

The SECRET GARDEN

THE SECRET GARDEN AND THE VICTORIAN ERA

Although *The Secret Garden* was written in the Edwardian era (1901 to 1910), Frances Hodgson Burnett drew on all her experiences of living during the exciting times of the Victorian era in order to shape the story. In *The Secret Garden* she incorporates many of the main characteristics from the following areas of Victorian life; the British Empire, food, health and exercise and travel.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Alexandrina Victoria of the house of Hanover was born in 1819 and was crowned Queen in 1837 at just 18 years old. Queen Victoria, as she was known, reigned for 64 years until her death in 1901. These years have become known as the 'Victorian Period'

Victoria led a fairly secluded childhood, which resulted in her being stubborn with strong prejudices. After being crowned at such a young age, she refused to take any further influence from her mother and instead ruled in her own way.



Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840 and they had 9 children together. Following Albert's death in 1861, Victoria withdrew from public life for a long time and wore black clothing for the rest of her life.

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INDUSTRY & PROGRESS

The Victorian period was a time of great change and progress which saw huge expansion of wealth, power, and culture. There were also great leaps in technological developments with the Victorians coming up with the idea of 'invention'.

Throughout the 1800s the Industrial Revolution took its hold and the cities of England expanded. Factories using new steam powered machines for manufacturing attracted people from the countryside who moved into the cities as better paying jobs were created operating these new machines.



Alexander Graham Bell with his invention – the telephone!

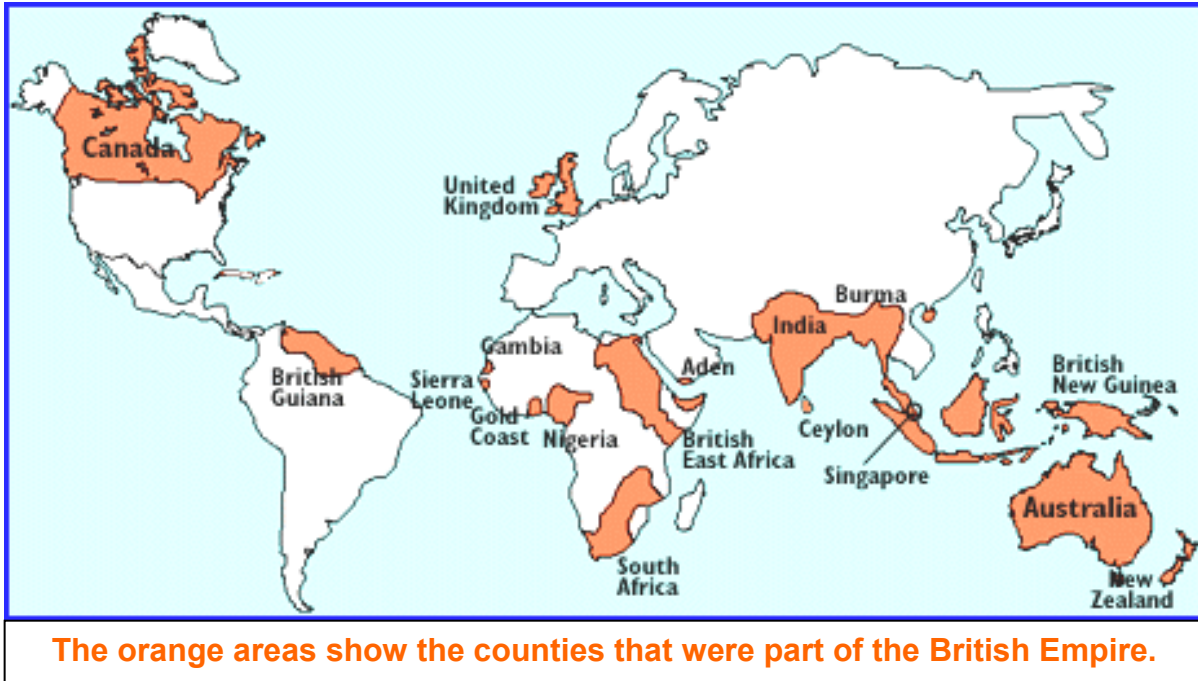
The factories created steam by burning coal to heat water. This led to huge amounts of thick black smoke lingering over the cities, blackening the majority of buildings and outside areas with soot. You can see buildings where stone is turned black by smoke and pollution in your area. The Scott's Monument on Princes Street in Edinburgh is one such building.

