

# 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Did You Know...?

Over 180 000 Londoners regularly sheltered from the bombs in the London underground.

London was bombed because it was the largest English city and home to the docklands. The docklands were important to the war effort because materials to make weapons and bombs were moved through there.

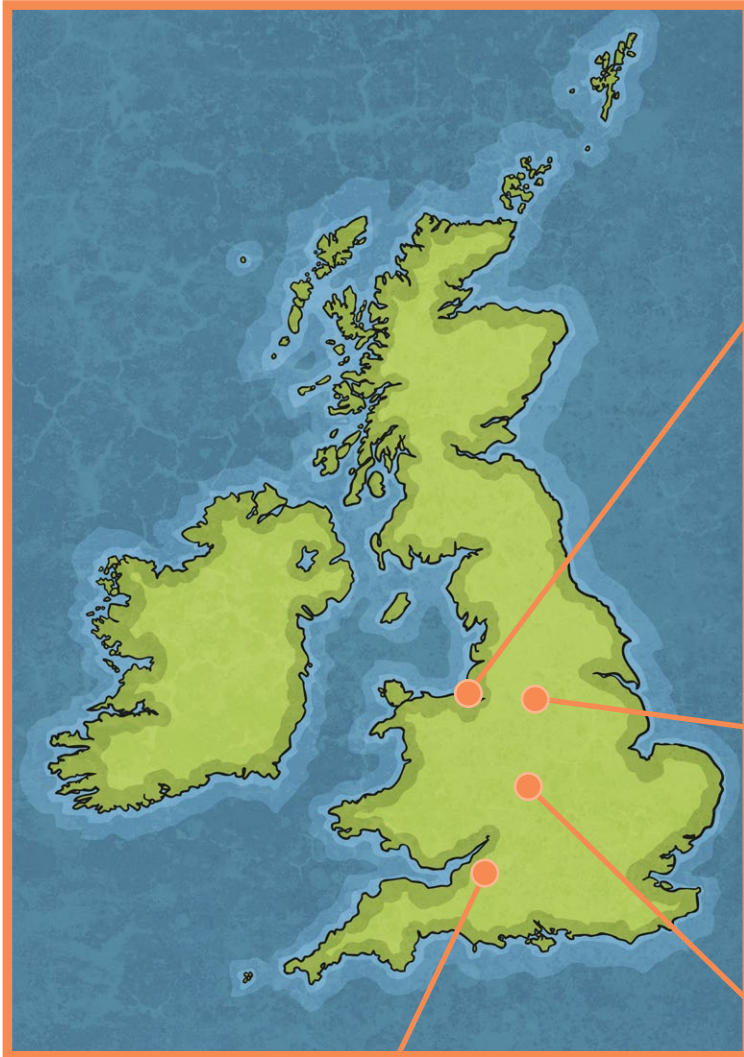


The Luftwaffe also wanted to attack civilian areas - a civilian is a person who is not in the armed forces. This also made London a target because

the Germans wanted to break the 'spirit' of the British by destroying its capital. Thousands of homes were destroyed and many people were left homeless.

## Places in England bombed during the Second World War:

Although London was bombed more often than anywhere else in England, the whole country was under attack during the Blitz.



### Liverpool

Liverpool was one of the most heavily bombed areas outside of London. This was because its port was important 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. The 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December were the worst attacks, killing 750 people.

### Coventry

One of the worst single attacks was in Coventry where 4,330 homes were destroyed and 554 people were killed in one night. Much of Coventry was destroyed 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. What was the Blitz?

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2. When did the Blitz begin? Tick **one**.

- 8<sup>th</sup> September 1940
- 7<sup>th</sup> September 1940
- 5<sup>th</sup> September 1941
- 8<sup>th</sup> September 1941

3. How long did the first Blitz attack last? Tick **one**.

- 3 hours
- 11 weeks
- 12 hours
- 120 minutes

4. Complete the sentence below:

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

5. What is a civilian?

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6. Where did Londoners shelter from the bombs?

- Buckingham Palace
- under Tower Bridge
- in the London Underground
- Trafalgar Square

7. Why did the Germans want to bomb industrial areas? Explain in your own words.

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8. Based on what you know about the other cities that were bombed by the Germans, can you guess why Coventry might have been targeted?

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