

Lesson 8: Victorians

What were Victorian schools like?



Main Input

Who Went to School?

At the beginning of the Victorian period, only richer children could afford an education. Poor children went to work instead and often never learned to read or write.

In the middle of the Victorian period, the government began to bring in laws to help more children get an education. Schools for poorer children were set up, called 'Ragged Schools' because often the pupils turned up wearing rags. Children went to these schools.

Main Activity

Time for School!

Imagine you are part of a Victorian school. Today you are going to try out three different Victorian lesson activities:

- Drill
- Nature drawing
- Handwriting

Matching Resources: 8a, 8b and 8c

Resource 8a (Page 1 of 2)

Victorian School: Drill Exercises

Instructions for the teacher:

1. Line up pupils in separate rows of boys and girls.
2. Take a register (surname first).
3. Start the session with either by reciting a prayer or singing the National Anthem the words together or singing the Anthem the words on the next page!
4. Start the drill by marching on the spot and then selecting a range of the following exercises:
 - Stand tall with shoulders back and arms straight by the sides. Breathe the head to the right, left, up, down then face the front again. Repeat 3 times.
 - Hands up straight towards the sky. Hands on shoulders. Hands by side. March on shoulders. Repeat 3 times.
 - Lift the legs, keeping it straight with the feet pointing out to the side. Return to standing position and repeat 3 times.
 - With left leg forward exercise 3 times.
 - Hands on hips and bend forward keeping the back straight. Return slowly to standing position. Repeat 3 times.
5. Finish the lesson by undertaking a finger-roll inspection. In Victorian times, teachers could punish a child with dirty finger-rolls. In children with dirty fingers - in children who may suggest your case you may suggest that those caught out wash their hands!

Resource 8b (Page 2 of 2)

Victorian School: Drill

Words for prayers and songs

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen

National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen!
Long live our noble Queen!
God save the Queen!
God save the Queen!
Victoria, Victoria,
Victoria.

Resource 8c (Letters to copy)

Copy the letters in the space next to each one.

a b c d
e f g
h i j
k l m n
o p q
r s t
u v w
x y z

Resource 8d

Victorian school: Nature drawing

Pupils in Victorian schools had a lot of drawing lessons. When the teacher would bring in natural objects like flowers or leaves and the pupils would sit at their desks and draw them carefully, paying attention to details.

Have a close look at the object your teacher has brought in. Use your state what you see. Draw them carefully, paying attention to details.



What were Victorian schools like?

Objectives

- To find out how rules about who could go to school changed over the Victorian period
- To compare Victorian schools with modern day schooling



Your School Day

Think about these aspects of your experience of school.
On your whiteboard, list them in order of most enjoyable to least enjoyable aspects of school.



A Victorian School Day

Now have a look at these aspects of a school day for Victorian children. On your whiteboard, list them in order of what you imagine would be most enjoyable to least enjoyable.



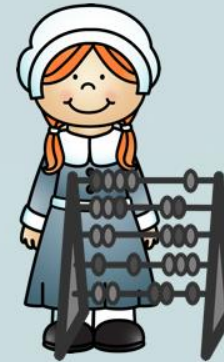
Writing
(chalk & slate)



Learning to wash clothes
(just for girls, while boys did woodwork or drawing)



Nature drawing



Arithmetic
(counting and reciting times tables)



Drill (strict exercises standing in rows)



Learning poems and prayers (off by heart and word perfect)



Who Went to School?

At the beginning of the Victorian period, only **richer children** could afford an education. **Poor children went to work instead** and often never learned to read or write.

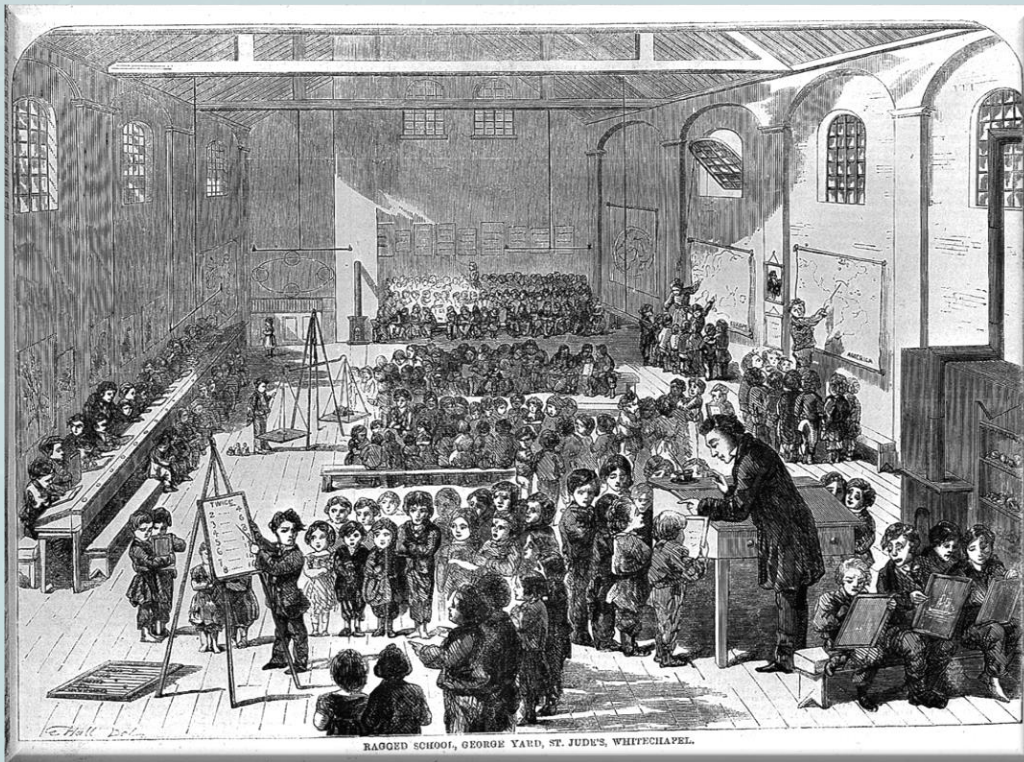


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In the middle of the Victorian period, the **government began to bring in laws to help more children get an education**. Schools for poorer children were set up, called 'Ragged Schools' because often the pupils turned up wearing rags. Children went to these schools part time so that they could still work and earn money as well.

