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Buzzwords

New inventions, habits, lifestyles, and occupations cause people to invent new words. The first decade of the new century was no exception. Listed below are some of the words and phrases that came into popular use throughout the decade.

Airspeed This is the speed of an aircraft determined by its relationship with the air instead of the ground.

Bonehead This expression meant a stupid or ignorant person, someone who has only bone and no brains in his or her head

Borderline This word for boundary or dividing line can also mean a person or thing on the edge.

Boy Scout This name is used for a young individual belonging to a group begun by Robert Baden-Powell, the purpose of which was to teach self-reliance, good citizenship, and outdoor skills.

Buffer Zone This refers to an independent and neutral place, person, or circumstance located between two antagonistic places, people, or circumstances.

Garage This is a shelter or storage facility for an automobile.

Grandfather Clause The Constitutions of some southern states contained a provision intended to prevent blacks from voting. It read “No person shall vote in this state if he is unable to read and write, unless his father or grandfather was a voter before 1867.”

Recessive This word means anything that tends to go backward, or recede.

Right Wing This usually refers to extremely conservative political views.

Rip Cord This is a rope fastened to the gas bag of a balloon or dirigible so that pulling it will open the bag, release the gas, and cause descent. It is also a rope used for opening a parachute during descent.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever This acute, infectious disease is caused by *Rickettsia* (a microorganism) from ticks found in the area around the Rocky Mountains; it causes pain, fever, and spotty red skin blemishes.

Scrimmage Line This is an imaginary line in football on which the ball sits at the beginning of each play and along which players on both teams line up.

Septic Tank This refers to a tank in which waste matter decomposes through the action of bacteria.

Turtleneck This is a high collar that folds over and fits snugly around the neck.

Wireless This is a telegraph system that sends sound signals by radio waves.

World Power This refers to any nation or organization with enough power to have influence around the world.

World War This term means war among several countries of the world.

Worthwhile This refers to anything valuable or important enough to repay the time, effort, or money spent in obtaining it.

Life on the Home Front

During World War II women faced new challenges. As more and more men were drafted, women were pressed into working outside the home. Some volunteered for duty in the armed services (see page 235). Even those who stayed at home were asked to make sacrifices for their country.

While women on the home front did not face the imminent dangers of war, they were faced with a number of obstacles. For one thing they had few household appliances. Clothes had to be washed by hand or with a hand-cranked machine. Meals were prepared from scratch as there were few convenience foods. Food preparation became even more difficult as popular foods were rationed. Women were encouraged to attend special classes that taught them how to use little-known foods (such as eggplant) in different dishes. Families were encouraged to grow “victory gardens”; more than 75% of American housewives preserved and canned the resulting produce.



As more and more men were drafted, women had to take on even more responsibilities. Twenty-five percent joined volunteer organizations. Some worked as aircraft spotters looking for enemy planes, while others learned to drive ambulances. Three million women joined the Red Cross where they organized blood banks, rolled bandages, and packed kits for soldiers. United Service Organizations (USOs) were established in 1941 on various U.S. military bases to support soldiers. Women served as hostesses and dance partners. Women, especially celebrities, helped sell war bonds.

As manufacturers faced a shortage of male workers, they, too, began recruiting women. Because Americans believed that a woman’s place was at home, companies had to convince women that they were needed and capable of building ships, planes, and tanks. Patriotic ads appeared in magazines with Rosie the Riveter as the symbol of working women. In time, women worked alongside men and in many cases took over welding, riveting, and machinists’ positions. These experiences helped women become more self-confident and provided the potential for futures very different from the ones they had faced only two or three years earlier.

Suggested Activities

African Americans Black American women wanted to serve their country, too, but it took a presidential order to fight discrimination. What was Executive Order 8802, and how did it come about?

Problems Women in the work force faced a number of problems: negative attitudes of male coworkers, lack of acceptance by unions, proper clothing for work. Assign students to research each of these problems. Discuss how each was resolved.