

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-322H-1.)

RATIONING BY THE NUMBERS

QUANTITATIVE DATA AS EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

Rationing affected the lives of all citizens on the US Home Front during World War II. The sharp increase in demand for a wide variety of raw materials and consumer goods led government officials to develop controls designed to give the military the tools it needed for fighting while limiting the impact on families at home. The sale of food, medicines, rubber, paper, and even typewriters and bicycles was restricted to varying degrees during the war. This activity challenges students to draw conclusions about the country's wartime rationing program by analyzing sources of quantitative data, and then use that information to strengthen the points made in a secondary source.

GRADE LEVEL

7-12

TIME REQUIREMENT

1 class period

MATERIALS

- + Copies of the **Source Analysis Worksheets**
- + Copies of the **"Rationing"** overview essay

OBJECTIVES

Students will analyze quantitative data presented in multiple formats and use the information to draw conclusions about the US rationing program during World War II. They will also use the data from the sources and their conclusions about their meaning to strengthen a piece of historical writing.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g. in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7

Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g. charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

ONLINE RESOURCES

ww2classroom.org

-  America Responds Video
-  Robert Gurr Oral History

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY**HISTORICAL CONTENT ERA 8, STANDARD 3B**

The student understands World War II and how the Allies prevailed.

HISTORICAL CONTENT ERA 8, STANDARD 3C

The student understands the effects of World War II at home.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 2

The student comprehends a variety of historical sources, therefore the student is able to utilize visual and mathematical data presented in graphs, including charts, tables, pie and bar graphs, flow charts, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 4

The student is able to support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

PROCEDURES

1. Begin by briefly reviewing the US system of rationing during World War II, using the **“Rationing”** overview essay as needed. Have students take a moment to write down a list of the kinds of information they would need to research if they were going to write an essay on this topic. What kinds of questions would the essay need to answer? Offer a few examples to get the students started, ideas including the kinds of products that were rationed, the effects of rationing on the average American family, etc. Ask students to share some of their answers, and challenge them to think of sources that might offer the kinds of information they feel they would need to tell this story properly.
2. Explain that students will now have the opportunity to use quantitative data to learn more about rationing in the United States during World War II. If necessary, review the difference between quantitative data and qualitative data.

Quantitative data is information that can be measured and expressed in numbers (e.g. the number of tanks produced in the United States during the war or the maximum speeds of different kinds of aircraft).

Qualitative data is information that cannot be expressed in numbers or percentages (e.g. the rank of a soldier or the hometown of a civilian munitions factory worker).

3. Students may complete this activity individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. Depending on the abilities of your students, you may want to analyze one source as a class and then direct the students to tackle the other sources on their own.
4. Distribute copies of the **Source Analysis Worksheets**, and (optionally) the **“Rationing”** overview essay for reference purposes. Each worksheet includes a set of quantitative data relating to rationing in the United States during World War II, plus questions to guide the students’ analysis. Review the instructions with the students and direct them to begin analyzing the sources you have assigned them.

5. If you have provided students with copies of the **“Rationing”** overview essay, you may also choose to instruct students to extend their analysis by locating a place in the essay where adding data from their source(s) would strengthen the points it makes about the US rationing program.

ASSESSMENT

You will be able to evaluate each student’s ability to interpret visually presented quantitative data and draw conclusions from it based on their responses on the **Source Analysis Worksheets**. You will also be able to measure their ability to find connections between this data and a related secondary source based on how well they integrate information from their source into the **“Rationing”** overview essay.

EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT

1. Have students visit **ww2online.org** and search for oral histories that discuss rationing, noting instances where the subject’s recollections confirm or differ from the information from the sources in this activity.
2. Have students make a list of the items that might be rationed or otherwise restricted in the event of a modern-day war or emergency situation.

NAME:

DATE:

SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET 1

Directions: Use the quantitative data in the source below to answer the questions that follow.