Later in the Victorian period, in 1880, a law was passed that meant that **all children would go to school until they were at least 10 years old**.



What did children learn about?

- **The main focus was the "3Rs":** reading, writing and arithmetic.
- Children had to **learn a lot of information off by heart**, including times tables, poetry, prayers and historical facts. There was also handwriting practice, lots of grammar exercises and singing.
- Sometimes **girls and boys had separate lessons**. Girls learned about washing clothes, cooking and sewing while boys had lessons in woodwork or technical drawing.
- **Religious education was also very important**. Children would start the day with prayers and they would learn to read the Bible.
- Children had **a kind of PE called 'drill'** where they would march or perform exercises in rows. Sometimes boys had boxing lessons, too.



**Think about how Victorian lessons compare to your own school curriculum.
What is...**

similar?

surprising?

different?

unappealing?



What was it like in the classroom?

- There were lots of children in each class – sometimes **60 or 70 pupils squashed into one room**. Can you imagine that many children fitting into your classroom?
- The **teachers were very strict** and made sure that everybody followed the rules. There were punishments for many things, including speaking out of turn, not learning information properly or being late for school.
- Punishments included **hitting children with a long stick called a cane**, embarrassing children by making them **sit in the corner and wear a cap called a dunce's cap** or making them stay behind after school and **write the same sentence 100 times**.
- Classrooms did not have colourful wall displays or comfy carpets. **Children sat in rows on benches or wooden desks** and it was often squashed and cold.
- Children would **write on slate using chalk or slate pencils**, or sometimes with special pens dipped into ink pots. Paper was very expensive so schools did not use it very often.



Finish the sentences...

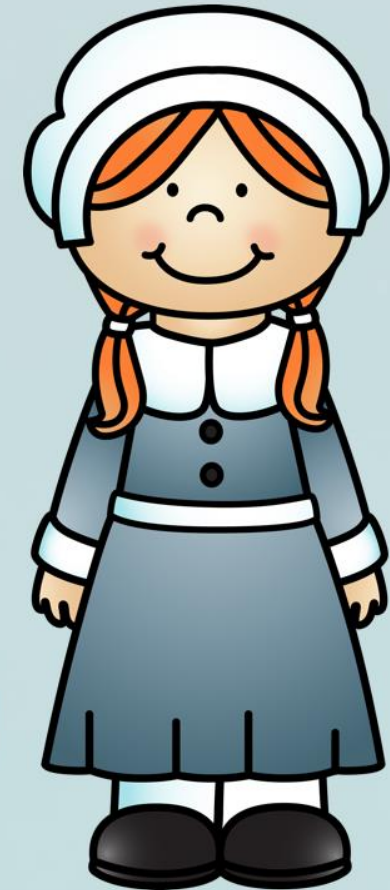
Work with a partner to finish the sentences about Victorian schools

Teachers used punishments such as....

Some of the lessons they had were...

Classrooms were different to ours
because...

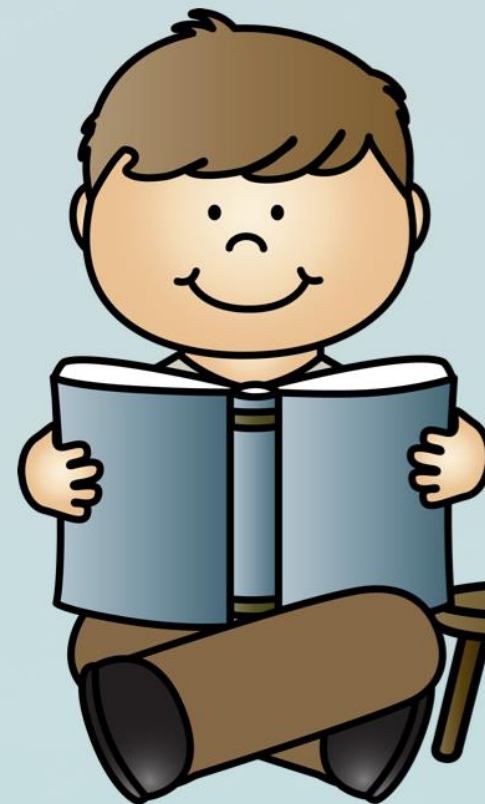
Some things that boys and girls did
separately were...



Spot Check



List **5 ways** in which school life for Victorian children was different to your school experience today.



Word Jumble

How quickly can you unscramble these words associated with Victorian schooling (the answers are on the next slide)?
Can you explain what each one means?



Word Jumble

Answers





Something to think about....

People in schools around the world still debate about whether or not it is best to split boys and girls for certain subjects.

Do you think there are appropriate times to separate boys and girls in school?
Explain your opinion to your partner.



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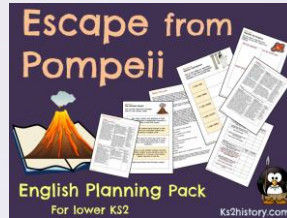
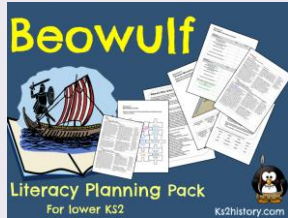


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