

The Blitz in London

What Was the Blitz?

The Blitz was a sudden and quick attack during the Second World War. 'Blitzkrieg' is a German word meaning 'lightning war'. The Blitz began in London on 7th September 1940 in an attack that lasted 12 hours. London was bombed every day and night (except for one) for 11 weeks, but the Blitz attack on Britain didn't end until May 1941.

Why Was London Bombed?

The German air force, called the Luftwaffe, dropped bombs to damage industrial areas, like factories and ports, to make it harder for the British to move weapons to fight them.

London was bombed because it is England's largest city and home to the docklands. The docklands were located on the East-End of London and were vital to the war effort because this was where materials to make weapons were moved around England.

Did You Know...?

When Buckingham Palace was bombed on 13th September 1940, Queen Elizabeth (wife of King George) famously said 'I am glad we have been bombed. It makes me feel I can look the East-End in the face.'

The Luftwaffe also wanted to attack civilian areas - a civilian is a person who is not in the armed forces. Thousands of homes were destroyed in London and many people were left homeless. The Blitz was terrifying - Hitler wanted it to affect the morale of British citizens and make them believe they could not win the war.

Places in England bombed during the Second World War:

Although London was a primary target for the Luftwaffe, the whole country was under attack during the Blitz.



Did You Know...?

In an attempt to stay alive, 180 000 people would regularly shelter in the London underground, emerging only when the siren signalled that it was safe to.



Liverpool

Liverpool was one of the most heavily bombed cities outside of London. This was because its port was vital to Britain – most of the material used to make weapons was brought through Liverpool's dock.

Sheffield

Sheffield was an important city during the war as the Steelworks there made parts for aircrafts, tanks and weapons. On the 12th and 15th December, the city centre was bombed, killing 750 people in total (most of whom were civilians). It is not known whether the Germans deliberately attacked the town centre or missed their original target.

Coventry

One of the most destructive single attacks was in Coventry where 4,330 homes were destroyed and 554 people were killed in one night. Much of Coventry was devastated by the 509 bombers that attacked here.

Bristol

The Germans targeted Bristol to attack their docks and aircraft factories. Many of the city's historic buildings were destroyed and 175 unexploded bombs were left behind.

Questions

1. When did the Blitz attack on Britain end?

2. "...Hitler wanted it to affect the morale of British citizens..."

Which is closest in meaning to the word morale? Tick **one**.

- ☐ Morse Code
- ☐ spirit or attitude
- ☐ weapons
- ☐ soldiers

3. Why do you think the Blitz is named after 'Blitzkrieg'?

4. What is the 'Luftwaffe'?

5. Why do you think civilian areas were also attacked?

6. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
The Germans deliberately attacked Sheffield town centre.		
Many of Bristol's historic buildings were destroyed by the Blitz.		
London was a primary target of the Luftwaffe.		
Liverpool was the most bombed city in England.		

7. What did Queen Elizabeth say when Buckingham Palace was bombed?

8. Explain in your own words what you think Queen Elizabeth meant when she said this.

