

# SURVIVING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION: WAR AND ITS LEGACIES

An exhibition presented by the  
National Archives of Singapore  
at Former Ford Factory

## Challenge Worksheet

(FOR STUDENTS AGED 13 – 16 YEARS OLD)

This challenge worksheet will help you explore the 'Surviving the Japanese Occupation: War and its Legacies' exhibition.

Singapore fell to the Japanese Army when Lieutenant-General Percival signed the surrender of the Allied forces on 15 February 1942, in this building. This marked the start of the Japanese Occupation until 12 September 1945.

In this gallery, you will learn about:

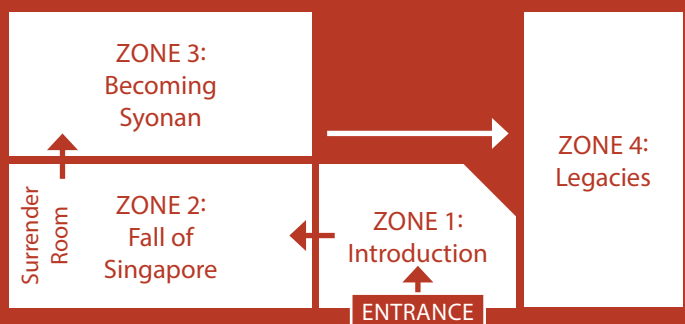
- the Japanese Occupation
- the impact of war and occupation on the people in Singapore



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This worksheet will help you explore the various exhibition zones. However it is not compulsory to follow the sequence of questions within each zone. The class can spread out amongst the various exhibits and displays.

Please use the map on the right to navigate through the exhibition.



On the afternoon of 15 February 1942, Lieutenant-General Percival and three of his officers left the Battlebox at Fort Canning to meet Lieutenant-General Yamashita at the Ford Factory in Bukit Timah. The meeting was to discuss the surrender of Allied forces to the Japanese Army. The Ford Factory was, at that time, being used as the headquarters of the Japanese 25th Army.

## ZONE 1

# FORMER FORD FACTORY: An Introduction

## 3D Exhibit of Bukit Timah

Look at the model of the Bukit Timah area.



Q1

Find the location of Former Ford Factory. Why do you think the factory was located here?

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TIP

PULL OUT THE PANELS ON THE SIDE OF THE DISPLAY TO EXPLORE MORE.

[LEFT] The Ford Factory in the 1950s. Vehicles were assembled here for distribution in Singapore and regionally.

## Singapore Before the War

Q2

The British considered Singapore a 'jewel' in the British Empire. Why was Singapore so important to the British?

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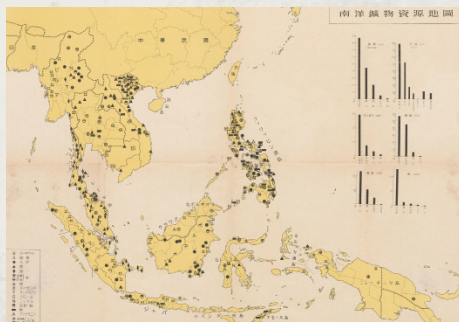
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## ZONE 2

# FALL OF SINGAPORE

In this zone, you will see three different perspectives of the war: the Japanese, British and Civilian.

## The Japanese Empire in Asia



[ABOVE] Map of mineral resources in Southeast Asia, 1941

Q3

What triggered the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia in 1941?

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Q4

Looking at the display on mineral resources in Southeast Asia, identify some of the raw materials desired by Japan in 1941.