Also, the Victorians cooked their food in cast iron ovens that were powered by coal. These were kept on all day to maintain high temperatures and as a result caused a great deal of dirty smoke to continually pollute the air.

The rapid Victorian developments led to many traditional ways being replaced. Trains and new railways came to take the place of horses and manual labour was replaced by mechanical work. Things changed so quickly that people struggled to keep up. By the end of the first decade of the 20th Century electricity, telephones and motor cars had become part of everyday life. It seemed that technological progress was limitless. Between the years of 1837 and 1903 the Victorians developed, amongst many things, the telegraph and Morse code, the steamship, petrol, the sewing machine, dynamite, the typewriter, the telephone, the machine gun and radio waves.

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE



Queen Victoria's reign was marked by a great expansion of the British Empire which extended to include India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and large parts of Africa. In 1876 she was even crowned Empress of India. The British believed they had an obligation to enlighten and civilize the 'less fortunate savages' of the world. They also needed money, resources, labour, and new markets for the expanding industry in England.

Ships were used to transport slaves around the British Empire and were then loaded up with supplies and brought back to Europe. In 1833 the Abolition of Slavery Act was passed which stated that all slaves were to be given their freedom. However, slavery continued in certain areas of the British Empire including India.

The technological developments that the British were making at home were used to help aid their progress abroad so that raw materials, such as cotton, could be transported more efficiently to ports for export to England. The rush of technology was also changing the agricultural economy in India and by the last decade of the 19th century lots of their raw materials - not only cotton, but also some food-grains - were being exported to faraway markets. At the beginning of the twentieth century India had many rail services and in 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal significantly reduced the journey time between India and England.

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TRAVEL

Between 1820 and 1850 roughly six thousand miles of railways were opened in Britain. They reached into some of the remotest parts of the countryside and into the centres of the largest cities.

The railway not only changed the landscapes and cityscapes of Great Britain, but it also changed conceptions of time and distance, and transformed the speed of movement and the pace of human life. The train allowed much easier movement over greater distances. It also created a more scheduled way of life, with people having to fit their routines in with train timetables and organise their journeys around several linked railroads.



In the stagecoach days, a ticket from London to Manchester and back would have cost £3 10s, but by 1851 the train fare for this same journey was only 5s (a seventh of the stagecoach fare) for a far quicker and more comfortable journey. Acts of Parliament ensured that trains conformed to standards of speed and comfort and offered rates that were affordable to all.

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FOOD

The Victorians' eating habits differed from today. They made even the most basic dishes from scratch and generally only ate breakfast and dinner. Most did not have a 'lunch' as such, but wealthier people would instead have afternoon tea which, while giving them the chance to have a snack before dinner, existed more as a show of status and wealth. Ladies would show off their finest linen, silver and china. For the wealthy mealtimes were considered as 'events'.

Banquets were often held which allowed people to display their wealth by the size of their dining hall and the range of courses and foods served. Place settings and the presence of numerous cutlery pieces and drinking glasses also demonstrated class.

Until the Food Adulteration Act of 1899 came into existence the contents of food and food practices were not regulated. Many food additives of the time were poisonous, for example bakers added chalk to their bread to make it white; cooks mixed clay or sawdust into their mashed potatoes and rat poison was even added to beer to improve its flavour!

Children's sweets were coloured with dyes from lead, copper and mercury. Scientific and medical progress led to a great awareness of the dangers of using such ingredients and additives and changed the way that people viewed their foods.



Did you know - The Victoria Sponge is named after Queen Victoria?

