



Dunkirk resources created by Andrew Powell-Thomas

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Dunkirk was such an important moment in the timeline of the Second World War that it deserves to be marked and remembered. It was the moment that over 330,000 troops were rescued from the beaches of Northern France in a week in 1940 – an action which greatly influenced the ultimate outcome of the war.

I hope that you find these resources useful and can use them to help commemorate this occasion. There are a whole range of activities and ideas, some suited towards younger children, and others more suitable for older children. Use them as you see fit, they are free for anyone to use, so do please share them!

Andrew

Photograph acknowledgements:

1: BEF in 1939. Public Domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Army_in_France_1939_0117.jpg

2: German advance 16-21 May 1940. The History Department of the United States Military Academy. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:16May-21May_Battle_of_Belgium.PNG

3: 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles awaiting evacuation. Public Domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dunkirk_1940_HU1137.jpg

4: A 'little ship' on display at the IWM. Authors Collection.

5: French and British troops 31st May 1940. Public Domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Army_in_the_UK-Evacuation_From_Dunkirk,_May-June_1940_H1621.jpg

6: Sundowner CC 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunday_4_April,_Ramsgate,_Dunkirk_Little_ship_Sundowner.JPG

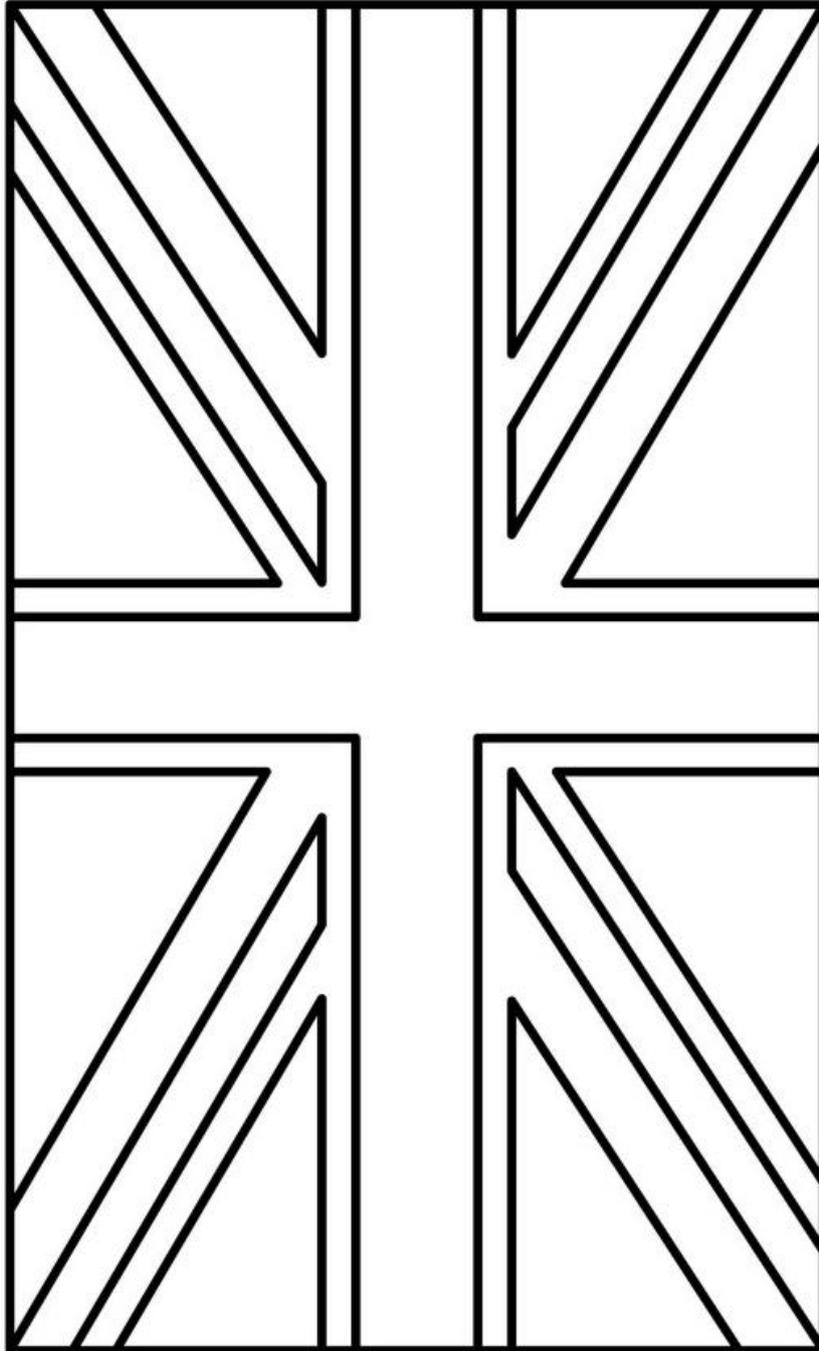


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Create your own bunting by printing out copies of this Union flag, colouring them in, and joining them together with string!



