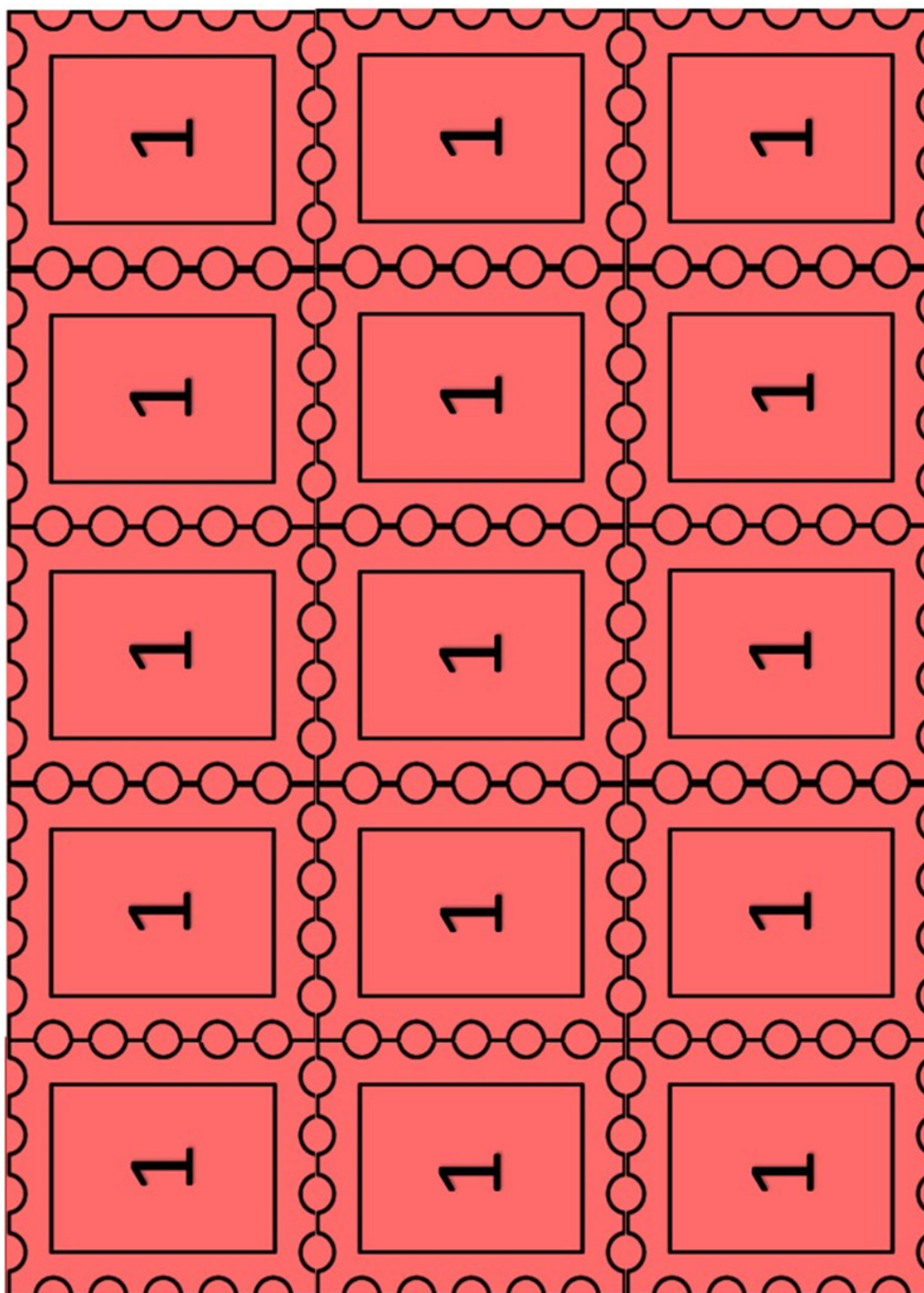
My Meal Log

Keep track of the food you eat for a week by entering each item on this log. You will use this information for the next activity.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

