

VE Day

What is VE Day?

VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day, and is celebrated on 8th May. Although it was not the end of the Second World War, it was the end of the fighting in Europe.

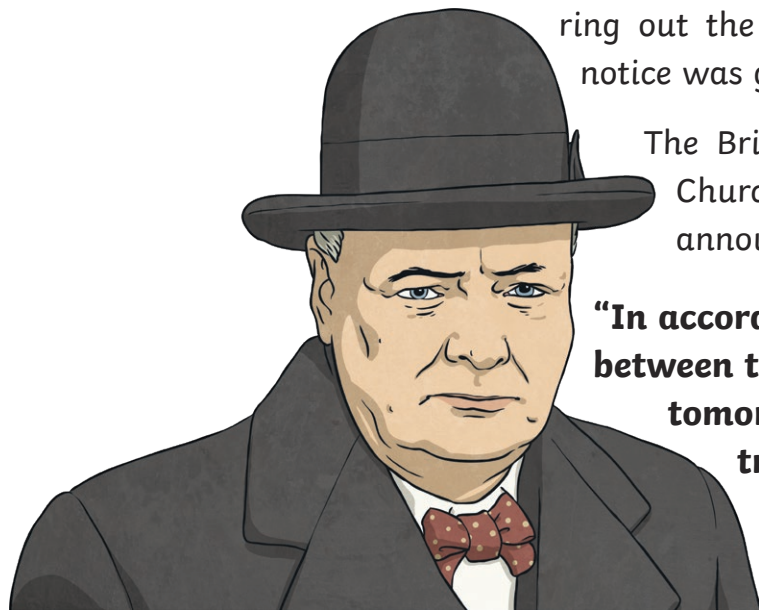


How did it happen?

In April 1945, Hitler died. This meant that the Germans had to surrender their part in WWII to the Allies. The German President of the Third Reich, Grand Admiral Donitz, gave orders that General Jodl should go to the American army Head Quarters in France. Here, Jodl surrendered to the Western and Russian officers, and agreed to all their demands.

The Announcement

The British people began celebrating as soon as they heard the news! Bell ringers in churches around the country were ready to ring out the good news when an official notice was given.



The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, made the following announcement at 19:40, 7th May.

“In accordance with arrangements between three great powers, tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory in Europe Day and will be regarded as a holiday.”



The Effects of War

In Britain, during the war in Europe, half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of ordinary people were killed and millions of lives had been torn apart.



The three great powers were:

- Great Britain
- Soviet Union (Russia)
- US

Bring on the Celebrations!

People began decorating the streets with banners, bunting and ribbons. They had street parties, neighbours shared food, and listened to the radio news programmes.

King George VI and the Queen appeared eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – walked in the huge crowds in London!

Churchill told the crowds,
“This is your victory!”

The End of the VE Day

Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights for the first time in six years since the war began, and two searchlights formed a V, the sign of peace, above St Paul’s Cathedral in London.

All the lights were turned off again the next day.

A Special Celebration

To celebrate 75 years since the original VE Day, the May Day bank Holiday has been moved for the second time in history. Although it’s usually on a Monday, this year, the May Day Bank holiday will be on Friday 8th May to coincide with the anniversary of VE Day.



Buglers have been invited to play The Last Post and Reveille from their homes at 2:55 p.m. This will be followed by a 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II' at 3:00 p.m. Here, people at home can raise a drink of their choice and say the following:

"To those who gave so much, we thank you."

The thought is that as a nation, the UK will toast their remembrance, together.

Bugler: Someone that plays the bugle – a horn-like instrument used by soldiers to send signals and orders.



Questions

1. What does VE day stand for?

2. Where were the American Army Headquarters? Tick **one**.

- America
- France
- Germany
- The Soviet Union

3. What happened at 19:40 on 7th May?

4. Read the '**A Special Celebration**' paragraph.

What has happened for the second time in history?

5. When will buglers be playing the Last Post and the Reveille? Tick **one**.

- 3:55 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m.
- 2:55 p.m.
- 7:30 p.m.

6. How do you think the people felt when they heard the news? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. Why do you think the King and Queen appeared so many times on the balcony?

