


## Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

### Topic 3 Content: Economic Resources During World War II Notes

#### Introduction

#### Economic Resources during World War II

Introduction



The message in America was one of unity. Every citizen needed to help the war effort. Propaganda posters told Americans that "Together We Can Do It!" In order to supply the troops fighting in the war, Americans at home needed to help produce resources, retool manufacturing plants to build war supplies, allocate resources, ration resources, and buy war bonds. In this interactivity, click each of the media panels to learn about the changes to the American economy during World War II.

- Production of Resources
- Retooling
- Allocation of Resources
- Rationing
- War Bonds

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#### Production of Resources

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**Production of Resources**



Wars require large amounts of resources to create materials needed to successfully fight. For example, soldiers need uniforms, food, weapons, ammunition, and transportation in order to be effective fighters. President Roosevelt directed the United States government to work with American industries and produce all the needed materials, not only for their own military, but also to help support the militaries of Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

**Retooling**

**Allocation of Resources**

**Rationing**

**War Bonds**

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#### Retooling

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Production of Resources

Retooling

#### Retooling



Once war broke out, businesses began retooling from peacetime to wartime production. For example, car manufacturers switched their factories from making cars to making tanks or jeeps. The change from peacetime to wartime production was significant and occurred quickly. Car production nearly came to a complete stop during World War II. Washing machines and refrigerators were not produced at all during the war. All efforts were put into production of war materials, which led to a huge demand for laborers.

Allocation of Resources

Rationing

War Bonds

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#### Allocation of Resources


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Production of Resources

Retooling

**Allocation of Resources**

Allocation of Resources



Rationing

War Bonds

In a traditional free market economy, prices help regulate supply and demand; however, during a war, the needs of the military dictate how supplies are divided among various industries. In January of 1942, President Roosevelt established the War Production Board to help oversee the allocation of resources between the military and the civilian population. Finding the right balance between the resources devoted to war and distributed to civilians was no easy task.

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#### Rationing

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Production of Resources


Retrofitting

Allocation of Resources

**Rationing**

War Bonds

#### Rationing



All citizens contributed to the war effort through rationing. Rationing, or the limited distribution of goods, was used to maintain supplies of materials essential to the war effort. Specifically, Americans were required to use ration books to purchase limited quantities of essential products like meat, sugar, butter, silk or nylon stockings, and shoes. In most cases, people were limited to three gallons of gasoline per week.

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#### War Bonds

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#### War Bonds



Americans were also encouraged by the government to buy war bonds, which helped pay for the war. The government wanted people to put at least ten percent of their earnings into war bonds, and had special programs to encourage citizens. The government also changed the tax structure by increasing the number of people who had to pay an income tax. These additional taxes, helped finance the war.

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