

Rationing and Recycling

1. Develop a list of some of the major items that civilians in the United States rationed, recycled or just went without during World War II.

2. How were these items used in the war effort?

3. How did the Depression help prepare many Americans for doing without the “luxury” items? After the war, recycling was discontinued. It began again, slowly, after the 1960s on a volunteer basis. Why do you think Americans didn’t continue to recycle items after the war?

4. How do you explain the contradiction between Americans whose act of rationing and recycling made them feel they were part of the war effort and the emergence of a black market for goods during the war?

5. How did rationing and recycling contribute to a sense of community? Do you think Americans today would ration to contribute to a war effort? Explain your answer.