

Was it right that children were evacuated away from home during the Second World War?

During the Second World War, it was decided by the government that children living in cities (particularly in London) were evacuated to the country for their own safety as the cities were seen as a target for German bombers. In the first three days of official evacuation, Operation Pied Piper –named after the traditional tale- relocated 1.5 million people to the country. While the scheme was entirely designed for the safety of the country's children, there were many people who had grave concerns about whether it was right to remove children from their parents.

On one hand, there was a strong view that evacuation was beneficial for children. Not only were they safe from attacks, but they were also able to live without constant fear. This also meant that their parents would not have to worry about their families as they knew that they were safe and being cared for in the country. Additionally, many children had positive experiences when they were evacuated as they were able to experience various things that they would not have been able to while living in the city: they helped to rear new-born animals; they assisted in growing, picking and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables; and they had the chance to explore the country, climb trees and play with other children in wide, open spaces rich with nature that they may not have spent time in before. Finally, many children were taken in by kind, loving families who cared for them well while they lived there and treated them like their own children.

On the other hand, many people believe that evacuation had a detrimental effect on children and their wellbeing. Firstly, young children were separated from their family and friends, which would have been very upsetting at an already distressing time. Knowing that their loved ones were still living in a dangerous environment would be very worrying for those children. Additionally, although every effort was made to keep siblings together when they were evacuated, often brothers and sisters were sent to different families. Without the familiarity of family around, children were often miserable and missed home. This was especially hard for them as stamps were rationed, which meant that that evacuees may not have been able to write to or hear from their family members very often. Finally, some children were taken in by families who only wanted the money from the government that was offered to the hosts. These families did not take good care of the children and some expected them to work for them, which they found hard as they were not used to hard labour.

In conclusion, there are strong arguments on both sides of the issue; however, it seems apparent that evacuation was beneficial to children. Although many children had an unhappy time and missed their families, they were removed from a dangerous environment and kept safe from harm. While it is, of course, important that children feel happy and secure where they live, it is essential that they are kept protected.

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- 1) What was the evacuation process known as?
- 2) Which word in the introduction is closest in meaning to 'serious'?
- 3) Decide whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
There are different views on evacuation.		
Evacuation was beneficial for children.		
Children were happier in the country.		
1.5 million people were moved to the country in the first three days.		

- 4) Which word in paragraph three is closest in meaning to 'negative'?
- 5) Why was it hard for children to contact their families
- 6) Why were children moved away from cities?
- 7) What benefit was there to host families for taking in evacuees
- 8) Decide whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Some children had positive experiences		
Children were moved from the country to cities		
Brothers and sisters were always kept together		
There are different opinions about whether evacuation was beneficial or not		

- 9) Which word in the conclusion is closest in meaning to 'important'?
- 10) Which word in paragraph two is closest in meaning to 'helped'?

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Answers

- 1) What was the evacuation process known as? **Operation Pied Piper**
- 2) Which word in the introduction is closest in meaning to 'serious'? **Grave**
- 3) Decide whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
There are different views on evacuation.	✓	
Evacuation was beneficial for children.		✓
Children were happier in the country.		✓
1.5 million people were moved to the country in the first three days.	✓	

- 4) Which word in paragraph three is closest in meaning to 'negative'? **Detrimental**
- 5) Why was it hard for children to contact their families? **Because stamps were rationed.**
- 6) Why were children moved away from cities? **Because cities were seen as a target for German bombers**
- 7) What benefit was there to host families for taking in evacuees? **They were offered money by the government.**
- 8) Decide whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Some children had positive experiences	✓	
Children were moved from the country to cities		✓
Brothers and sisters were always kept together		✓
There are different opinions about whether evacuation was beneficial or not	✓	

- 9) Which word in the conclusion is closest in meaning to 'important'? **Essential**
- 10) Which word in paragraph two is closest in meaning to 'helped'? **Assisted**