

Teacher's Notes

Victorian Reporter

These teacher's notes give you extra information about each of the activities featured in our Victorian Reporter trail.

Practical hints:

- This trail is for pupils around Primary 2–5 (age 6–9) who have some prior knowledge of the Victorians.
- The trail will take approximately 20 minutes.
- The trail will involve moving between levels 5 and 4 in the Scotland galleries.
- You can access all areas using the lifts and stairs. Each group should take a map with them to help them finding the galleries.
- The trail contains seven sections.
- Start the trail with your whole class together at the Victorian kitchen/laundry display in the Industry and Empire gallery on Level 5 of the Scotland galleries. After this, you can split up into smaller groups to complete each section.
- Enjoy looking at all the objects up close, but please remind pupils not to touch them.
- This trail is available in black and white or colour.



Section 1: The Victorian Home

Find the kitchen and laundry section in the gallery.

Introduction

Many people in the Victorian period lived in homes without any of the modern comforts that we take for granted today. For example, people had to manage without central heating or hot water from the tap.

Question

Describe **three** differences between the homes we have today and the homes in the Victorian period:

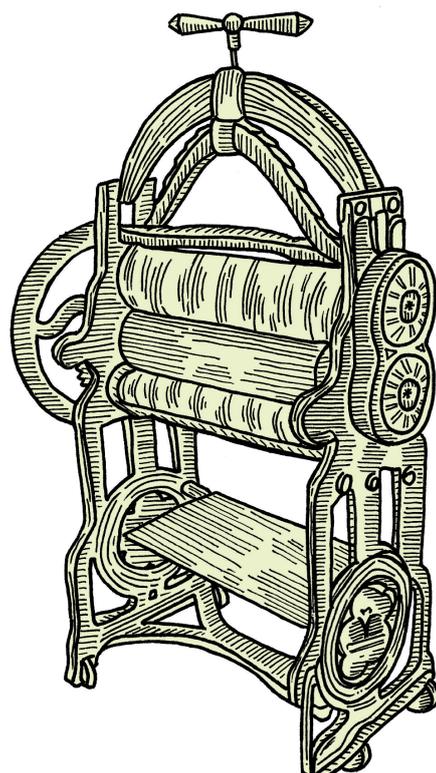
Suggested answers:

- Victorian ovens were powered by coal.
- As there was no electricity, kettles were boiled by placing them on top of the coal fired range
- Pots and pans were often made from cast iron or copper.
- Washing was a major domestic chore before the automatic washing machine and had to be done by hand in a big basin or cauldron. It was much more time consuming and took a lot of physical energy to get the whole family's washing done!
- Wealthier families employed a laundry maid to do their washing and ironing. Poorer families sometimes washed their clothes in communal wash houses called 'steamies'.

Question

What do you think this object was used for?

Answer: This machine is called a mangle. It is operated by turning the metal handle to spin the two wooden rollers. Linen would be fed through the middle of it to squeeze out any excess water in order to help the clothes dry.



Section 2: School Life

Look for a picture of a school class about to have a lesson.

Introduction

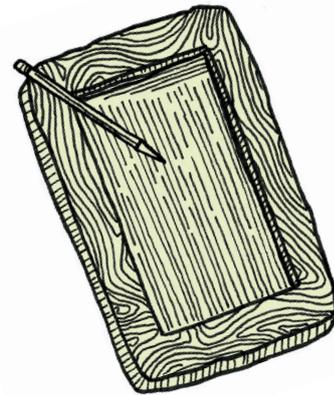
- The Victorian period saw laws created to ensure that all children from the age of five to ten attended school rather than being forced to work.
- Victorian schools had wooden desks and chairs in rows and a blackboard for the teacher to write on. Windows were often placed high up so that children weren't distracted from their lessons by looking outside!
- Boys and girls often had separate entrances into the school. They would also sit separately in the classroom with girls at the front of the class and boys at the back.



Question: What did school pupils use to write with in their lessons?

Answer: A slate and slate pencil

- School pupils would use a slate set in a wooden frame and a piece of slate sharpened to a point like a pencil to write during their lessons.
- To clear the slate, pupils were supposed to use a piece of cloth or a rag to wipe the slate clean. However, many pupils would have used their own sleeves!
- Of course, work couldn't be saved when using a slate.



Section 3: Watch the birdie

Find the wooden cradle in the gallery – you will see a photograph of a Victorian family.

Introduction

The Victorian period witnessed many improvements and advancements in photograph technology. Photographs are fantastic primary evidence of life in Victorian Britain. By looking at photographs we can tell what people would have worn and what homes and streets were like in the period.

Extra information

- The first photographs would have taken hours to capture- people had to remain very still for a long period of time and smiling for that length of time was much harder to do. Hence the stern faces!
- British inventor William Fox-Talbot was a pioneer in photography and in 1841 developed the first negative/positive process known as a calotype.



Section 4: Celebrating Scotland

Look for the display covered in red tartan.

Introduction

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert often visited Scotland. They bought Balmoral Castle to spend their summer holidays in, just like the Royal family today! Traditional Scottish songs and poetry which celebrated Scotland's romantic history were very popular in the Victorian period.