8. Why do you think Buckingham Palace had not been lit for 6 years?

Answers

1. What does VE day stand for?

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2. Where were the American Army Headquarters? Tick **one**.

- America
- France**
- Germany
- The Soviet Union

3. What happened at 19:40 on 7th May?

Winston Churchill made the announcement for VE Day.

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What has happened for the second time in history?

The May Day Bank Holiday has been moved.

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- 7:30 p.m.

6. How do you think the people felt when they heard the news? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think the people felt a mixture of things when the news was announced. I think they felt relieved and happy as they cheered and had parties in the street. However, I also think many people will have felt sad because a lot of people died in the war.

7. Why do you think the King and Queen appeared so many times on the balcony?

Pupil's own response, such as: I think the King and Queen appeared so many times on the balcony so they could be there for the people of England. They wanted to share in the good feeling and be part of the celebrations.

8. Why do you think Buckingham Palace had not been lit for 6 years?

Pupil's own response, that may refer to their own knowledge of the blitz, or their own suggestions.

VE Day

What is VE Day?

VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day and is celebrated on 8th May. It was the end of six years of suffering, misery and courage during the Second World War in Europe. Although it was not the end of the Second World War, it was the end of warfare in Europe.

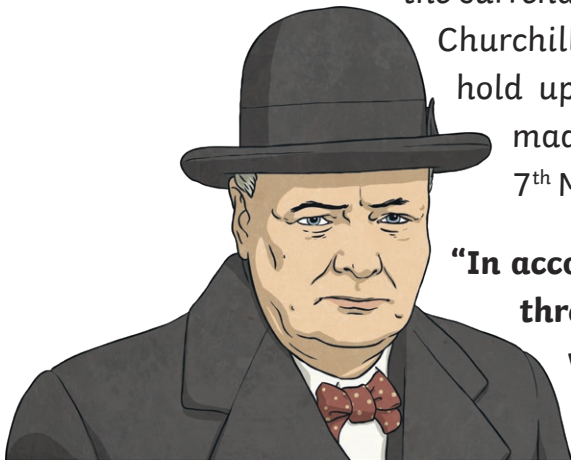
How did it happen?

On the morning of 7th May, 1945, following Hitler's death in the April, the German President of the Third Reich, Grand Admiral Donitz, gave orders that General Jodl should go to the American Head Quarters based in France. Jodl surrendered on behalf of the Germans, to the Western and Russian officers, and agreed to all their demands.

The Announcement

The British people began celebrating as soon as they heard the news. Although no official announcement had been made, bell ringers in the churches around the country were on standby to ring out the good news when an official notice was given.

Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Russians, was taking his time to announce the surrender, but the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, did not want to give Stalin the chance to hold up what everyone already knew! Churchill made the following announcement at 19:40, 7th May.



“In accordance with arrangements between three great powers, tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory in Europe Day and will be regarded as a holiday.”



The Effects of War

In Britain, during the war in Europe, half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of ordinary people were killed and millions of lives had been torn apart.



Did you know ...?

The three great powers were Britain, the US and the Soviet Union, now known as Russia.

Although everyone was pleased the war in Europe had ended, for many the celebrations would have been a sad reminder of the loss of many loved ones. They would have been fighting abroad, caught by the enemy or died in air raids attacks. This meant that many did not completely feel the lasting joy of the time.

Bring on the Celebrations!

People began decorating the streets with banners, bunting and ribbons. They organised street parties where neighbours shared food, which was still rationed, and listened to the radio news broadcasts.

King George VI and the Queen appeared eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – walked amongst the crowds! Churchill told the crowds, “This is your victory!”

Churchill spoke to the nation, reminding them that although Japan still had to be defeated, and the war was not yet over, for now Great Britain “May allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing. God Save the King!”

The End of the VE Day

At 21:00, King George VI made a final broadcast to the nation. Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights for the first time since the start of the war, and two searchlights formed a V, the sign of peace, above St Paul’s Cathedral in London.

All the lights were turned off again the next day.

A Special Celebration

To celebrate 75 years since the original VE Day, the May Day bank Holiday has been moved for the second time in history. Although it’s usually on a Monday, this year, the May Day Bank holiday will be on Friday 8th May to coincide with the anniversary of VE Day.

