

Victorian Life: Industry and Innovation

Learning objective: To analyse the impact of the Industrial Revolution and social changes during the Victorian era.

Use your historical knowledge to answer the following questions. Remember to provide evidence for your reasoning where asked.

Ellie the elephant has been exploring the archives of Victorian history. She has discovered that between 1837 and 1901, the world transformed through incredible inventions, the rapid growth of cities, and significant changes to how children lived and worked. Use your knowledge of this period to complete the tasks below.

Word bank: Industrial Revolution · Urbanisation · Workhouse · Innovation · Empire · Social reform · Steam engine · Textile mill

1. Explain why the invention of the steam engine was a major turning point for the British economy during the Victorian era. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the lives of wealthy Victorian children with those from working-class families. Consider education and daily responsibilities. (3 marks)

3. Justify your answer: Was the Victorian era a time of progress or a time of hardship? Use one historical example to support your view. (3 marks)

4. What might happen if the Factory Acts had never been passed by the government? Describe the impact on child labourers. (2 marks)

5. If a Victorian shopkeeper sold a loaf of bread for 2d (old pence) and a sack of coal for 1s 6d, calculate the total cost in modern decimalised terms if 1 shilling equals 5p. Show your working out. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Victorian Invention' of your own design that might have helped people in the 19th century, such as an automatic chimney sweeper or an early steam-powered carriage.



Extension challenge: Research a significant Victorian reformer, such as Dr. Barnardo or Florence Nightingale. Write a short persuasive speech from their perspective explaining why the Victorian public should donate money to their cause to improve the lives of the poor.