

# Victorian School Life

Life in a Victorian school was very different from today. There were no laptops, tablets or films to watch. Teachers were much stricter, too.

## School

At first, only some children went to school. Boys from rich families went to private schools. Girls were often taught at home. Some churches provided free schools for poor children but the classrooms were often really big. Sometimes they were so big, there would be 100 pupils.

In 1880, the law changed. Every child between the ages of five and ten had to go to school.

## Lessons

Pupils called male teachers, 'Sir' and female teachers, 'Madam' or 'Miss'. In a lot of the lessons, pupils had to listen and watch the teacher write things on the blackboard. The pupils then had to copy everything down.

Reading, writing and maths were very important. Instead of learning in a fun way, children often had to remember everything. They would say the times tables until they knew them off by heart.

Days were very long. They usually lasted until 5:00 pm but pupils went home for a long lunch. Here is what a Victorian school day might be like:

Time	Lesson
9:00 - 9:10	prayers
9:10 - 10:10	Bible work
10:10 - 11:10	maths
11:10 - 11:30	play time
11:30 - 12:00	writing
12:00 - 2:00	lunch
2:00 - 2:45	PE
2:45 - 3:30	woodwork (for boys) cookery (for girls)
3:30 - 4:30	science
4:30 - 5:00	reading

## What They Used

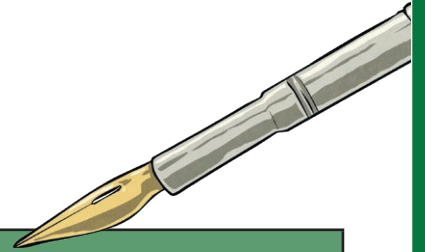
Writing was very different. Pupils often used something sharp to scratch letters onto a flat piece of rock, called slate. The slate could be wiped clean and used again. Older children may have used a special pen that was dipped in ink. The ink was in a pot called an inkwell.


Victorian classrooms had windows high up so children couldn't look outside. The classrooms usually had things to help with counting and there was often a map of the world.

## Punishment

Here's what might happen if you did something wrong:

Action	Possible Punishment
telling lies, missing school, being rude or being lazy	...being hit with the cane. (The cane is a long, thin stick.)
not understanding	...being made to wear a dunce's hat. (This is a hat with the word 'dunce' on it. 'Dunce' means 'stupid'.)





### Other Punishments

Children might have to do 'lines'. They would have to copy the same sentence a lot of times (perhaps 100). In some schools, pupils were beaten with a leather strap. In other schools, pupils were hung from the ceiling in a basket.

Would you like to have gone to school in Victorian times?

# Victorian School Life

Life in a Victorian school was very different from today. There were no laptops, tablets or films to watch and teachers were much stricter.

## School

To be begin with, only some children went to school in Victorian times. Boys from rich families went to private schools, while girls were often taught at home. Some charities and churches provided free schools for poor children but the classrooms were often really big – sometimes with more than 100 pupils per class.

In 1880, a law was passed saying that every child between the ages of five and ten had to go to school.

## Lessons

Pupils called male teachers, 'Sir' and female teachers, 'Madam' or 'Miss'. A lot of the lessons involved listening to the teacher and copying things down from the blackboard.

Like today, reading, writing and maths were very important. Instead of learning in a fun way, children often had to memorise things. They would chant the times tables, for example, until they knew them off by heart.

Days were long and usually lasted until 5:00 pm. Here is an example of a Victorian school day:

Time	Lesson
9:00 - 9:10	prayers
9:10 - 10:10	scripture (Bible work)
10:10 - 11:10	arithmetic (maths)
11:10 - 11:30	recreation (play time)
11:30 - 12:00	writing
12:00 - 2:00	lunch (pupils usually went home)
2:00 - 2:45	drill (PE)
2:45 - 3:30	woodwork (boys) cooking (girls)
3:30 - 4:30	science
4:30 - 5:00	reading

## Equipment

When writing, pupils often used something sharp to scratch letters onto a flat piece of rock, called slate. It was a bit like a whiteboard as the slate could be wiped clean and used again. Older children may have been given paper and a special pen that was dipped into ink. The ink was held in little pots in the desk called inkwells. They were refilled each morning.

Victorian classrooms had windows high up so children couldn't look outside. This was so they could concentrate on their work. The classrooms usually had an abacus (beads on a wire to help with counting) and a map of the world.

