

Organising a Victorian Day

A Victorian day at school can be an enjoyable, memorable and educational experience for the students (and teachers and support staff!). It needs plenty of planning to run smoothly so if you are considering having a Victorian day as part of your coverage of teaching about Victorian times we hope that these notes will help you have a successful day.

Support from home

You will need support from home for the making of costumes and the making of a Victorian meal so a pleasant letter to homes explaining your plans will help start the project moving. You may find that some parents and carers are very enthusiastic and may volunteer ideas and resources.

► Bright neckerchiefs and waistcoats are the easiest things to get for boys.

Costumes

Information about Victorian costumes is found in activities 9A and 9B on pages 72–75. It would be useful to have two or three basic costumes made by you or the school staff for students who, for any reason, do not have a costume on the day.

You will also need to consider when the costumes are worn. Do you want them to wear the costumes all day and go out at breaks and lunch-times in them? Do you want them to be worn after morning break, through lunch-time to afternoon break or do you just want them to be worn in the afternoon? The longer they are worn, the better value the students will get from them.



▲ At the end of the day a group photograph will be a memorable experience.

Food

The students could make up a Victorian lunchbox and bring it to school selecting items from activity **16B** (pages 108–109). Alternatively, you may prefer to have a Victorian picnic as described in the activity. If you do, make sure you follow your school policies on visits or simply eating food outside.

You will also find a recipe for gruel on



▲ Chimney sweep using dark make-up.

◀ Girls have petticoats, lace-up boots and lace caps.

page 19. You may care to give this recipe to children who could each bring their own version in to school in a vacuum flask, or you can make it and serve it to them from a large cauldron-type pot and pretend to be Mrs or Mr Beadle!

Advanced preparations for other activities

There are two activities suggested on the day – Making a toy theatre (activities **11A**, **11B** and **11C** pages 80 to 83) and Punch and Judy (activity **15B** pages 100 to 101) which you may like to bring forward so that on the day the students can

perform a play in the puppet theatre and give a Punch and Judy show (There is a script for the Punch and Judy show on the companion web page).

You may also like the students to make Owen's monitor (activity **5A** pages 52 to 53) before the day so they can simply attach it to their chairs the afternoon before the Victorian day.

Activities on the day

First session

You may wish to refer to the students as **scholars** throughout the day.

- Owens monitor (activity **5A** pages 52 to 53). Once the monitors have been made and attached to the students' chairs you can go round and turn them to the colour that you think describes their work and behaviour. You could repeat this several times during the morning.
- Follow the commands (activity **12B** pages 88 to 89).
- Activities in Victorian school lessons (activity **12A** pages 86 to 87).

▼ Great fun with hoops and pinafores.

Break-time

Issue and eat gruel. Here is how to make it. Add one quarter cup of cooked and mashed oats, one tablespoon flour and one quarter teaspoon salt to one and one half cups boiling water. Let boil for two minutes, then cook over hot water for one hour. Finally bring to boiling point. The final product should be only slightly thick.

Second session

- Activities in Victorian school lessons (activity **12A** pages 86 to 87). You can test the students and see what they can remember from the first session. A colleague could come in dressed as an inspector to test the students. You could introduce a dunces cap (a cone made from a sheet of paper formed into a funnel and stuck along one side) and ask the students how they would feel when they have to wear it.
- Etiquette for gentlemen (activity **16A** pages 106 to 107).

The Victorian lunch

This could be in the form of a picnic as described in 'A Victorian picnic' (activity **16B** pages 108 to 109).

Afternoon sessions



- Inventions in Victorian times (activity **2B** pages 38 to 39).

The students could divide into groups and each group work on one of these activities. You may like to enlist the help of support staff and school volunteer helpers to supervise the activities and give general help to the groups of students.

- Making a toy theatre (activities **11A**, **11B** and **11C** pages 80 to 83).
- Punch and Judy (activity **15B** pages 100

to 101)

Your colleague, the ‘inspector’, could return and ask a few questions either as a short written test or an oral test.

The awarding of certificates

Certificates of Merit should be prepared for each student using the photocopiable on the page opposite. You should explain that the certificates were given out as rewards for hard work and then let the ‘inspector’ present them to each student or scholar.



◀ A group of boys playing marbles.



For of such is the kingdom of God

Name of School

Victorian Day

Date

Certificate of Merit

Presented to

For proficiency in all things
Victorian on this day

Signed

PRaise ye the Lord