NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

LESSON PLAN: RATIONING ON THE HOMEFRONT

INTRODUCTION:

When the United States entered World War II on December 7, 1941, the lives of Americans everywhere would start to change. Over the course of the war, six million men and women would serve in uniform, meaning the homefront experience would be altered. Women entered the workforce in droves, filling in for the men that were now serving in the military. They would produce items that were necessities – wartime supplies for the military, and food for both civilians and soldiers.

Now, the workforce would not only be filling the roles of essential jobs, but they would also be providing for their families at home. Due to the demand of food and supplies for the troops, rationing happened on the homefront. Families had ration cards, and they would have to decide what was a necessity, what could be traded for, and what could be cut out entirely.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the concept of rationing during World War II and recognize the reasons behind its implementation on the homefront.
- Analyze primary and secondary sources related to rationing during World War II.
- Examine the impact of rationing on individuals and communities during World War II by exploring personal narratives and accounts from that era.
- Develop critical thinking skills by considering viewpoints of various individuals and groups.
- Enhance reading comprehension by engaging with primary and secondary sources, extracting relevant information, and interpreting its significance in the context of the war.
- Foster collaborative learning by engaging in discussions with peers about rationing experiences through the perspectives of others.
- Encourage active engagement with historical content by participating in a hands-on activity with object-based learning.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What were the main reasons for implementing rationing during World War II?
- What were the specific items rationed and how did this affect households and individuals?
- What primary sources can provide insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals living through rationing in World War II?
- How did rationing affect individuals and communities during World War II?
- What lessons can we learn from the rationing efforts of World War II and how can they be applied to present-day challenges?

GRADE LEVEL:

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5-9

TIME REQUIREMENT:

90 Minutes

TEKS ADDRESSED WITHIN THE LESSON:

5th Grade: 113.16(b)(5)(A), 113.16(b)(11)(A),(B), 113.16(b)(17)(A), 113.16(b)(23)(A),(B),(C),(D),(E), 113.16(b)(25)(A),(B),(C),(D)

6th Grade: Social Studies: 113.18(b)(12)(A),(B), 113.18(b)(19)(A),(B),(C),(D), 113.18(b)(21)(A),(B),(C),(D)

Math: 111.26(b)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G), 111.26(b)(3)(D)

7th Grade: Math: 111.27(b)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G), 111.27(b)(3)(A),(D)

8th Grade: Math: 111.28(b)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G)

Algebra I: 111.39(b)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G)

Algebra II: Math: 111.40(b)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G)

Principles of Business, Marketing, and Finance:

130.132(c)(1)(A),(B),(C),(D),(F), 130.132(c)(2)(A),(B), 130.132(c)(4)(A),(B), 130.132(c)(9)(B)

Financial Mathematics: 130.180(c)(2)(A),(B),(C),(D),(G), 130.180(c)(5)(A), 130.180(c)(15)(A),(C)

Financial Mathematics: 130.182(c)(4)(A),(B), 130.182(c)(8)(A)

U.S. History Since 1877: 113.41(C)(7)(A),(F),(G), 113.41(c)(17)(A)

World History Studies: 113.42(C)(23)(A)

World Geography Studies: 113.43(C)(11)(B)

NATIONAL STANDARDS:

Grade 5: 5.NBT – 4

Grade 6: 6.RP – 2, 6.NS – 3

Grade 7: 7.NS – 3, 7.EE – 3

High School: N-Q – 1,2,3

MATERIALS:

- Writing Utensils
- Calculator/Phone
- Primary Source Documents (Center for Pacific War Studies)
- Item Tracker Worksheet
- Recipe Ideas
- Grocery Items List
- Weekly Meal Planner

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- Family Scenario Cards

RELEVANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

- Students should have a basic understanding of the causes and major events of World War II.
- Familiarity with the concept of the homefront during wartime is essential. Students should understand that the homefront refers to the civilian population and activities within a country during a war. They should also grasp the concept of total war, where nations mobilize all available resources, including civilians, to support the war effort.
- Some knowledge of propaganda used during World War II is necessary. This includes understanding its purpose, techniques employed, and its role in influencing public opinion and mobilizing support for the war effort.
- Students should have a general understanding of the concept of rationing, where limited resources are allocated to ensure equitable distribution among the population. Familiarity with the concept of scarcity, supply and demand, and how rationing helps manage resources is important.
- Students should have a basic understanding of primary and secondary sources. They should know that primary sources are original materials from the time period being studied, such as letters, diaries, photographs, or interviews, while secondary sources are interpretations or analyses of primary sources.

