

# 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.

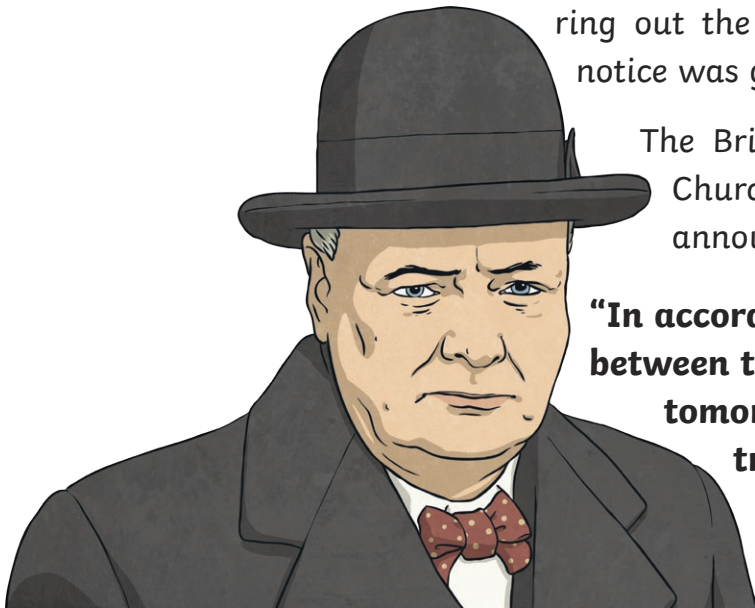


## How did it happen?

In April 1945, Hitler died. This meant that the Germans had to surrender their part in the Second World War to the Western armies. The German President of the Third Reich (the German army), 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)
- France

### 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.

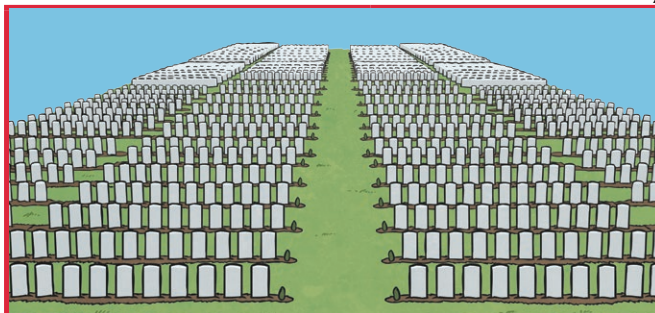
King George VI and the Queen appeared eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – walked in the huge crowds in London!

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.



Although everyone was pleased the war in Europe had come to an end, many people would have also felt sad, for the family and friends who had been killed.

# Questions

1. What did VE Day mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What had happened, for VE day to be announced?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How would people know that there was good news?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name two effects that war in Europe had had on the British people  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Winston Churchill?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did he announce that the next day, Tuesday would be a holiday?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Name one of the great powers.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why would some people have felt sad on VE Day?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What unusual thing did the princesses do on that day?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How was it shown in London that people were happy?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

1. What did VE Day mean?  
**VE Day meant Victory in Europe.**
2. What had happened, for VE day to be announced?  
**For VE Day to be announced, the Germans had surrendered their part in the Second World War.**
3. How would people know that there was good news?  
**People would know that there was good news because the church bells would be rung all around the country.**
4. Name two effects that war in Europe had had on the British people  
**Accept any two: Effects that the war in Europe had on the British people were half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of ordinary people were killed and millions of lives had been torn apart.**
5. Who was Winston Churchill?  
**Winston Churchill was the British Prime Minister.**
6. Why did he announce that the next day, Tuesday would be a holiday?  
**Churchill announced that the next day, Tuesday, would be a holiday because it was to celebrate Victory in Europe Day.**
7. Name one of the great powers.  
**Accept one of the following: The great powers were Great Britain, the Soviet Union and France.**
8. Why would some people have felt sad on VE Day?  
**Some people would have felt sad on VE Day because their friends and families might have been killed.**
9. What unusual thing did the princesses do on that day?  
**On that day, the princesses walked in the huge crowds in London.**
10. How was it shown in London that people were happy?  
**In London, it was shown that people were happy by the lights being lit at Buckingham Palace and the two huge searchlights which lit the sky above St Paul's Cathedral in a V sign for peace.**

# 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.

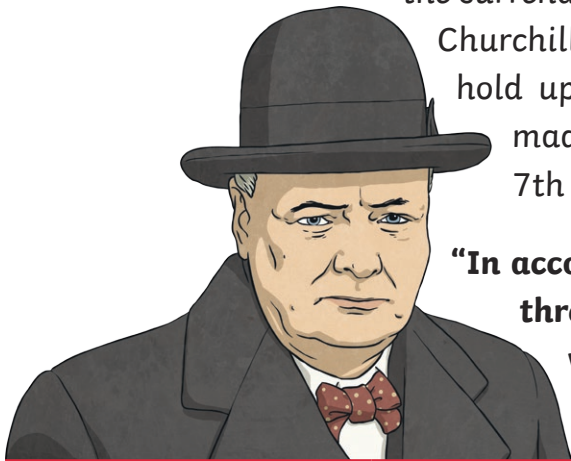
## How did it happen?

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, France and the Soviet Union, now known as Russia.

### 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

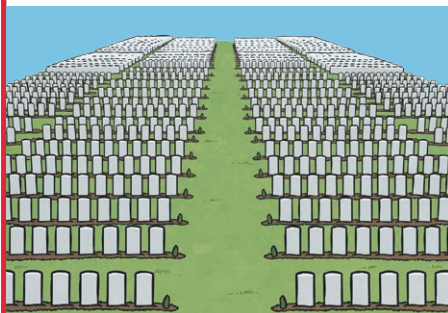
Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – walked amongst the crowds! Churchill told the crowds, “This is your victory!”

