A Day in the Life: Victorian Discovery with Ellie

Learning objective: To identify and describe key features of Victorian life, including inventions, social changes, and daily routines.

Ellie the elephant has been reading through her history archives! Below is a list of items and events from the Victorian era (1837–1901). Your task is to sort them into two categories: 'Life for Wealthy Children' and 'Life for Working-Class Children'. Use the word bank to help you place each item in the correct column.

Word bank: Attending school regularly · Working in dark coal mines · Playing with expensive clockwork toys · Cleaning chimneys as a sweep · Living in large houses with servants · Wearing handmade, simple clothes · Learning to read and write with a private tutor · Working long hours in a textile factory

1. Choose two items from the word bank that describe the life of a wealthy Victorian child and explain why they were lucky to have these opportunities. (2 marks)

2. Choose two items from the word bank that describe the life of a working-class Victorian child and explain how their daily routine was different from yours today. (2 marks)

3. The Victorian era saw the invention of the steam train. How do you think this changed the way people travelled compared to using horses and carts? (2 marks)

4. Look at the list of jobs. Why was it dangerous for Victorian children to work in coal mines or as chimney sweeps? (2 marks)

5. If you had £1 to spend in a Victorian shop, would you rather buy a wooden spinning top or a simple book? Explain your choice based on what you know about Victorian hobbies. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a Victorian street scene. Include one invention from the era, such as a gas lamp, a steam train in the distance, or a Penny Farthing bicycle.

Extension challenge: Research a Victorian invention that we still use in a different form today (like the telephone or the camera). Write a short paragraph explaining how it has changed since the 1800s.