Buglers have been invited to play The Last Post and Reveille from their homes at 2:55 p.m. This will be followed by a 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II' at 3:00 p.m. Here, people at home can raise a drink of their choice and say the following:

"To those who gave so much, we thank you."

The thought is that as a nation, the UK will toast their remembrance, together.

Bugler: Someone that plays the bugle – a horn-like instrument used by soldiers to send signals and orders.



Questions

1. What date is VE Day?

2. VE day stands for...? Tick **one**.

- Victory and Excellence Day
 Victory in Europe Day
 Vanquish in Europe Day
 Very Excellent Day

3. What did General Jodl do?

4. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
Hitler died in May 1945.		
Grand Admiral Donitz gave the order to surrender.		
The 'three great powers' were Britain, the Soviet Union and the US.		
Half a million homes were destroyed in Britain during the war.		

5. How was a sign of peace made above St Paul's Cathedral?

6. What did Stalin do, and how did this affect Britain?

7. In detail, explain what VE day ended.

8. Name one of the ways VE Day is celebrating the 75th Anniversary.

9. Why do you think the author has used an exclamation mark when commenting on the princesses walking around the crowds in London? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. What date is VE Day?

8th May

2. VE day stands for...? Tick **one**.

- Victory and Excellence Day
 Victory in Europe Day
 Vanquish in Europe Day
 Very Excellent Day

3. What did General Jodl do?

General Jodl went to the Head Quarters based in France. He surrendered on behalf of the Germans to the Western and Russian Officers and agreed to all their demands.

4. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
Hitler died in May 1945.		✓
Grand Admiral Donitz gave the order to surrender.	✓	
The 'three great powers' were Britain, the Soviet Union and the US.	✓	
Half a million homes were destroyed in Britain during the war.	✓	

5. How was a sign of peace made above St Paul's Cathedral?

Lights were used to make the sign of peace above St Paul's Cathedral.

6. What did Stalin do, and how did this affect Britain?

Stalin took his time announcing the surrender. This meant Churchill could not let Britain know officially that there was an end of the war in Europe.

7. In detail, explain what VE day ended.

Answers will vary, based on: VE Day ended six years of suffering, misery and courage during the Second World War in Europe/ ended warfare in Europe.

8. Name one of the ways VE Day is celebrating the 75th Anniversary.

Accept any of the following:

- **The May Day Bank Holiday has been moved from Monday to Friday.**
- **Buglers will play The Last Post and Reveille at 2:55 p.m.**
- **People will have a toast to the heroes of World War II**

9. Why do you think the author has used an exclamation mark when commenting on the princesses walking around the crowds in London? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary, but should suggest the princesses walking among the crowds being unusual.

VE Day

What is VE Day?

VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day, and is celebrated on the 8th May. It marked an end to the six years of suffering, misery but also endurance that defined the Second World War in Europe. Although it was not the end of the Second World War, it was the end of conflict in Europe.

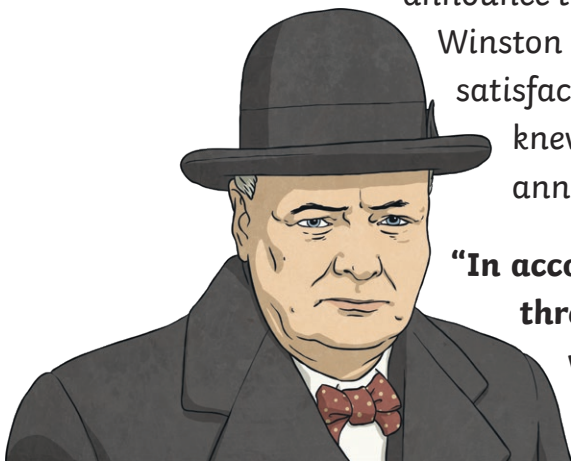
How did it happen?

Hitler was the dictator of Germany, who had instigated the Second World War. After Hitler's death on 30th April 1945, the German President of the Third Reich, Grand Admiral Donitz, ordered that General Jodl go to the American General Eisenhower's Head Quarters based in France and surrender to the Western and Russian officers, agreeing to all their demands, on the 7th May.

