Revolution

Victorian era

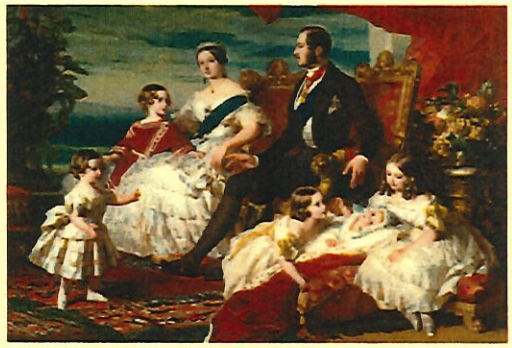
The Victorian era was the time when Queen Victoria was on the throne. It lasted from 1837 until 1901. It was a time of huge change in Britain. The introduction of steam power revolutionised transport, factories, and farming, leading to the Industrial Revolution. Social change saw the rise of the suffrage movement, the struggle for women's right to vote. Working conditions and education also improved during the Victorian era.

Schools in Victorian times

When Queen Victoria first came to the throne, most children did not go to school. However, during her reign, it became law that all children between five and 13 must attend school. There could be 70 to 80 children in a class. Lessons were very formal and teachers were strict. Children sat in rows and recited their times tables or copied words or calculations from the blackboard onto a slate. Children from rich families were taught at home by an educated lady called a governess, until the age of 10, when boys were sent away to boarding school. Girls continued to be taught at home.

Queen Victoria

Victoria was born in 1819 and became queen in 1837. She married her cousin, a German prince called Albert, in 1840. They had nine children. Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years. During that time, Britain became the most powerful country in the world. Its empire spread across the world, the population more than doubled and industry expanded. Queen Victoria became well-known for her high moral standards. Prince Albert died in 1861 and Queen Victoria was so grief-stricken that she wore black mourning dress for the rest of her life.



Rich and poor

There was a huge difference between the lives of the rich and poor in Victorian times. Rich Victorians lived in large, comfortable houses with servants and children were looked after by a nanny. Poor people often lived in cold, damp houses in areas called slums. Poor children were sent out to work because their families needed money. Very poor people with no home and no money were sent to the workhouse, where they had to live and work in terrible conditions.

Crime and punishment

The main punishments for serious crimes in Victorian times were hanging or transportation to Australia. Thieves or debtors who owed people money were sent to prison. Many new prisons were built in the Victorian era to replace old prison ships, called hulks. Crime prevention also improved at this time. The first police force was formed in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel so the first police officers became known as 'Bobbies' or 'Peelers' after him.

Great Exhibition

The Great Exhibition was held in Hyde Park in London, in 1851. It was organised by Prince Albert and Sir Henry Cole. Inventions, new technology, objects from across the empire and works of art were displayed in a huge iron and glass building called the Crystal Palace. The exhibition was designed to show that Britain was a world leader in modern technology and design. The show was enormously successful and the huge profits were used to open the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum in London.

Images used from Wikimedia Commons/Public domain

Tip: Print in A3.

Copyright © 2018 Cornerstones Education Limited

Victorian timeline

1819	Victoria is born.
1825	The Stockton and Darlington Railway opens. It is the first steam railway in the world.
1829	Robert Peel starts the police force.
1834	A new Poor Law is passed that stops people giving money to the poor. Anyone who is poor or in need must go into the workhouse instead.
1837	Victoria becomes Queen.
1837	The Houses of Parliament are built.
1840	Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert.
1842	The Mines and Collieries Act prevents underground work for women and girls, and boys under 10.
1851	The Great Exhibition opens at Crystal Palace.
1853	The Crimean War begins.
1859	Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* is published.
1861	Prince Albert dies.
1870	The Education Act makes education compulsory for children between the ages of five and 13.
1879	Thomas Edison makes the first electric light bulb.
1891	The Elementary Education Act makes school free for all children up to age 15.
1901	Queen Victoria dies.

Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was a time of great progress when machines began to do the work that had been done by hand. Mills and factories full of new machines produced more goods than ever before. Coal was mined in vast quantities to feed the newly invented steam engines and people moved from small farming communities to large towns to find work. Many business owners became incredibly rich but workers suffered because working conditions were dirty and dangerous. Laws to protect workers were passed during the Victorian era to make working conditions safer.

Famous Victorians

There was a lot of social change, innovation and creativity during the Victorian era. Many important and well-known people were working during this time.

Dr Barnardo
founder of the Barnardo's charity for orphaned children

Elizabeth Fry
prison reformer

Florence Nightingale
nurse and social reformer

Isambard Kingdom Brunel
engineer

Charles Dickens
author

Lewis Carroll
author

Alexander Graham Bell
inventor of the telephone

William Morris
designer

Glossary

empire	A group of countries ruled by one monarch.
factory	A place where goods are manufactured.
Industrial Revolution	The rapid development of industry that took place during the late 1700s and early 1800s, brought about by the introduction of machinery.
moral	Relating to behaviour that is considered by most people to be correct.
orphan	A child whose parents have died.
population	The people living in a country or area.
punishment	Inflicting a negative consequence as a result of someone's crime.
reign	The time when a king or queen is on the throne.
revolutionise	To change something completely.
slum	An overcrowded area where poor people live.
social reformer	A person who tries to improve the lives of people in society.
suffragette	A woman who campaigned for the right for women to vote.
Victorian	Relating to the time when Queen Victoria reigned.
workhouse	A place where poor people lived and worked, usually in terrible conditions.

Images used from Wikimedia Commons/Public domain

Copyright © 2018 Cornerstones Education Limited