The invention of the steam engine enabled fresh food to become much more readily available and more widely distributed throughout the country all year long. Foods could also be imported from abroad without the fear of spoiling. The invention of canning and other food sterilization techniques also improved the longevity of food and more hygienic food practices.

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HEALTH & EXERCISE

During Victorian times, diseases were widespread due to poverty, overcrowding and poor sanitation. Little was actually known about the nature of diseases and how they were spread. Smallpox, Typhus, Tuberculosis and Cholera were some of the worst diseases to affect the Victorians.

A greater availability of soap and clean running water led to a great increase in levels of hygiene. Boiling and scrubbing medical instruments before and after use was found to greatly increase a patient's chance for survival. Scientific breakthroughs also aided both diagnosis and cure. Microscopes had been developed and improved to the extent that they allowed examination of micro-organisms to identify diseases.

Scientific developments led to the introduction of inventions to help medical advancements. Cholera was shown to be a product of sewage water. With the simple procedure of boiling drinking water and washing the hands, incidents of cholera dramatically dropped. In 1847, Chloroform was introduced as an anaesthetic which became widely used during childbirth and Morphine was discovered to help ease pain.

Sport was popular in Victorian times, although many were not as accessible as they are today and were reserved for the wealthier, higher classes. Lawn tennis, cricket, rugby and croquet were played.

Schools did not teach PE in the way that they do now. Instead children often did 'drill' in their classrooms by their desks or outside in the playground. This involved doing exercises such as marching on the spot or doing arm stretches and movements.



A Victorian rugby team

As well as keeping children fit, these exercises were also thought to increase discipline.

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MONEY

In Victorian times, money was different from today. Instead of pounds (£) and pence (p), money was divided into pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d).

Today there is 100 pence in £1, but in Victorian times their money worked like this:

- **£1** was worth **240 pennies**
- **1 shilling** was worth **12 pennies**
- **20 shillings** equalled **£1**

The cost of living was much lower than it is now; therefore wages were also much lower. For example, for a whole year:

- **A maid** would typically earn between £9 and £14 (£550 - £840 in today's money).
- **A gardener** would earn between £20 and £40 (£1,200 - £2,400 in today's money)

An example of the difference in costs can be seen by looking at the postal system. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the post office delivered two or even three times daily. This meant that people could arrange social events, sending invitations and receiving responses within a few hours. A penny postcard, in other words, was the equivalent of a modern day personal courier service which would now cost several pounds.

Today's Money (easier!)

£1.00	=	100p
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Money in Victorian Times

£1	=	240p
£1	=	20s
1 s	=	12d

KEY:

£ = pound

p = pence (in today's money)

d = pennies (in Victorian money)

s = shillings

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ACTIVITIES/ FURTHER INFO

ACTIVITY 1

Outcome: LIT 2-06a

Victorian Presentation

Group presentation activity, research, practice and presentation time should be factored in.

Please pick one area of information on the Victorians. You can choose from:

Queen Victoria	Industry & Progress	The British Empire	
Travel	Food	Health & Exercise	Money

You are going to read over the information in your chosen section again carefully. In your group you will **prepare a presentation on the topic** to share with the rest of your class. You will need to do research by finding appropriate books in the library and information and images online to learn more about your subject.

Your presentation should last 4-5 minutes and can include;

- **demonstrations/ acting out**
- **photos (printed or on a screen)**
- **sound effects/ music**
- **Props/ objects**

It should be interesting to listen to and have a start, middle and an end. Think about what you would like to hear about!

Everyone in your group should have a chance to talk in the presentation.

It is a good idea to get organised before you start your research. Decide who in your group is going to be:

- **The Team Editor** (deciding on the content/ materials that are most important to the presentation)
- **The Time Keeper** (making sure you don't run over schedule during your research or practice times)
- **The Presentation Director** (guiding the group on what order your information should be presented in, who should present which parts and giving feedback on presentation styles)

Everyone should have input into how you want your presentation to be, so make sure you put your ideas forward!

