

Life in Victorian Times

Learning objective: To understand what life was like for children in the Victorian era.

Read the text carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand the tricky words. Answer the questions in the boxes provided.

Ellie the elephant loves to look back into history. She has been reading about the Victorian era. This was a long time ago, from 1837 to 1901. During this time, Britain changed a lot because of new machines and big factories.

Life was very different for children depending on if they were rich or poor. Many poor children did not go to school. Instead, they had to work very long hours. Some boys worked as chimney sweeps, climbing into narrow, dark chimneys to clean them. Other children worked in noisy factories or mills. They were often tired and hungry.

Rich children had a much easier life. They often had tutors at home or went to private schools. They had plenty of toys and warm clothes. By the end of the Victorian era, laws were made to help children. Laws said that children must go to school and that work was not allowed for very young ones. Life started to get better for all children as these new rules were followed across the country.

Word bank: Victorian: The time when Queen Victoria ruled Britain. · Chimney sweep: Someone who cleans soot from inside chimneys. · Workhouse: A place where very poor people had to live and work. · Factory: A big building where things are made by machines. · Education: Learning at school.

1. What years did the Victorian era last from and until? (2 marks)

2. What jobs did poor children do during the Victorian times? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think poor children were often tired? (2 marks)

4. How was the life of a rich child different to a poor child? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it was a good idea to change the laws about children working? Why? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture showing a Victorian classroom or a Victorian street scene.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a child living in the Victorian era. Write two sentences about what your day at school might be like.