LESSON INSTRUCTION:

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES

1. Review with the class the difference between primary and secondary sources.
    a. A primary source is a source that was created on or near the event being studied, someone who experienced the event, or a firsthand account of the event.
        i. Newspapers, diaries, songs, art, letters, speeches
        ii. Optional: Show examples from the Center for Pacific Studies Digital Archive

    b. A secondary source is a source that was created years after the event, by someone that did not experience the event, or a secondhand account of the event.
        i. Newspapers written way after the event, textbooks, biographies, research websites, documentaries
2. Ask the students to discuss how primary sources can be used to study World War II? What information can we gain from first-hand accounts, particularly in the homefront?
    a. Ask the class what might we learn from an oral history?

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3. Play a clip of an oral history from the Center for Pacific War Studies Oral History Collection.
    a. Tip: You can narrow down the oral histories by using the search feature. The following link are stories mentioning the homefront and rationing.

    b. Ask the students to reflect on what they heard. Did they gain any information about what life was like during World War II? How does this perspective differ from a book or newspaper account?
4. Show the students primary sources from the homefront collection at the Center for Pacific War Studies and encourage discussion amongst the class about the homefront.

5. Have students take a moment to write down a list of the kinds of primary sources they would need to research if they were going to write an essay on rationing.
6. Now let's connect primary sources to the homefront, particularly rationing and victory gardens.
    a. Before giving the class historical background, ask the students what information they may gain from just viewing the ration card. Source: Center for Pacific War Studies (photos below)

    b. Read aloud the background information on rationing.
        i. Were the students correct? Did the primary document alone give them enough context to make an educated guess?

BACKGROUND: RATIONING

On August 28, 1941, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8875, which created the Office of Price Administration. By May of 1942, American families would be using ration books which limited their consumption of consumer goods.

Each person in the household would receive a ration book that dictates what they are allowed to buy. These ration books contained stamps that would be presented when they were buying an

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item. If you didn't have the stamp, the item could not be bought. Ration stamps dictated limits on food, gasoline, and many other materials.

Not all materials were rationed all at once. In May of 1942, sugar was rationed. By March of 1943, meats, fats, canned fish, cheese, and canned milk were rationed. Then, at the end of 1945, the only thing rationed was sugar. Rationing officially ended in June of 1947. However, food wasn't the only thing rationed. For example, shoes were rationed from February 1943 – October 1945.

7. Before giving the class historical background, ask the students what information they may gain from Victory gardens from primary sources. Source: Library of Congress

BACKGROUND: VICTORY GARDENS

Victory Gardens were vegetable, fruit, or herb gardens that people planted at their homes to supplement the items they were buying. Because some food items were scarce, governments would encourage families to plant victory gardens to lessen the need to supply foods that people could grow at home. Money that would have been spent on this food would in turn be given to the military. Over the course of the war, about 18 million victory gardens were planted.

Victory Gardens were portrayed as patriotic because they helped to support the country and the military. They were a form of civic participation, and the Department of Agriculture even distributed booklets explaining the importance of having and caring for a victory garden. It is thought that about 9,000,000 short tons of fruits and vegetables were harvested from these gardens in 1944, which was the equivalent of commercially produced vegetables.