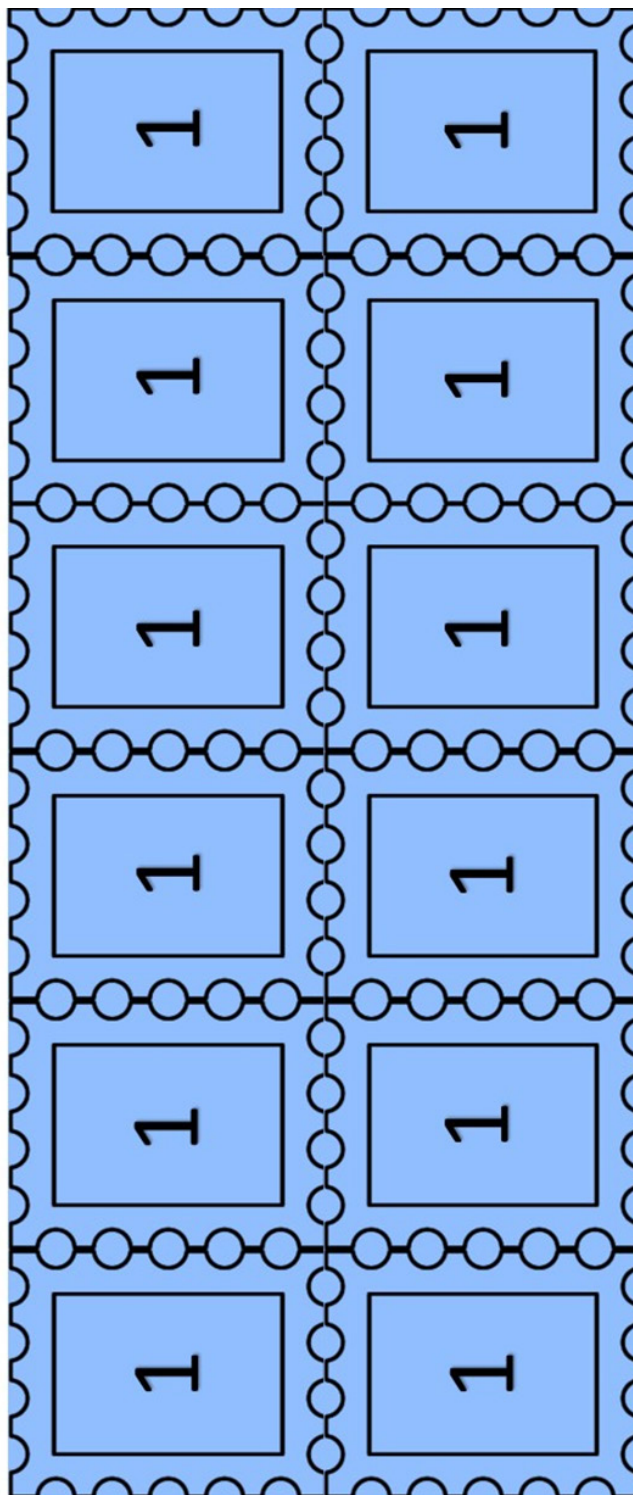
Activity Resource: Red Ration Book Coupons

Red coupons in World War II ration books were used to purchase foods that included meats, fish, dairy, and fats.



Activity Resource: Blue Ration Book Coupons

Blue coupons in World War II ration books were used to purchase foods that included canned and bottled goods.



Ration Book Shopping

How well can you use your rationed resources to shop for food like American citizens did during World War II? Here is your challenge. You are to buy all the groceries you need for one week. Under ration conditions, you have

- **\$2.75** in cash
- **15** red coupons
- **12** blue coupons

Once your money and coupons are gone, you are done shopping. What you managed to buy is the food you will have for the whole week. Think about your food choices and substitutes. Make a check by the items in the lists that you wish to buy. The food items and their coupons and costs reflect World War II supplies and prices. Be sure to notice whether the purchase of each item requires money or red or blue coupons. Keep track of your coupon count and your cash supply. Good luck and shop wisely!