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.



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.

# Questions

1. In detail, explain what the VE Day ended.

---

---

---

2. What did General Jodl do?

---

---

---

3. What does 'the bell ringers were on standby' mean?

---

---

4. Explain, in your own words, the effects of war in Europe, on Britain.

---

---

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

---

---

---

6. What date was VE Day?

---

---

7. Name two ways people might have lost loved ones during the war in Europe.

---

---

8. Describe how people celebrated VE Day.

---

---

---

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

---

---

10. Was this the end of the war? Explain your thoughts.

---

---

11. Why do you think two searchlights were lit in the shape of a V?

---

---



# Answers

1. In detail, explain what the 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.**
2. 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.**
3. What does 'the bell ringers were on standby' mean?  
**The 'bell ringers were on standby' means the bell ringers were waiting to be told when they could all ring the church bells to let people know the good news.**
4. Explain, in your own words, the effects of war in Europe, on Britain.  
**Answers will vary.**
5. What did Stalin do, and how did this affect Britain?  
**Stalin took his time announcing the surrender, so this meant Churchill could not let Britain know officially that there was an end to the war in Europe.**
6. What date was VE Day?  
**VE Day was Tuesday, 8th May 1945.**
7. Name two ways people might have lost loved ones during the war in Europe.  
**Accept any two: fighting abroad, caught by the enemy or died in air raids attacks.**
8. Describe how people celebrated VE Day.  
**People celebrated VE day by decorating the streets with banners, bunting and ribbons, and by having street parties, and sharing food.**
9. Why do you think the author has used an exclamation mark when commenting on the princesses walking around in the crowds in London?  
**Answers will vary.**
10. Was this the end of the war? Explain your thoughts.  
**No this was not the end of the war because Japan still needed to be beaten.**
11. Why do you think two searchlights were lit in the shape of a V?  
**I think two searchlights were lit in the shape of a V as a sign of peace.**

# 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.

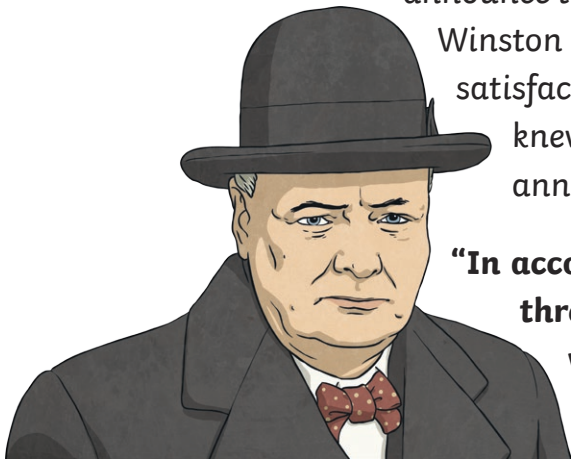
## How did it happen?

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.



### 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!”

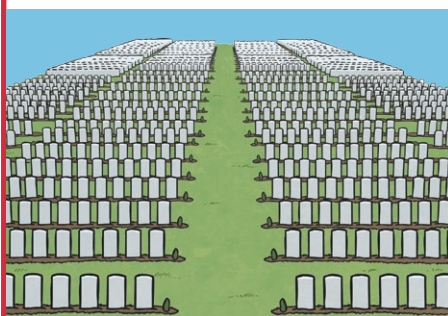
Churchill attended a celebratory lunch with King George VI then addressed the nation, reminding them that although Japan still

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.



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.

# Questions

1. Which negative words have been used to describe some of the effects of the fighting in Europe?

---

---

---

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

---

---

---

3. Explain what it means when it says the bell ringers were “put on stand-by”.

---

---

4. What were some of the lasting effects on Britain, from the war?

---

---

5. Explain how Stalin affected Churchill.

---

---

---

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

---

---

7. Explain what the paragraph in italics is about.

---

---

8. Why do you think it unusual that the princesses ‘mingled with the crowd’?

---

---

---

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

---

---

---

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

---

---

# Answers

1. Which negative words have been used to describe some of the effects of the fighting in Europe?  
**The negative words used to describe some of the effects of fighting in Europe are suffering and misery.**
2. 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, so once he had died I think they knew they would not win so they had to surrender.**
3. Explain what it means when it says the bell ringers were “put on stand-by”.  
**When it says the bell ringers were “put on stand-by”, it means they were ready and waiting to ring the bells to let everyone know the good news.**
4. What were some of the lasting effects on Britain, from the war?  
**Some of the lasting effects on Britain from the war were, half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of civilians killed and millions of lives had been disrupted.**
5. Explain how Stalin affected Churchill.  
**Stalin affected Churchill because he would not announce the surrender as he was reluctant to admit it had happened. This meant that Churchill could not announce the end of the war in Europe and celebrate VE Day.**
6. What word has been used that means ‘unplanned’, and how does it relate to the sentence it is used in?  
**The word which has been used that means ‘unplanned’ is ‘impromptu’. It relates to the sentence it has been used in because people were not expecting VE Day, so the parties would have been unplanned and unexpected.**
7. Explain what the paragraph in italics is about.  
**The paragraph in italics is explaining that some people did not feel completely happy about VE Day because their families or friends might have been killed, which meant the event was bittersweet.**
8. Why do you think it unusual that the princesses ‘mingled with the crowd’?  
**Answers will vary.**
9. 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 that for one day, the British people could allow themselves a “brief period of rejoicing”.**
10. How do you think people felt on the 9th May? Explain your thoughts.  
**Answers will vary.**