

Shopping

The Victorians invented shopping as we know it. The most important shop was the general store that acted like a market all rolled up into one weatherproof place.



A



B

1. Look at page 39 in your class book. It is the same as picture A. Write down at least four things that are sold in this shop.

.....

2. They sell savings stamps. What help might these be to poor people?

.....

3. Look at picture B, the same one as on page 38 of your class books. What differences do you see between how people were served then compared to how people get their goods today?

.....

4. How much was 1/4 (it is not a weight)?

5. There were no plastic bags in Victorian times. What do you think they used to carry their goods home?

.....

Shopping

Age range

- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet, class books.

Using the worksheet

The corner shop was the focus of much life in a neighbourhood because, for most things people went to a single shop and were served by a real person over the counter. The range of goods sold is far wider than we would expect to see today, although the choices between brands was much smaller. People would also buy more regularly in smaller quantities, reflecting the fact that wages were usually paid weekly or even daily in cash.

Answers



1. Chocolate, bacon, tea, savings stamps, cooked ham, buckets, tins of biscuits, cocoa.
2. Savings stamps were a form of voucher, like points offered by supermarkets today.
3. People were served by sales assistants over the counter. Items were often measured out or cut up (see right) from bulk quantities and placed in paper bags. Butter, for example, would be made up into blocks this way, and ham would be cut from the bone.
4. One shilling and 4 pence, 16 pence, 16p.
5. Shopping bags and sometimes wicker baskets. It was not a disposable society.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Extract information from a text.
- Make simple calculations from the information in the text.
- Make comparisons of living conditions in Victorian times with conditions today.

Further activities

The students could sell to one another over a counter. They would have to ask for goods by name and weight or volume. They would have to be told how much that would be. So here is an opportunity to see the reason that multiplication tables were such a vital part of the school's learning effort. There were no calculators and so shopkeepers had to add and multiply in their heads for the most part. They did it so often it became second nature.