## Punishment

Here's what might happen if you did something wrong in a Victorian school:



Action	Possible Punishment
telling lies, skipping school, being rude or being lazy	the cane (This is a stick that the teacher would hit the pupil with.)
not understanding	dunce's hat (The teacher made the pupil wear a hat with the word 'dunce', meaning stupid, on it. The dunce had to stand in the corner of the room.)



## Other Punishments

Children might have to do 'lines' where they copied the same sentence over and over again (perhaps 100 times). In some schools, pupils who were really naughty were beaten with a leather strap, or hung from the ceiling in a basket.

Would you like to have gone to school in Victorian times?

# Victorian School Life

Life in a Victorian school was very different from today. There were no laptops, tablets or interactive whiteboards – and punishments could be very harsh.

## School

At the start of the 1800s, only some children went to school. Boys from rich families were educated in private schools, while girls were often taught at home by their governess. Some charities and churches provided free schools for poor children but the classrooms were often overcrowded, sometimes with more than 100 pupils.

In 1880, a law was passed saying that every child between the ages of five and ten had to go to school.

## Lessons

Victorian teachers were very strict. Pupils called male teachers, 'Sir' and female teachers, 'Madam' or 'Miss'. A lot of the lessons involved listening to the teacher and copying things down from the blackboard.

The three **Rs**: reading, writing and arithmetic were very important. Instead of learning in a fun way – like multiplication bingo or online games – children often had to memorise things. They would chant the times tables, for example, until they knew them off by heart.

Days were long and usually lasted until 5:00 pm. Here is an example of a Victorian school day:

Time	Lesson
9:00 - 9:10	prayers
9:10 - 10:10	scripture (Bible work)
10:10 - 11:10	arithmetic (maths)
11:10 - 11:30	recreation (play time)
11:30 - 12:00	writing
12:00 - 2:00	lunch
2:00 - 2:45	drill (PE)
2:45 - 3:30	woodwork (boys) cookery and embroidery (girls)
3:30 - 4:20	science
4:20 - 4:50	reading
4:50 - 5:00	prayers



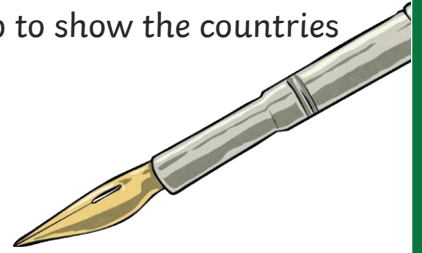
## Equipment

When writing, pupils often scratched letters onto slates (flat rocks) with something sharp. It was a bit like a whiteboard as the slates could be wiped clean and used again. Older children may have been given a fountain pen to write in 'copybooks'. The pen was dipped into a little pot of ink on the table. The inkwells were refilled each morning.

Victorian classrooms had tall ceilings with windows high up so children couldn't look outside. This was so they could concentrate on their work. The classrooms usually had an **abacus** to help with arithmetic and a map to show the countries of the British Empire.

## Punishment

Here's what might happen if you did something wrong in a Victorian school:



Action	Possible Punishment
rudeness, laziness, telling lies, skipping school	the cane (This is a stick that the teacher would hit the pupils with; boys usually on their bottoms and girls on their legs or hands.)
not understanding the work or not keeping up with lessons	dunce's hat (The teacher made the pupil wear a hat with the word 'dunce', meaning stupid, on it. The dunce was told to go and stand in the corner of the room.)

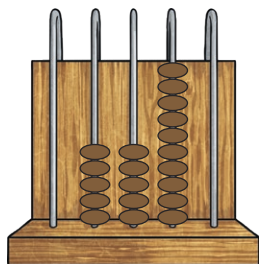


## Other Punishments

Children might have to do 'lines' where they copied the same sentence over and over again (perhaps 100 times). In some schools, if a pupil was really naughty, they would be beaten with a leather strap, or perhaps hung from the ceiling in a wicker basket using ropes and pulleys.

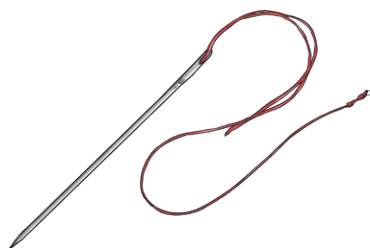
Would you like to have gone to school in Victorian times?

## Glossary



**abacus**

a wire frame with beads to help with counting



**embroidery**

sewing and needlework



**governess**

a woman who teaches children in their home