



Evacuation

During World War II, many people were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, where it was believed they would be safer from bombing. In total, over 3.5 million people were evacuated during the war.

Most of the evacuees were children but other evacuees included mothers with very young children, pregnant women, disabled people and teachers and helpers to look after the children.

Evacuation happened in distinct waves, with the first wave of evacuations beginning on the 1st September 1939, two days before Britain officially declared war on Germany. Other waves were at the start of the Battle of Britain in June 1940 and at the start of the Blitz in September 1940.

On evacuation day, children travelled with their teacher or helper by train to their destination. They had to wear an identity label and take their gas mask, ration book, identity card and food for the journey. Many children also took a suitcase containing clothes and other personal items.



When they reached their destination, billeting officers were responsible for arranging for children to stay with host families. For many children, this involved being selected from a line by their host. This was an upsetting experience for some children, who felt unwanted or rejected.

Many children were evacuated to countryside towns and villages in Britain but some were evacuated overseas and lived with host families in places as far away as Australia and Canada.



Read this extract carefully.

Describe two ways that the text gives the impression that evacuation was a large-scale operation. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

[3 marks]
