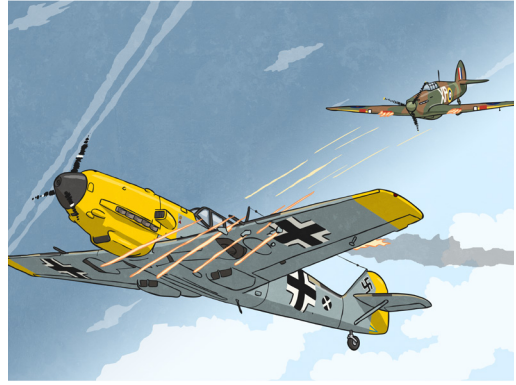


Battling for the Skies: Key Facts

The Beginning

The Battle of Britain took place during the Second World War and is an important and significant part of British history. After Germany had invaded much of Europe, Hitler (Germany's leader) turned his attention to Great Britain. Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe, was very powerful at this point. Moreover, it is thought that they had up to four times as many planes as the Royal Air



Force (RAF) at the start of the battle. In July 1940, Hitler ordered German aircraft to begin bombing British airfields, harbours and factories. The bombing continued for many months and many pilots, soldiers and civilians were killed as a result. However, due to the heroic efforts of the Royal Air Force, Germany was not successful in its attempt to invade Great Britain.

As the battle continued, Hitler grew increasingly frustrated at how long it was taking the Luftwaffe to defeat Great Britain. Therefore, in September, he commanded German planes to bomb British towns and cities instead. Although many cities in Britain were attacked, London was most heavily bombed in a period of history now referred to as the Blitz. Thousands of people lost their homes and their lives during the Blitz.



Did You Know...?

The code name for Hitler's planned invasion of Britain was Operation Sea Lion. His plan was to destroy Great Britain from the air and then invade it by sea.

The Final Days

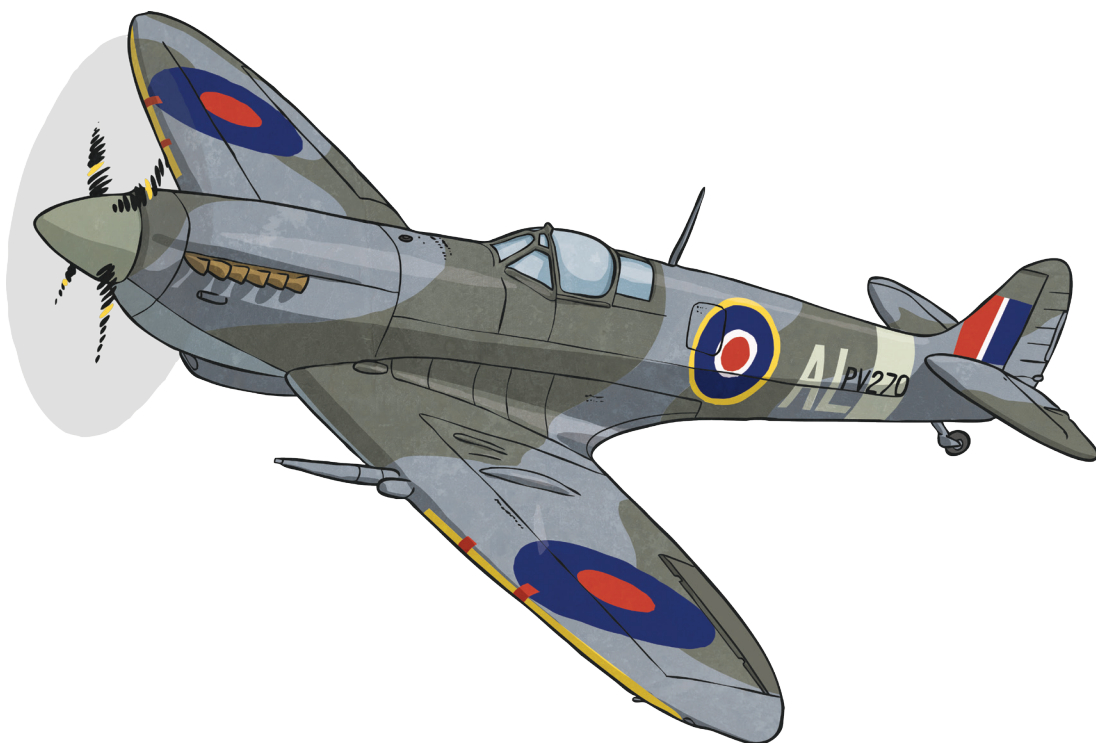
The bombardment of cities and the Blitz continued for many more months until 15th September, which is officially regarded as the end of the Battle of Britain. This is because it was on this day that the RAF finally took advantage over the Luftwaffe and gained control of the skies. Germany no longer believed that victory would be theirs. This date is commemorated every year as a result. The bombing finally stopped in May 1941 when Hitler decided to use the Luftwaffe to attack Russia in the East instead.

The Royal Air Force

The British Armed Forces consists of the Royal Navy, the British Army and The Royal Air Force (RAF for short). It was formed on 1st April 1918 towards the end of the First World War and is often referred to as the 'junior' service as it is the youngest of the three services.

Plane Facts

The two most popular British planes flown during the Battle of Britain were the Supermarine Spitfire Mark 1 (famously known as the Spitfire) and the Hawker Hurricane. During the Battle of Britain, both sides lost considerable numbers of aircraft and pilots. It is estimated that around 1800 German planes were shot down whereas just 1000 British planes are believed to have been lost.



Questions

1. What was the Luftwaffe? Tick **one**.

- ☐ the British air force
- ☐ the name of a German plane
- ☐ the German air force

2. Find and copy a word that means the same as **commanded**.

3. Which of the following is not a service within the British Armed Forces? Tick **one**.

- ☐ The Marines
- ☐ The British Army
- ☐ The RAF

4. What was the code name of Hitler's planned invasion of Great Britain?

5. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ The Blitz begins.
- ① The RAF is formed.
- ☐ The Luftwaffe begin to bomb Russia.
- ☐ The Battle of Britain begins.
- ☐ The RAF take control of the skies.

6. How many **British** planes were destroyed during the Battle of Britain? Tick **one**.

- ☐ 1800
- ☐ 100
- ☐ 1000

7. Why is 15th September commemorated every year? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

8. It is believed that Hitler's decision to begin bombing cities instead of airfields and factories was a mistake. Do you agree? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Answers

1. What was the Luftwaffe? Tick **one**.
 - ☐ the British air force
 - ☐ the name of a German plane
 - ☒ the German air force
2. Find and copy a word that means the same as **commanded**.
ordered
3. Which of the following is not a service within the British Armed Forces? Tick **one**.
 - ☒ **The Marines**
 - ☐ The British Army
 - ☐ The RAF
4. What was the code name of Hitler's planned invasion of Great Britain?
Operation Sea Lion
5. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.
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 - ④ The RAF take control of the skies.
6. How many **British** planes were destroyed during the Battle of Britain? Tick **one**.
 - ☐ 1800
 - ☐ 100
 - ☒ **1000**
7. Why is 15th September commemorated every year? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: The 15th September is commemorated every year because it is the day that the RAF took control of the skies and Germany no longer believed that they would defeat them. It is regarded as the end of the Battle of Britain.

8. It is believed that Hitler's decision to begin bombing cities instead of airfields and factories was a mistake. Do you agree? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I agree because when Hitler stopped bombing the airfields and factories, more British planes and weapons could be made which could then be used against the Germans.

or

I do not agree because when Hitler started to bomb cities, thousands of people were killed or lost their homes and people are more important than planes and machines.