PART TWO: ACTIVITY

1. Using their knowledge of rationing and victory gardens, students must now put themselves in the shoes of the first-hand accounts they witness.
    a. Encourage the class to go back in time to 1943.
2. Divide students into six groups and assign each a different family scenario card.
    a. Distribute the Rationing Activity packet that includes an item tracker, meal ideas, grocery items list, and meal planner.
3. Give each group an adequate amount of time to discuss their family scenario and develop a plan for what they would do in that situation.
4. Instruct the groups to use the items in the rationing activity packet to create a meal plan for the week for their family scenarios.
    a. Have the students choose a "family" representative to share with the class their plan when the time is up.
5. Once the timer has expired, allow each group to share their meal plans with the class.
6. Wrap up the activity by discussing the results with the class. Did they find the planning difficult? What was the most challenging aspect?
7. Optional: Additional Projects

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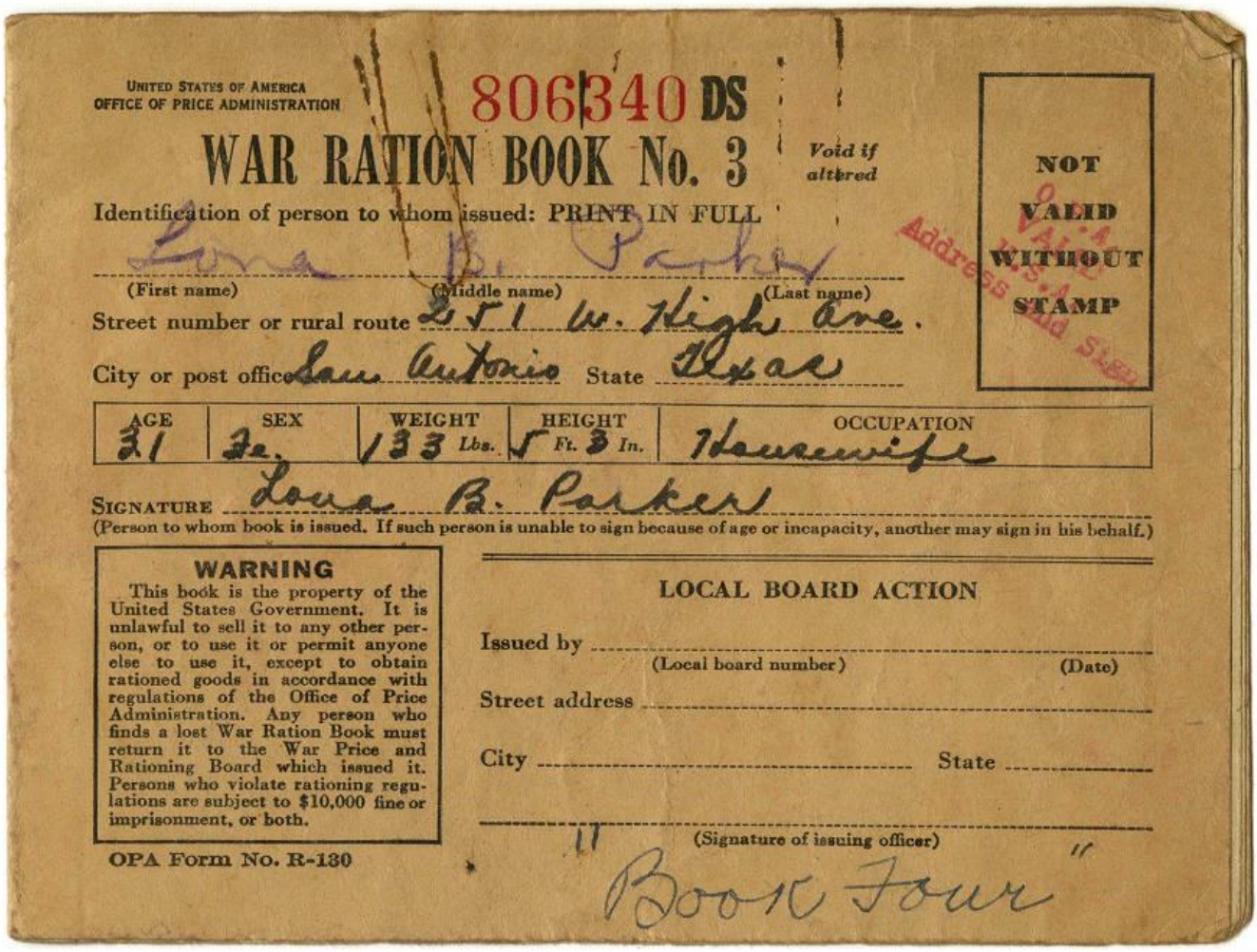
a. Instruct students to go to the grocery store (online or in-person) to “shop” for a week of groceries. Did they purchase enough food for the size of their family for a full week? Did they buy things that could have been grown or bartered for instead?
b. Have students attach points to food items at home. How many points would they need for the amount of food they eat in one day? In a week?
c. Have students plan a victory garden. Where would it go? What kinds of fruits and vegetables would they plant? How would it fit into their regular meal planning?

