

Uncovering the Secrets of Oakhaven

Learning objective: To develop historical enquiry skills by investigating local heritage and how settlements change over time.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your detective skills to answer the questions, referring back to the text to support your ideas.

Ellie the elephant loves to explore the history of Oakhaven, a bustling town that has transformed remarkably over the centuries. Centuries ago, Oakhaven was merely a collection of wattle and daub cottages nestled beside a winding river, where farmers traded grain for wool. By the Victorian era, the arrival of the railway turned the quiet village into an industrial hub. Tall chimneys rose above the landscape, and workers filled the new terrace houses, creating a vibrant community atmosphere. Ellie recently discovered an old ledger from 1895 in the town library, showing that a loaf of bread cost just 2p! Today, the old factory has been repurposed into a community arts center, and the railway station remains a gateway for commuters. By studying old maps and crumbling brickwork, we can see how Oakhaven's past is etched into its very streets. History is not just found in textbooks; it is hidden under our feet and within the walls of the buildings we pass every single day.

Word bank: settlement · heritage · archaeology · industrial · chronological · primary source

1. Identify two changes that occurred in Oakhaven during the Victorian era. (2 marks)

2. How much did a loaf of bread cost in 1895, according to the ledger Ellie found? (1 mark)

3. Why does the author suggest that the town's history is 'etched into its very streets'? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the arrival of the railway might have caused the town to grow so quickly. (2 marks)

5. Do you think it is important to repurpose old buildings like the factory instead of knocking them down? Justify your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'then and now' split-screen image of Oakhaven. On the left, show the village with wattle and daub cottages; on the right, show the modern town with the arts center and railway station.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an archaeologist who has just found an object from Oakhaven's past. Write a short diary entry describing what you found, how old you think it is, and what it tells you about the people who lived here long ago. Use at least three words from the word bank.