



The Victorian Period 1837 - 1901

The Victorian period is named after Queen Victoria who reigned over Britain and a world Empire from her coronation in 1837 to her death in 1901 – 64 years. Life in Victorian England was very different to today. It was a time of great wealth and poverty, as well as invention and scientific discovery.

Vocabulary

Board school	School set up by the Board of Education using money given by the government.
British Empire	Lands that Britain controlled all over the world (for example, India).
Compulsory	Having to do something.
Crime	Actions which break the law of a country. Many things were crimes in Victorian times with harsh punishments, even for children.
Domestic service	To do household work such as cleaning and cooking in someone else's house.
Factory acts	Laws passed by government to protect people working in dangerous factories (particularly women and children).
Industrialised	Where heavy mechanised or factory industries, like mining and cloth making, have been widely developed.
Middle class	The middle of the Victorian class system, including lawyers earning £500 per year to a small shopkeeper earning £100 per year.
Paupers	Very poor people who have no way of feeding or supporting themselves.
Public health	The health of people living in a particular place, often looked after by the government.
Ragged schools	A school set up to teach poor children.
Reformer	A person who makes changes in order to improve things.
Slum	The poorest, most overcrowded and uncared for part of a town or city.
Upper class	Wealthy people, often estate owners, who had a lot of money and servants.
Workhouse	Places set up by the government where poor people with no money could go and be given a bed, food and work. Many had very harsh rules.
Working class	The bottom of the Victorian class system. A working class man could be anyone from a skilled mechanic earning £90 a year to a servant earning £10 per year.

Key dates

- 1837: Queen Victoria crowned (aged 18 years).
- 1840: Queen marries her cousin, Prince Albert.
- 1840: first ragged schools set up.
- 1844: factory act states children could start work from age 8 but had to have 2 hours schooling daily.
- 1847: factory act states women and children under 18 could only work 10 hours or less daily.
- 1851: Great Exhibition.
- 1861: Prince Albert dies.
- 1863: first underground railway opens in London.
- 1867: all factory workers limited to 10 hours work daily.
- 1870: Dr Barnardo opens first home for boys.
- 1871: first FA cup for football.
- 1877: Queen declared 'Empress of India'.
- 1880: Children 5-13 required to attend school (but had to pay).
- 1882: first electric power station in London.
- 1891: education made free and compulsory for children 5-13.
- 1897: Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee (50 years on the throne).
- 1901: Queen Victoria dies.

Key people

- Queen Victoria:** Second longest serving monarch after Queen Elizabeth II. The first monarch to live at Buckingham Palace.
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel:** Engineer who built tunnels, railways and steam ships.
- George Stephenson:** Engineer who built 'The Rocket' – the first train.
- Dr Thomas Barnardo:** Founded homes for children who needed a home. They were given care and an education.
- Elizabeth Garrett Anderson:** The first British woman doctor.



