

Pushing through the crowds on the platform, small suitcase and sandwiches in our hands, labels tied to our clothes, we boarded the train. Mum thrust a postcard into my hand.

“Write as soon as you arrive. Let me know where you are.” she said, tears appearing in the corner of her eyes. “Remember our code – one kiss after your message means it’s terrible, two it’s alright and three, well it’s almost as good as home!”

We hugged, before Rose and I found a seat, near a window so that we could wave. Our journey, as ‘vackies’, to safety was beginning.



1. What is a ‘vackie’? why do you think this?
2. What words, or phrases, could describe how the children feel?
3. Why do you think that the postcard is given to the children just before they climb onto the train?
4. Why do you think their mum used a ‘code’ to describe their new ‘home’?
5. If you were one of the children, what is the last thing that you would say to your mum before the train left?
6. Imagine that you have arrived at your destination. What might you write on the postcard?

A Starter for 10

Be a detective.



- Why were children evacuated from England during World War II?
How many children were evacuated? Where were they sent to?
Write a postcard as if you were an evacuee? Will you be honest about your new home and life?
Who invented steam trains? Where was this?
What are the fastest trains around the world? How fast do they travel?
What was the ‘kindertransport’? When was it used? What are your opinions of it?