SELECTED RATION POINT VALUES FOR FRUITS AS OF FEBRUARY 1943

KIND OF FRUIT	RATION POINTS PER 19-22 OZ CAN	RATION POINTS PER POUND
CANNED OR BOTTLED		
Apples	10	8
Apricots	16	13
Cherries	14	11
Grapefruit	10	8
Peaches	14	11
Pineapple	16	13
FROZEN		
Cherries	16	13
Peaches	16	13
Strawberries	16	13
Other berries	16	13
DRIED/DEHYDRATED FRUITS		
Prunes	25	20
Raisins	25	20
All other fruits	10	8

Source: Office of Price Administration

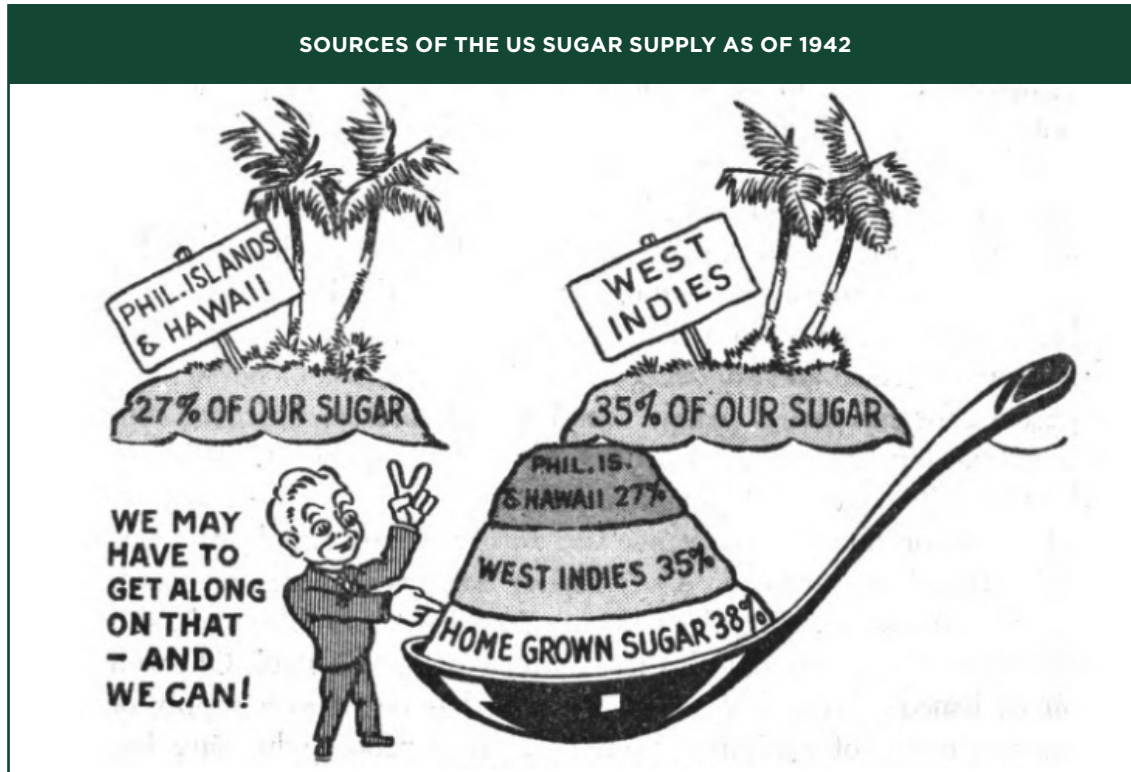
1. What kind of information does this table provide?
2. Who published this information, and who was likely their intended audience?
3. Notice the differences between point values for the various fruits. What factors do you think might have caused these differences?
4. What are two conclusions you can draw about rationing in the United States based on the information in this table?

NAME:

DATE:

SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET 2

Directions: Use the quantitative data in the source below to answer the questions that follow.

