

# The Role of Women During the Second World War

10 Life for most women before the war was quite different  
19 than today. Typically, most women stayed at home and  
24 did not go to work.

34 When the war started in September 1939, the role of  
37 women changed rapidly.

49 With men called up for active service, there was a need for  
59 women to undertake the jobs that the men had previously  
67 done, giving them the opportunity to become patriotic  
76 heroines. During the war, women were employed in a  
83 range of positions including: munition factory workers  
91 (making weapons); working in the armed forces (army,  
102 navy and air force); working as Land Girls; driving buses or  
110 trains; working as nurses or ambulance drivers; building  
113 ships; becoming searchlight  
116 operators and becoming  
119 air raid wardens.

124 In 1943, almost 90% of  
128 single women and 80%  
132 of married women were  
134 in employment.



## Quick Questions



1. Find and copy two words related to 'working'.

\_\_\_\_\_



2. What percentage of married women were working by 1943?

\_\_\_\_\_



3. How did life change for women during the Second World War? Give two examples.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



4. Why does the author use the phrase 'patriotic heroines'?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# The Role of Women During the Second World War

10 Life for most women before the war was quite different  
19 than today. Typically, most women stayed at home and  
24 did not go to work.

34 When the war started in September 1939, the role of  
37 women changed rapidly.

49 With men called up for active service, there was a need for  
59 women to undertake the jobs that the men had previously  
67 done, giving them the opportunity to become patriotic  
76 heroines. During the war, women were employed in a  
83 range of positions including: munition factory workers  
91 (making weapons); working in the armed forces (army,  
102 navy and air force); working as Land Girls; driving buses or  
110 trains; working as nurses or ambulance drivers; building  
113 ships; becoming searchlight  
116 operators and becoming  
119 air raid wardens.

124 In 1943, almost 90% of  
128 single women and 80%  
132 of married women were  
134 in employment.



## Answers



1. Find and copy two words related to 'working'.

**Accept: 'employment', 'work', 'jobs',  
'positions' or 'employed'**



2. What percentage of married women were working by 1943?

**Accept: 80%**



3. How did life change for women during the Second World War? Give two examples.

**Accept reference to men being away  
on active service; they began to  
work rather than stay at home.**



4. Why does the author use the phrase 'patriotic heroines'?

**Accept any explanation of the fact that  
they were helping their country to win  
the war. Also accept reference to women's  
role being important and heroic.**