RED Ration Book Items

Buy?	Item	Coupon Points
	Corned beef (1 pound)	9
	Dried beef (1 pound)	16
	Potted and deviled meats (1 pound)	5
	Tongue (1 pound)	7
	Steaks (1 pound/ 16 ounces)	11
	Roasts (1 pound)	9
	All other meats (1 pound)	3
	Canned fish (1 pound)	8
	Evaporated or condensed milk (1 pound)	1
	Cheddar cheese (1 pound/16 slices)	8
	Cream cheese (1 pound/1 container)	3
	Cottage cheese (1 pound)	3
	All other cheese (1 pound/16 slices)	6
	Butter (1 pound)	16
	Margarine (1 pound)	6
	Shortening and oil	5

Ration Book Shopping pg 2

BLUE Ration Book Items (all cans are 2.5 cups)

Buy?	Item	Coupon Points
	Tomato juice (1 can)	6
	Package of raisins (6 pack)	4
	Plums (1 jar)	15
	Spinach (1 can)	14
	Sliced pineapple (1 can)	30
	Pears (1 can)	20
	Tomato soup (1 can)	4
	Grapefruit (1 can)	10
	Corn (1 can)	13
	Peas (1 can)	18
	Green beans (1 can)	5
	Apples (1 can)	15
	Frozen fruit (16 ounces)	12
	All fruit juices (16 ounces)	2
	Jelly (8 ounces)	2