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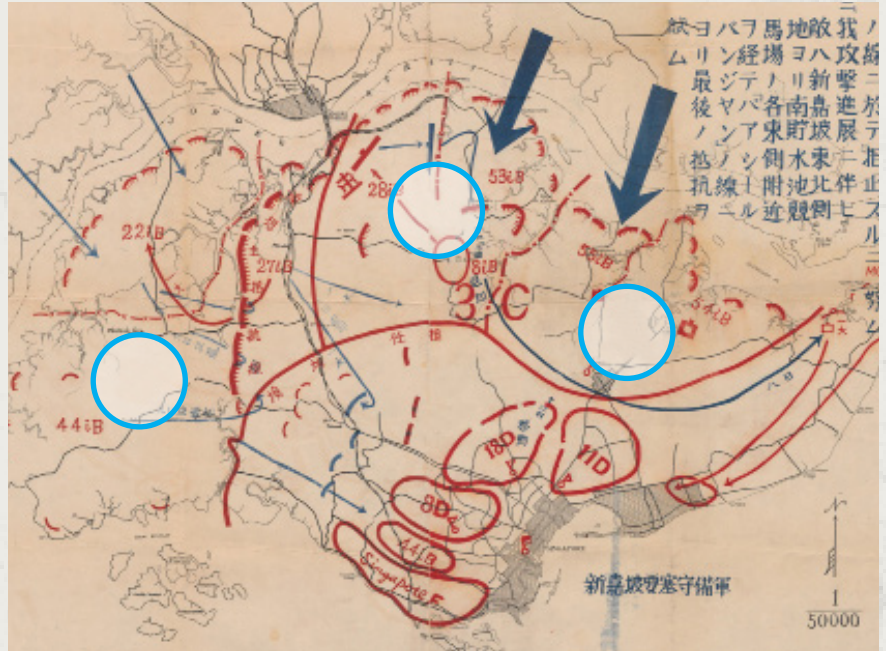
# FALL OF SINGAPORE

## The Japanese Attack

The Allied divisions were forced to withdraw from the northern coastline to the city perimeter after just seven days of fighting from 8 to 15 February 1942.

Q5

Can you locate the original positions of the 8th, 11th and 18th Divisions on 8 February 1942?



[RIGHT] 'Invasion Map of Singapore Island', 1942

## Documentary Video

The video highlights oral history accounts from civilians who experienced the horrors of war.

Q6

How is life today different from wartime Singapore (1941-45)? Do you think we are better prepared to defend ourselves?

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## Britain's 'Impregnable Fortress'

In the 1920s and 1930s, the British built up the island's defences and were confident that it would be difficult for the Japanese to capture Singapore.

Q7

Based on the Illustrated London News and Eastern Graphic sources, why were the British so confident that Singapore was well-defended?

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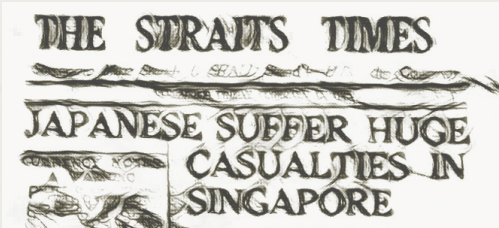
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# FALL OF SINGAPORE

## Civilians Caught Up in War

The main source of updates on the war were the newspapers and the radio. Look at the Singapore newspapers shown in the display.



Q8

How did the headlines given in the newspapers differ from the actual situation?

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**Reflection question:**  
 What do you think could have been the consequences of this misrepresentation?

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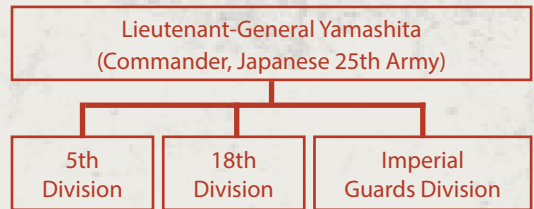


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The Japanese 25th Army was made up of three divisions: 5th, 18th and Imperial Guards Divisions.



Q9

What evidence on the map of Battle for Singapore, 5 February 1942 shows that the British overestimated the enemy threat?

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## Surrender Room

Look at the storyboard on the wall as you enter the Surrender Room.

During the war, many Japanese artists were assigned to military units to record the war in paintings. This painting was done by Saburo Miyamoto. He based his paintings on films and photographs of the surrender negotiations.



Q10

What are the differences between the painting and the photograph?

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Q11

How do the differences reflect the intent of the artist?

