

The Victorians:



Quick summary

The Victorian era is the name given to the period of Queen Victoria's reign. It was a time of significant technological, scientific, economic and social change. New inventions and discoveries were made that changed where people lived, how they worked and how they spent their leisure time. The Industrial Revolution saw new inventions, like the steam engine, completely change the way people lived, and how they worked. People flocked to growing urban areas and cities to find jobs. This led to immense wealth for many, but lots of people still lived in terrible poverty. Many children worked in mines and factories. However, the Victorian era also saw lots more children attending school and significant progress in medicine and health care. The Victorian era was a period of exploration and discovery. The British Empire grew, and Britain came to rule over a quarter of the world's population.



Not all Victorian exploration was about trade and conquest. Much of the world was still 'undiscovered' and a source of great mystery. One famous explorer, Mary Kingsley, travelled over much of West Africa, writing about her experiences and collecting scientific evidence of new animal species that she had discovered. Her achievements were even more influential because, as a woman living in Victorian Britain, she would not have been expected to travel in this way.

The Industrial Revolution, which started in the late 1700s, saw significant growth in steam-powered machinery. The number of large factories making products to trade across the world also grew rapidly. Cities increased in size as people came to work in these factories, leaving the small villages they had lived in behind. The increase in population meant urban centres became overcrowded with factories and houses. Pollution created significant problems for people's health and wellbeing. The new working class had to work very long hours in difficult conditions. Very young children had to work too, and it was only towards the end of the Victorian era that the law was changed to stop young children working in terrible conditions. The lives of the rich and the poor were very different in Victorian times. Despite improvements in the lives of many people, the poor and very poor continued to live and work in terrible conditions.

1837: Victoria became Queen

1838: Slavery abolished in the British Empire

1840: First postage stamp issued

1854: Britain went to war in Crimea

1858: Charles Darwin published 'On the Origin of Species'

1861: Victoria's husband (Albert) dies

1867: Antiseptic first used

1879: Electric lightbulb invented

1880: Education made compulsory until the age of ten

1897: Women's Suffrage Movement grew

1901: Victoria dies



Vocabulary

empire – a number of nations controlled by one country

poverty – being extremely poor

revolution – important change

conditions – how good or bad something is

innovations – new ways of doing something

workforce – people available to do a job

economy – the wealth a country gets from business or industry



Settlements



Beliefs



Culture and pastimes



Location



Main events



Food and farming



Travel and exploration



Conflict



Society



Artefacts