

The Occupation Board Game

Many of you will have seen the news item about the Occupation board game recently found in Jersey [<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/29/occupation-boardgame-found-in-jersey-attic-pokes-fun-at-nazis>]. An image of that board game can be found on the next page below.

Two copies of this board game are already on display in Jersey museums, so this is not really a new discovery.

Those who know their Occupation history will observe that this board game represents a rather tame or sanitised version of the Occupation. Why is this? You might want to discuss this with your class. What is missing? Why, for example, is there no reference to Jews, to political prisoners, to deportations or forced labourers?

It seems likely that the real reason for this is that it was produced in the early years of the Occupation before things got really hard, and when losing your ration book was about as bad as it got.

In this exercise, ask your students to create a new board game based on the entire Occupation, reflecting the realities and the darkness of the Occupation years. You might want just to change the information on the squares, or you might want to introduce 'Chance' cards (as you find in Monopoly) in the centre, with things written on them like 'You have been deported from the Island. Hard luck, you're out of the game!' or 'As a Jewish member of the community you must sell your business. Go back to the start' or 'The Germans search your house and do not find your radio. Go forward two squares'. Think about what would make appropriate and inappropriate / insensitive cards to draw.

Your students might want to model their board game on Snakes and Ladders rather than Monopoly. They might want a different design altogether.

Why not make this a Young Enterprise project and sell your finished version? But beware copyright restrictions on games like Monopoly – if you really want to make a commercial copy, do not plagiarise – at least, not too closely!