Good Luck!
The Victorians

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ACTIVITY 2

Outcome: SOC 2-06a & SOC 2-04a

*Activity involves using lining paper/ wallpaper horizontally on the classroom wall.
Approx 2 hour activity.*

The Victorian period lasted from 1819-1901. However, there are many other important times in history. Below is a little information about some of them, along with a few things that were significant in defining the times.

When you look at the years below you may see some new abbreviations: **BC** stands for 'Before Christ' and **AD** stands for 'Anno Domini', which is Latin for 'The Year of Our Lord'. This is the calendar way of splitting history into periods of time before and after Jesus was born. At the moment, we live in **AD 2010**.

THE ROMANS 753 BC – AD 476

- Europe would not be the same without the Romans. All over the continent they founded cities which still stand today. The great city of London for example, was founded by the Romans under the name Londinium. Also the German city of Cologne is Roman (Colonia Agrippina). And of course the capital of Italy, Rome, where it all started!
- The Romans were famous for building roads! They built them on foundations of clay, chalk and gravel. They laid bigger flat stones on top. The road sloped from the middle to ditches either side, so rain water drained off.
- People in Roman times wore togas and leather strapped sandals.



Photo from:
www.roman-empire.net/

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THE VIKINGS AD 700 – AD 1110

- The Vikings came from three Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Though it was mainly the Norwegians who came to Scotland.

- The name 'Viking' comes from a language called 'Old Norse' and means 'a pirate raid'. People who went off raiding in ships were said to be 'going Viking'.



A replica Viking ship. Photo from:
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/vikings

- The Vikings were famous for their fast built ships for raiding and war. These ships were 'dragon-ships' or 'longships'. The Vikings also had slower passenger and cargo ships called knorrs.

- A Blacksmith was a common job in Viking times. Blacksmiths sweated over fires, hammering red-hot iron. They made iron tools, knives and swords (which were needed as the Vikings were always at battle!)



Viking tools. Photo from:
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/vikings

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THE TUDORS AD 1485 - AD 1603

- The Tudors were a family who ruled over England. This period of time was named after them because they were so influential. At the same time, the Stuart family ruled Scotland. One of the most famous rulers of the Tudor family was King Henry VIII. He had 6 wives during his life (2 of whom he had executed!)
- John Harrington of England invented the world's first flushing toilet - the Water Closet (W.C). It worked exactly as modern toilets do now, but took 200 years to really catch on.
- Sugar was imported as a great expensive luxury. The Tudors loved it so much they invented a new meal course, called the Banquet Course (which we call desert or pudding).
- Here you can see it was the fashion to have huge ruffs around the necks of clothing that might stick out further than the person's shoulders! This is Queen Elizabeth I who was Henry VIII's daughter. She became queen for nearly 45 years.



King Henry VIII



Queen Elizabeth I

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THE VICTORIANS

AD 1819 - AD 1901

- All of the information you need on the Victorians can be found on pages 1-4.

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF MODERN TIMES: 1901 – 2000s

- World War I broke out in the summer of 1914. The fighting ended in late 1918.
- World War II (the Second World War) broke out in 1939 and lasted until 1945.
- 1947 India gained independence from Britain
- 1947 The Edinburgh International Festival was formed
- 1948 National Health Service was established
- 1952 Elizabeth II was crowned Queen of Great Britain
- 1965 Death penalty was abolished in Britain
- 1992 Channel Tunnel opened, linking London and Paris by rail
- 2001 Islamic terrorists crashed airplanes into targets in New York and Washington

Once you have looked through all of the time periods and important events, please **make a giant time line**. It is best to do this in small groups, working together on different sections. You may want to do some more research on each time period before you start, in your school library or on the internet. You can add in any new information you find.

- You should use a piece of lining paper that is about 2 metres long.
- Along the bottom you will need to draw a thick line.
- Along this line you should put the dates of the time period (starting with the earliest date on the left side).
- Beside the dates you should write clearly the name of the time period.
- Once you have all of this laid out you can get creative by drawing people, places or objects from each time in the sections along the timeline.