DOCUMENTS:

Source: Center for Pacific War Studies



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

806|340 DS

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3

Void if altered

NOT VALID WITHOUT STAMP

Identification of person to whom issued: PRINT IN FULL

Lona B. Parker

(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

Street number or rural route 251 W. High Ave.

City or post office San Antonio State Texas

AGE	SEX	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	OCCUPATION
21	Fe.	133 Lbs.	5 Ft. 3 In.	Housewife

SIGNATURE Lona B. Parker

(Person to whom book is issued. If such person is unable to sign because of age or incapacity, another may sign in his behalf.)

WARNING

This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell it to any other person, or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration. Any person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to $10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both.

OPA Form No. R-130

LOCAL BOARD ACTION

Issued by (Local board number) (Date)

Street address

City State

(Signature of issuing officer)

"Book Four"

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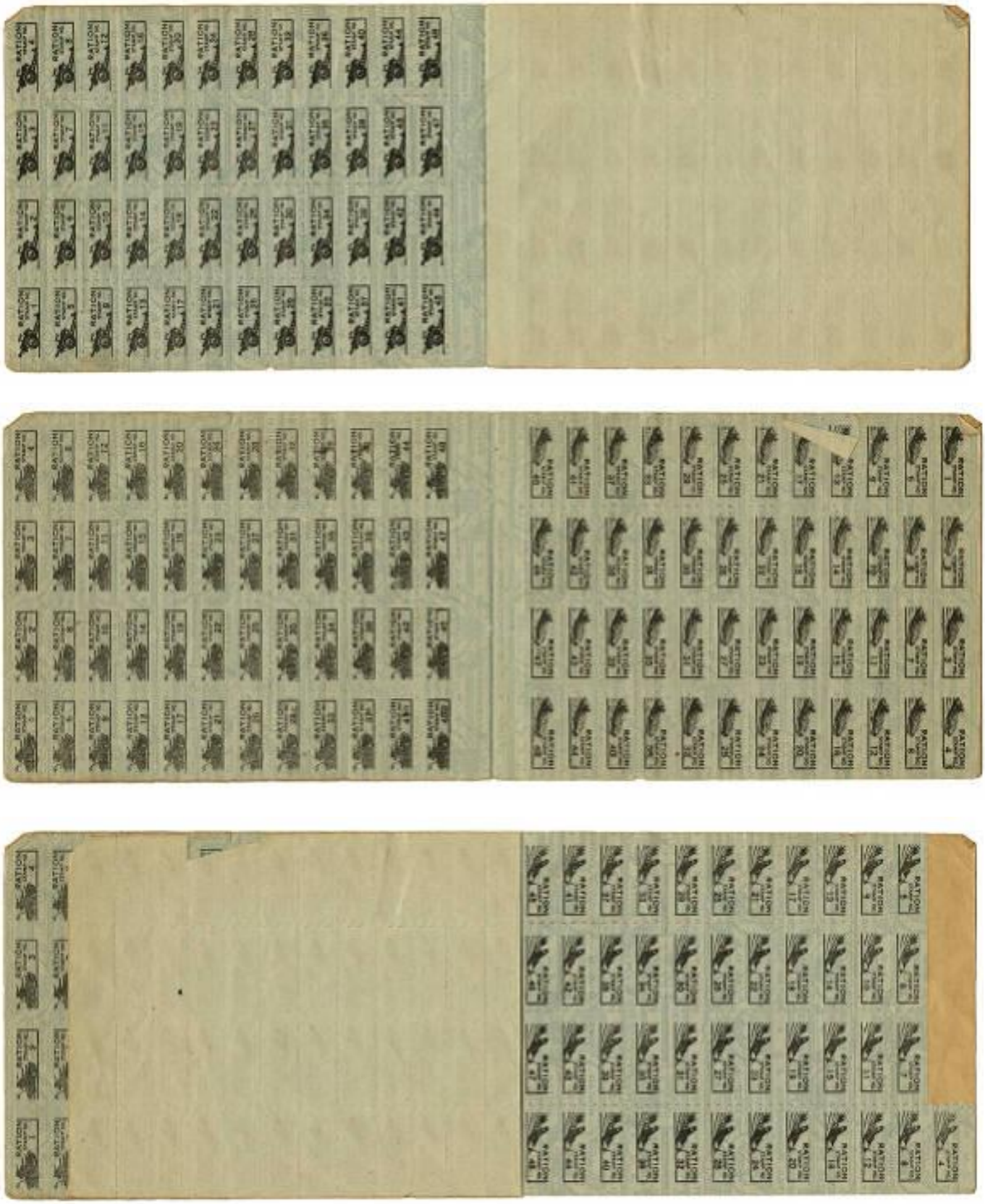