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[LEFT] Painting by Saburo Miyamoto, entitled "The Meeting of General Yamashita and General Percival" 1942

# BECOMING SYONAN

## Sook Ching Operation

Shortly after the Japanese forces took over Singapore, they took action to identify people suspected to be anti-Japanese. Thousands of Chinese were arbitrarily rounded up and killed in what is referred to as the Sook Ching (or “purging through cleansing”) Operation.

Watch the video presentation on the truck and answer the following questions:

Q12

What criteria did the Japanese use for identifying anti-Japanese elements?

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Q13

How do you think Sook Ching affected the people’s perception of Japanese rule?

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## Life as a Prisoner-of-War



[ABOVE] Four men in their prison cell at Changi Prison during the Japanese Occupation.

The Allied soldiers captured by the Japanese were made to live in extremely cramped conditions in Changi Prison.

The white outline on the floor represents the layout of a jail cell meant for a single person. During the Japanese Occupation, three or four men were squeezed into a single cell.

Q14

How did the POWs keep their spirits up, despite the adverse conditions?

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## The Struggle to Survive

Life was extremely hard during the Japanese Occupation. The number of recorded deaths in Singapore during this period rose significantly.

Q15

What was the second-highest cause of death in Singapore as recorded by the Japanese Administration?

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Q16

Why do you think this was the case?

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# BECOMING SYONAN

## Endau and Bahau

During the Japanese Occupation, 300,000 people were relocated to settlements in southern Malaya. Eurasians were transferred to Bahau and the Chinese to Endau. In addition, the Malays and Indians were sent to the Riau Islands. They became farmers and had to grow their own food. The work was laborious and many suffered and died from diseases such as malaria.

Q17

Of the four settlements, only Endau was successful. One of the reasons for its success was its location on a river delta. Suggest other reasons why it was successful.

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## Armed Resistance

Despite the difficulties faced during the Japanese Occupation, some chose to fight against the Japanese. The three main groups were the Indian National Army, Force 136 and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army.

Q18

What were the objectives of the INA, Force 136 and the MPAJA?

INA:	FORCE 136:	MPAJA:

## 1945: War Again?

Did you know? Singapore was attacked by Americans during World War II. Watch the video to find out more.

Q19

How and why did the Americans attack Singapore?

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## A New Beginning

War came to an unexpected end while the British were still planning a major military campaign to take back Singapore in September 1945.

In August 1945, Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing Japan to surrender.

With the end of war, many expected peace and better living conditions to follow.

Head to the next section in "Legacies" and see if this indeed took place.

# LEGACIES

## War Crimes Trials in Singapore

After the end of the war, the British set up war crimes tribunals in order to prosecute those who had committed atrocities during the war. Only two out of seven Japanese soldiers tried for the Sook Ching Massacre were sentenced to death.

Q20

How many war crimes trials were conducted at the end of the Japanese Occupation?

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Q21

Based on what you have learnt about life under the Japanese Occupation, answer the following question:

How was British treatment of the Japanese soldiers who were charged with war crimes, different from Japanese treatment of civilians and POWs during the occupation?

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## Rebuilding the Colony

The British sought to rebuild the colony upon their return, but there were serious social, economic and political problems to be addressed.

Q22

Give two examples each of the social, economic and political problems in post-war colonial Singapore.

SOCIAL:

ECONOMIC:

POLITICAL:

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## Rendel Constitutional Commission

After the war, there was a growing desire for self-government and even independence. Nationalism was sweeping across Asia. Many countries, such as India and Indonesia, were gaining independence. In Singapore, steps were also taken to enact political reforms.

Q23

List any two important political changes that resulted directly from the Rendel Constitutional Commission.

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## Post-Visit Activity:

Watch the video in the Remembering the War and Occupation section, and look out for the quotation from Mr George Yeo. Your teacher will discuss this with you in class later.

## CONCLUSION:

The surrender in 1942 brought great suffering for people living in Singapore as well as our defenders. However, we have worked hard and created a strong defence force, and taken several steps to ensure that we will never meet this fate again.