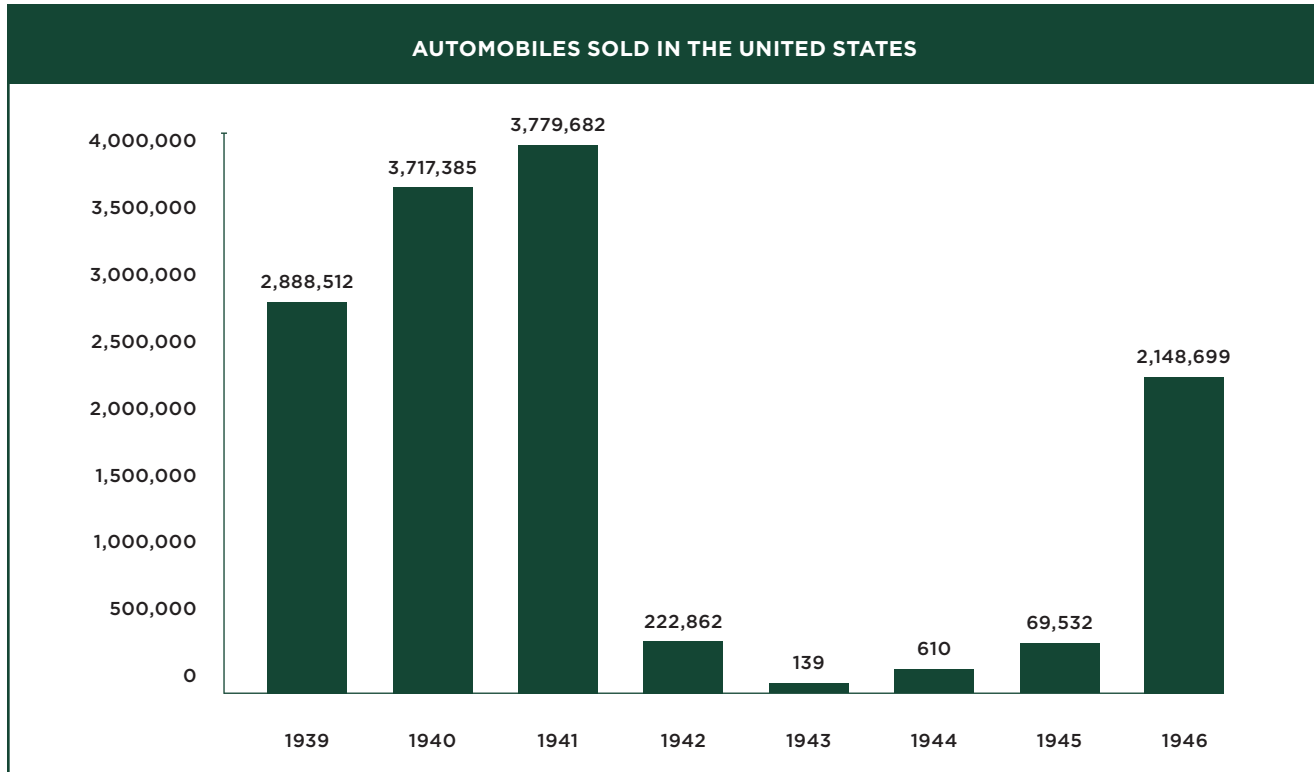


Source: Office of Price Administration

1. What kind of information does this graphic provide?
2. Who published this information, and who was likely their intended audience?
3. What message do you think the creators of this graphic wanted to convey to their readers?
4. What are two conclusions you can draw about rationing in the United States based on the information in this graphic?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET 3**Directions:** Use the quantitative data in the source below to answer the questions that follow.**Source:** *Historical Statistics of the United States (1960)*

1. What kind of information does this table provide?
2. Who published this information, and who was likely their intended audience?
3. Based on what you know about rationing in the United States, how do you explain the dramatic shifts in the number of automobiles sold in the United States during the war?
4. What are two conclusions you can draw about rationing in the United States based on the information in this table?