Question: What is the name of this famous Scottish poet?

Answer: Robert Burns

Victorian Statues:

Robert Burns became so famous in the Victorian period that statues of him were placed all around the world!

This bronze statue of Robert Burns by Sir John Robert Steell, the eminent Victorian sculptor, was unveiled in Central Park, New York in 1880.



Section 5: Queen Victoria

Find the statues of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert.

Introduction

These statues were made in Grangemouth Colliery in Leith, Edinburgh. The material used is called fireclay which is more commonly used to make industrial bricks.

Question: By looking at the statue—how can you tell she is a queen? Circle two pieces of evidence.

Suggested answers and further information:

Crown on her head:

- The Imperial State Crown was made in 1838 for the coronation of Queen Victoria.
- In 1870, Queen Victoria had a miniature crown made of silver and covered with over 1,000 diamonds—it was light weight and more comfortable to wear than the Imperial State Crown.

Orb carried in her hand:

- The orb was originally created for Charles II.
- During a coronation, the Sovereign Orb is placed in the right hand of the monarch by the Archbishop and by the end of the ceremony the monarch is carrying it in their left hand.

Order of the Garter on her chest:

- The badge that Queen Victoria is wearing is called The Order of the Garter—these have been worn by the monarchy ever since 1344.



Section 6: Explorers and Inventors

Now make your way around the corner, passing all the countries people travelled to across the world. Past the wooden chest, you will see a balcony with lots of Scottish inventors and explorers.

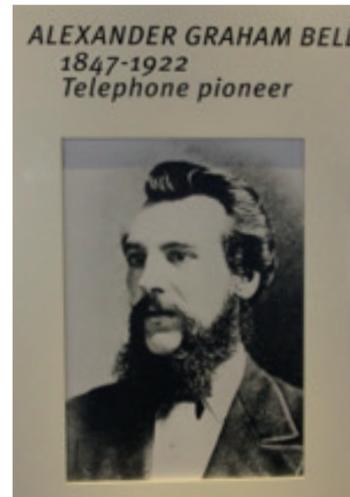
Introduction

The Victorian period saw many major developments that made travel, communications and trade easier for many people. Many of the things we take for granted today, such as photography, telephones, electric light bulbs and cars were invented during Queen Victoria's reign.

There are many inventors and explorers for pupils to choose from in this gallery to write a report about.

Highlight to pupils: Alexander Graham Bell

- Alexander Graham Bell was a Scottish-born American scientist and inventor, most famous for his pioneering work on the development of the telephone.
- In 1876, at the age of 29, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.
- His first words with the working telephone were spoken to his assistant Watson and were along the lines of "Mr Watson, come here. I want to see you."



Section 7: Victorian Transport and Industry

Head down the stairs to Level 4 towards the trains.

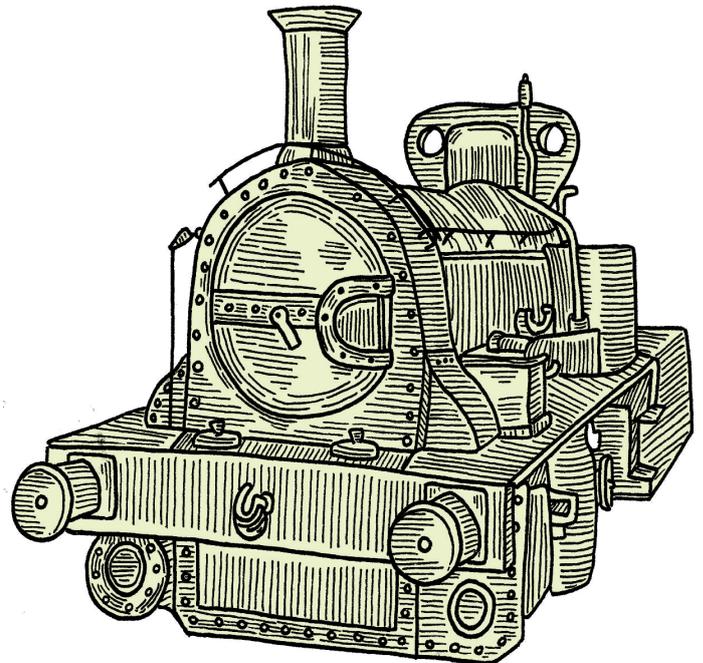
Introduction

The Victorian period saw the development of trains and railways lines across Britain. As a result, there were new opportunities for people to travel and to carry goods across Britain. Queen Victoria made her first train journey on 13 June 1842 and then became a regular user of the railways! In the middle of this gallery you will see this locomotive which was built in 1861– it was once one of the oldest working steam locomotives in Britain.

Question: What is the name of this famous locomotive?

Answer: The Ellesmere Locomotive

- In this gallery, pupils can also push buttons to make the locomotives move. The engines on display here are called locomotives. It is called a train once it has carriages attached!



We hope you have enjoyed completing this trail you can find more resources online:
www.nms.ac.uk/schools