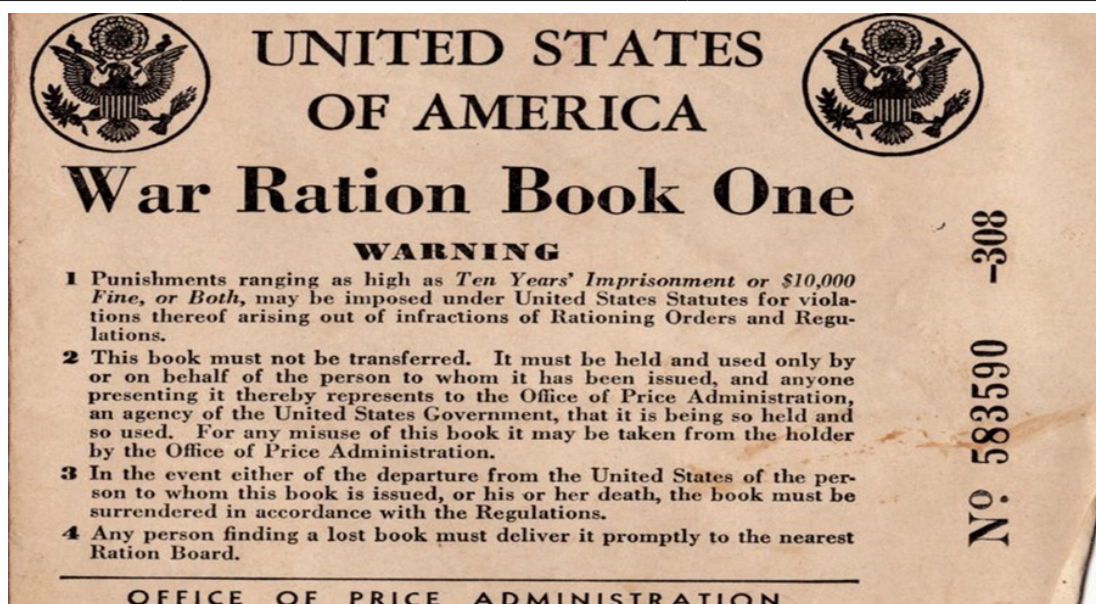


Image courtesy Library of Congress



Ration Book Shopping pg 3

Items FOR SALE

Buy?	Item	Price
	Eggs (1 dozen)	\$0.55
	White bread (1 pound)	\$0.08
	Whole wheat bread (1 pound)	\$0.10
	Macaroni (1 pound)	\$0.16
	Corn flakes (8 ounces)	\$0.07
	Salad dressing (1 pint)	\$0.25
	Peanut butter (1 pound)	\$0.29
	Fresh milk (1 quart)	\$0.15
	Mayonnaise (8 ounces)	\$0.15
	Salt (2 pounds)	\$0.07
	Fresh apples (1 pound)	\$0.11
	Fresh bananas (1 pound)	\$0.11
	Fresh oranges (1 dozen)	\$0.46
	Fresh grapefruit (each)	\$0.09
	Fresh carrots (bunch)	\$0.09
	Fresh lettuce (head)	\$0.11
	Fresh onions (1 pound)	\$0.06
	Fresh potatoes (15 pounds)	\$0.69
	Fresh sweet potatoes (1 pound)	\$0.10
	Corn syrup (24 ounces)	\$0.16
	Molasses (18 ounces)	\$0.16
	Apple butter (16 ounces)	\$0.13
	Chocolate bar (1 bar)	\$0.05
	Ice cream (1 scoop)	\$0.05
	Tasty cake (1 cake)	\$0.07

Think About It: Ration Book Shopping

Write your answers to the questions below.

- ★ What was your biggest challenge in buying groceries for a week under the ration plan?

- ★ How did you decide what food to buy?

- ★ What were the reasons you didn't buy food?

- ★ What food substitutions did you have to make? Why?

- ★ To supplement your rationed food, what would you plant in your Victory Garden?

- ★ List three words that explain the emotions you felt as you tried to buy food on a ration plan.

- ★ Think about the words you wrote that explained your feelings doing this one challenge. Describe how you think people felt who had to deal with rationing every day for three years during World War II.