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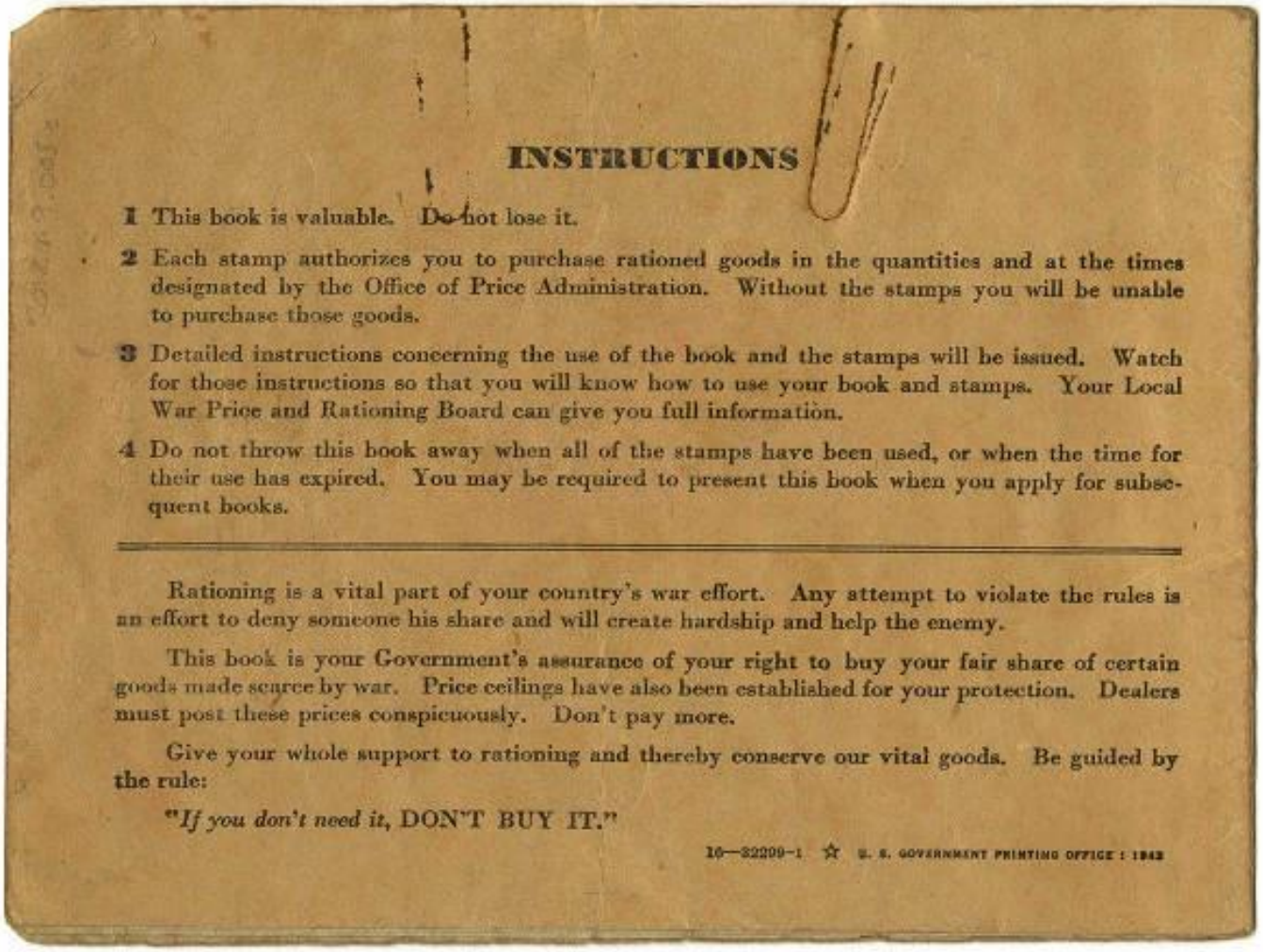