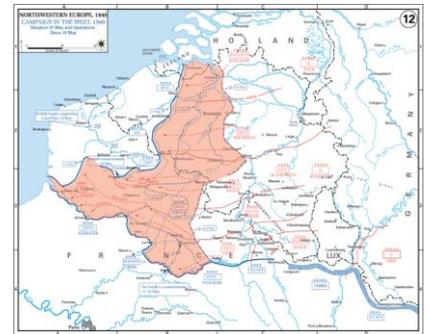


Understanding Dunkirk – reading comprehension



Britain joined the Second World War in September 1939 and immediately sent over the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) – a force of over 150,000 soldiers and over 20,000 vehicles – to prepare defensive positions on the border of Belgium and France.

In May 1940, Nazi Germany quickly overpowered the low countries of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium. Despite the best efforts of the BEF, along with French, Belgium and Dutch troops, they decided to retreat in order to regroup and fight another day.



They gradually became surrounded until there was only one port in the area they could escape from – Dunkirk. The beach at Dunkirk was very shallow, so bigger vessels couldn't come too close for fear of being grounded.



'Little ships' from right across Britain answered the call for help. Over 700 fishing trawlers, barges, yachts and even lifeboats sailed across the English Channel to assist the 200 or so bigger naval vessels with the evacuation.

Between 26 May – 4 June 1940, over 330,000 troops were brought back to Britain, turning Dunkirk from a disaster into a morale boosting success.



Understanding Dunkirk – with reading comprehension

1: What is BEF short for?

2: What countries did Nazi Germany quickly overpower in early May 1940?

3: Explain why the beach at Dunkirk made escape difficult?

4: When did this 'Miracle of Dunkirk' happen?

5: What was unusual about some of the vessels used to evacuate the troops?

6: How many men were saved as a result of this evacuation?

7: How do you think the rescued soldiers might have felt when they returned home?



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Look at this photograph of some soldiers returning from Dunkirk.



Observe – What can I see?

Wonder – What would I like to find out?

Infer – What could happen?



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The 'Sundowner' is one of the best known of the 'little ships'. Arriving in Dunkirk, she drew alongside the destroyer HMS Worcester and started to take on soldiers. Unbelievably, 75 men were crammed into the cabin and another 55 men on deck – making a total of 130!

How would you have felt if you were one of those men on board?!



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Design your own 'little ship'.

Can you design your own little ship? What will it look like? How many soldiers will you be able to get on board?



Make your own self-propelling 'little ship'.

You will need:

- Card (could be a cereal box!)
- Scissors and pencil
- Water
- Washing up liquid
- Soldiers (optional)



1. Begin by drawing a boat shape and a 'keyhole' shape – cut out carefully.
2. Then, put some washing up liquid on the circular part of the 'spoon' shape.
3. Next, place the boat in the water and quickly add some soldiers.
4. Put the spoon shape (with the washing up liquid) into the keyhole and move backwards.
5. Watch your 'little ship' move forwards all by itself!



Challenge and change.

- What is the maximum number of soldiers you can get on without it sinking?
- Does more washing up liquid make it go further or faster?
- Does paper or card work better?
- Does the size or shape of the boat make any difference?
- How does it move by itself?



Wartime recipe: Rock Cakes

With all the rationing, are you bored of eating the same food every day? Do you long for a tasty treat that will last for ages? Follow these simple instructions to find an easy yet delicious snack which you can make in no time!

You will need:

- *Scales*
- *Sieve*
- *Knife, fork and a tablespoon*
- *Bowls*
- *Baking Tray, Oven and Oven glove!*
- *8oz (200g) self-raising flour*
- *3oz (75g) butter*
- *3oz (75g) sugar*
- *2oz (50g) mixture of currants, sultanas and mixed peel*
- *1 egg*
- *3tablespoons of milk*
- *A pinch of salt*

Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 6, 400 °F (200 °C).

- 1. Begin by collecting your ingredients and washing your hands.*
- 2. Then, grease a shallow baking tray; making sure you cover the base and sides so nothing sticks.*
- 3. Next, cut the butter into small cubes, place in a large bowl and slowly sift in the flour and salt.*
- 4. Now, rub the butter, flour and salt between your fingertips until it looks like breadcrumbs.*
- 5. After that, gradually pour in the sugar and fruit.*
- 6. Carefully add the egg and briskly mix together with a fork.
(You can gently pour in the milk but make sure you keep the mixture stiff.)*
- 7. Arrange the mixture into even little balls (about the size of an egg) and place on your baking tray. You will be able to make about eight cakes.*
- 8. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. (After about 12 minutes your nose will become tickled by the delicious aroma!)*
- 9. Finally, use an oven glove to carefully remove the baking tray from the oven and enjoy.*

Although they are delicious when served warm, you can store your Rock Cakes in an airtight container for up to a month, making them the perfect snack for an unexpected air raid!



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