Extension Resource: World War II Food Groups



Image courtesy of Stanford University

Extension Resource: 1992 Food Guide Pyramid

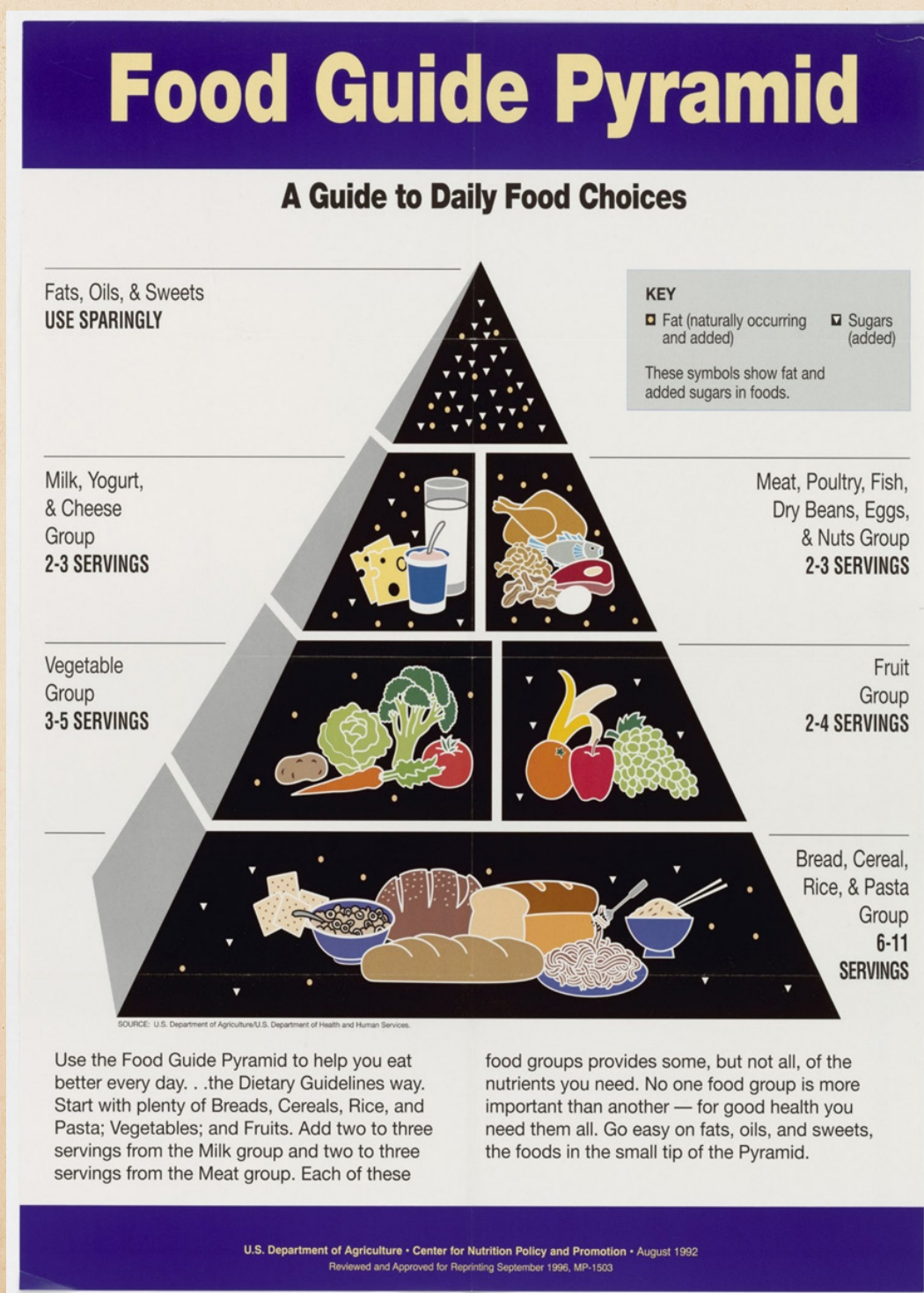
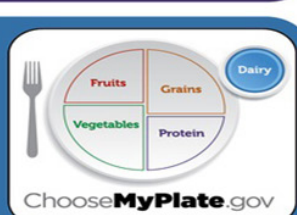
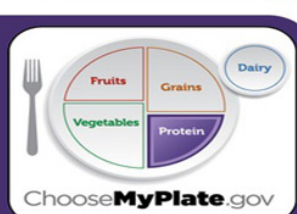
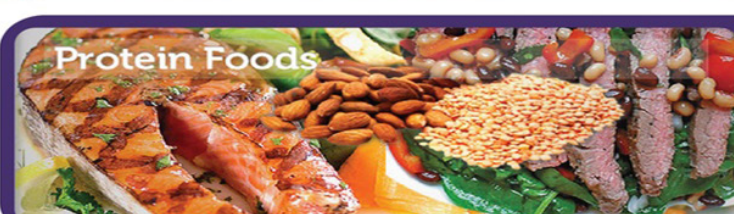
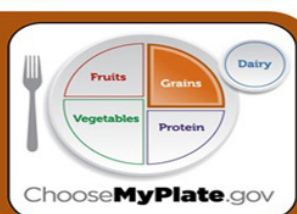
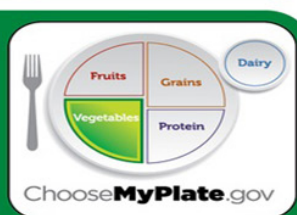
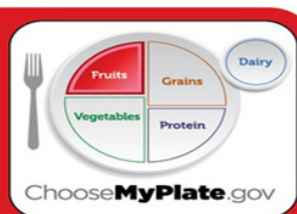
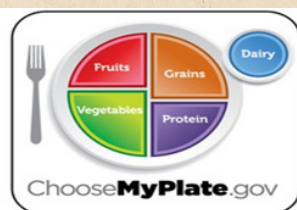


Image courtesy of USDA

Extension Resource: 2013 My Plate

What's **MyPlate** All About?



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Image courtesy of USDA

Think About It: Eating Then and Now

Write your answers to the questions below.

★ Are food charts helpful guides for people? Why or why not?

★ Which food chart most closely reflects the way you eat?

★ How would your daily diet change if you ate according to the World War II chart?

★ Draw your own food chart that visually represents what percentage of each food group (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, dairy) you eat.