INSTRUCTIONS

1 This book is valuable. Do not lose it.

2 Each stamp authorizes you to purchase rationed goods in the quantities and at the times designated by the Office of Price Administration. Without the stamps you will be unable to purchase those goods.

3 Detailed instructions concerning the use of the book and the stamps will be issued. Watch for those instructions so that you will know how to use your book and stamps. Your Local War Price and Rationing Board can give you full information.

4 Do not throw this book away when all of the stamps have been used, or when the time for their use has expired. You may be required to present this book when you apply for subsequent books.

Rationing is a vital part of your country's war effort. Any attempt to violate the rules is an effort to deny someone his share and will create hardship and help the enemy.

This book is your Government's assurance of your right to buy your fair share of certain goods made scarce by war. Price ceilings have also been established for your protection. Dealers must post these prices conspicuously. Don't pay more.

Give your whole support to rationing and thereby conserve our vital goods. Be guided by the rule:

"*If you don't need it,* DON'T BUY IT."

16—32299-1 ☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1943

Source: Online Archive of California-Author Office of Price Administration

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HOW TO SHOP WITH WAR RATION BOOK TWO

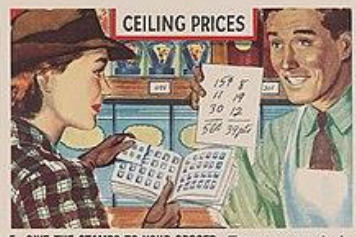
. . . to Buy Canned, Bottled and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables; Dried Fruits, Juices and all Canned Soups

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

BUY EARLY IN THE WEEK

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

BUY EARLY IN THE DAY

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.*

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

History Channel Video: Rationing

PBS: Rationing and Recycling Video

Book: Grandma's Wartime Kitchen and the Way We Cooked

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SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 6

The Young family – Mr. Young is a fireman and Mrs. Young stays at home to watch their newborn baby and 6 other children. They have 252 ration points to feed their family for the week.

SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 5

The Webster family – Mr. and Mrs. Webster own an orange orchard. Oranges and orange juice are very convenient and common in their household. The Websters have 308 points to support their family of 11 for the week.

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SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 4

The Timson family – Mr. Timson is a doctor and Mrs. Timson works at the local dairy farm, which makes dairy accessible to them. They have 84 ration points to support themselves and their newborn child.

SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 3

The Rawlins family – Mrs. Rawlins works at the meat packing plant to support herself, her 5 children, and her 4 elderly grandparents. Meat products are easily accessible due to her job. She has 280 ration points to support herself and the other 9 people she is feeding.

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SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 2

The Baxter family – Mrs. Baxter became a riveter at the local factory while her husband is off fighting in the Pacific. She has to feed herself, and her 3 children with only 112 ration points.

