The Battle of Britain.

❶ Speech given in the House of Lords by Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 5 September 1940.

Exactly four weeks ago the enemy launched the first of a series of massed attacks which have continued without any serious intermission ever since. Every part of our air defence system has been called upon to play its part and every part has done what was expected and required of it. The greatest burden of the battle, of course, has fallen upon the Fighter Force, which almost hourly since the battle began has been called upon to intercept and engage wave after wave of enemy aircraft. [...] The achievements of this force in the face of an enemy greatly superior to it in numbers have surpassed all our expectations. In the space of these last four short weeks more than 1,200 enemy aeroplanes have been destroyed for certain and many hundreds more have been severely damaged. [...] But, my Lords, while we may on this ground feel confidence, let us make no mistake. The battle is very far from being over and there are indeed signs that it may shortly be intensified. [...] Production both here and in the United States has continued to increase. As we stand at a critical stage of this air battle we can see every reason for confidence but none for complacency. The Royal Air Force we believe will answer every call made upon it, but let us not forget that the whole effort of our people is required to back it up. [...] Our own work on the Home Front, whether here or in the factory or in the countryside, which may often seem tedious and pedestrian in comparison with that of the Royal Air Force or of the other armed Forces, is in effect directly related to it and perhaps in its way just as vital.

❷ WAAF operators plotting incoming enemy aircraft on a map at RAF operations room.



➪ Using the documents and your knowledge, explain the situation of the UK in the summer of 1940 and how the Battle of Britain was won.