The Announcement

The British people began celebrating as soon as they heard the news, although no official announcement had been made. Bell ringers in the churches around the country were put on standby ready to ring out the good news when an official notice was given.

Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Russian's Communist Party, was reluctant to announce the surrender but the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, did not want to give Stalin the satisfaction of holding up what everyone already knew anyway! Churchill made the following announcement at 19:40, 7th May:



"In accordance with arrangements between three great powers, tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory in Europe Day and will be regarded as a holiday.



The Effects of War

In Britain, during the war in Europe, half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of civilians killed and millions of lives had been disrupted.



Although everyone was relieved that the war in Europe had ended, for many the celebrations would have been bittersweet. The loss of many loved ones, either fighting abroad, captured by the enemy or those who died in air raids, meant that many people felt a certain anti-climax after the celebrations.

Bring on the Celebrations!

People took to decorating the streets with banners, bunting and ribbons. They organised impromptu street parties where neighbours shared food, which was still rationed, and listened to the wireless news broadcasts.

King George VI and the Queen appeared eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – mingled amongst the crowds! Churchill told the crowds, “This is your victory!”

Churchill attended a celebratory lunch with King George VI then addressed the nation, reminding them that although Japan still had to be defeated, Great Britain “May allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing. God Save the King!”

The End of the VE Day

At 21:00, King George VI made a final broadcast to the nation. Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights for the first time since the start of the war, and two searchlights formed a V, the sign of peace, above St Paul’s Cathedral in London.

All the illuminations were turned off the next day.

A Special Celebration

To celebrate 75 years since the original VE Day, the May Day bank Holiday has been moved for the second time in history. Although it’s usually on a Monday, this year, the May Day Bank holiday will be on Friday 8th May to coincide with the anniversary of VE Day.



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"To those who gave so much, we thank you."

The thought is that as a nation, the UK will toast their remembrance, together.

Bugler: Someone that plays the bugle – a horn-like instrument used by soldiers to send signals and orders.



Questions

1. What date is VE Day?

2. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
VE day marked the end of the Second World War.		
The British people began celebrating before the official announcement.		
General Jodl ordered Grand Admiral Donitz to surrender.		
VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day.		

3. Who were put on standby?

4. What prompted the German surrender, and why do you think this was?

5. What word has been used that means 'unplanned', and how does it relate to the sentence it is used in?

6. What three things happened at 21:00 on VE Day?

7. What time is the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II? Tick **one**.

- 2:55 p.m.
- 3:55 p.m.
- 2:00 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m.

8. What two things did Churchill do on VE Day?

9. Why were the celebrations bittersweet for some?

10. How do you think people felt on 9th May? Explain your thoughts.

Answers

1. What date is VE Day?

8th May

2. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
VE day marked the end of the Second World War.		✓
The British people began celebrating before the official announcement.	✓	
General Jodl ordered Grand Admiral Donitz to surrender.		✓
VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day.	✓	

3. Who were put on standby?

The Bell ringers in the churches were put on standby to announce the good news.

4. What prompted the German surrender, and why do you think this was?

The Germans surrendered because Hitler had died. He was the leader of the Germans and had started the Second World War. Once he had died I think they knew they would not win so they had to surrender.

5. What word has been used that means 'unplanned', and how does it relate to the sentence it is used in?

The word 'impromptu' means 'unplanned'. It relates to the sentence it has been used in because people were not expecting VE Day so the parties would have been unexpected and unplanned.

6. What three things happened at 21:00 on VE Day?

King George VI made a final broadcast to the nation, Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights and two search lights formed the sign of peace above St Paul's Cathedral in London.

7. What time is the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II? Tick **one**.

- 2:55 p.m.
- 3:55 p.m.
- 2:00 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m.**

8. What two things did Churchill do on VE Day?

On VE day, Churchill had a celebratory lunch with King George VI and talked to the nation, reminding them that the war wasn't over, but for that one day, the British people could allow themselves a "brief period of rejoicing".

9. Why were the celebrations bittersweet for some?

The celebrations would have been bittersweet for some, because their families or friends may have been killed during the war, so although they were happy to hear the fighting in Europe was over, they might also feel sad that it hadn't ended sooner so their friends or family were still alive.

10. How do you think people felt on 9th May? Explain your thoughts.

Answers will vary