SCENARIO CARD: FAMILY # 1

The Summerfield family – Mr. and Mrs. Summerfield work at the local factory to support their family. They have 4 children, and only have 168 points to feed their family for the week.

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WORKSHEET: WEEKLY MEAL PLANNER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
DINNER	DINNER	DINNER
SNACK	SNACK	SNACK

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
DINNER	DINNER	DINNER
SNACK	SNACK	SNACK

SUNDAY	NOTES:
BREAKFAST	
LUNCH	
DINNER	
SNACK	

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WORKSHEET: MEAL IDEAS

PORK TAILS WITH LIMA BEANS

PORK TAILS
LIMA BEANS
SALT
ONIONS
VINEGAR

TREET WITH NOODLES & CHEESE

TREET
NOODLES
BUTTER
GREEN PEPPERS
ONIONS
CHEESE

SCRAMBLED EGGS & BRAINS

CALF'S BRAIN
BUTTER
EGGS
WORCESTERSHIRE
SAUCE
PARSLEY

LUNCHEON SOUP

DRIED BEEF
POTATOES
SALT
BUTTER
ONIONS
MILK

BOILED BEEF

FORESHANK
SALT
POTATOES
ONIONS
CARROTS

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WORKSHEET: ITEM TRACKER

ITEM BEING BOUGHT	AMOUNT	CASH	RATION POINTS
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○

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WORKSHEET: GROCERY ITEM LIST

FOOD ITEM	PRICE/ITEM QUANTITY	RATION POINTS	FOOD ITEM	PRICE/ITEM QUANTITY	RATION POINTS
APPLES	33 CENTS/2 POUNDS	20	PEPPER	5 CENTS/26 OUNCES	0
BREAD	10 CENTS/1 LOAF	0	PORK TAILS	15 CENTS/1 POUND	0
BUTTER	50 CENTS/1 POUND	8	POPSICLES	29 CENTS/1 BOX	22
CAKE MIX	18 CENTS/1 BOX	18	POTATOES	70 CENTS/15 POUNDS	0
CALF'S BRAIN	19 CENTS/1 BRAIN	2	RICE	10 CENTS/1 POUND	3
CARROTS	9 CENTS/1 BUNCH	0	SALT	5 CENTS/26 OUNCES	0
CHEERIOS	14 CENTS/1 BOX	8	SAUSAGE	35 CENTS/1 POUND	0
CHEESE	35 CENTS/1 POUND	12	SHRIMP	53 CENTS/1 POUND	12
COFFEE	24 CENTS/1 POUND	42	SOUP	9 CENTS/1 CAN	10
COOKIES	22 CENTS/1 BOX	22	SPINACH	15 CENTS/1 CAN	18
DRIED BEEF	21 CENTS/4 POUNDS	16	STEAK	40 CENTS/1 POUND	13
EGGS	33 CENTS/1 DOZEN	0	STRAWBERRIES	28 CENTS/POUND	0
FLOUR	66 CENTS/10 POUNDS	18	SUGAR	31 CENTS/5 POUNDS	80
FORESHANK	13 CENTS/1 POUND	10	SYRUP	23 CENTS/1 JAR	80
GREEN PEPPER	30 CENTS/1 POUND	0	TOMATO CATSUP	15 CENTS	30
GROUND BEEF	27 CENTS/1 POUND	0	TOMATO JUICE	10 CENTS/1 CAN	20
JELLY	24 CENTS/1 JAR	40	TREET	35 CENTS	7
LIMA BEANS	19 CENTS/1 POUND	0	TUNA	24 CENTS/1 CAN	6
MILK	15 CENTS/1 GALLON	1	VINEGAR	14 CENTS/1 QUART	0
NOODLES	5 CENTS/1 BOX	18	WORCHESTERSIRE	29 CENTS/1 BOTTLE	0
ONIONS	7 CENTS/1 POUND	0			
ORANGE JUICE	19 CENTS/1 CAN	0			
PARSLEY	10 CENTS/1 BUNCH	0			
PEANUT BUTTER	25 CENTS/1 JAR	9			

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