



Victorian life

Learning Outcome:

To understand the day to day life of a mill worker and their family in Victorian Dundee through a range of drama, creative writing and maths activities.

Curriculum for Excellence links – Group Discussion

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. **LIT 2-02a**

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. **LIT 1-04a**

Curriculum for Excellence links– Drama Activity

I enjoy creating, choosing and accepting roles, using movement, expression and voice. **EXA 1-12a**

I can create, adapt and sustain different roles, experimenting with movement, expression and voice and using theatre arts technology. **EXA 2-12a**

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through drama. **EXA 2-13a**

I have developed confidence and skills in creating and presenting drama which explores real and imaginary situations, using improvisation and script. **EXA 1-14a**

Curriculum for Excellence links – Creative Writing Activity

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. **LIT 2-26a**

As I write for different purposes and readers, I can describe and share my experiences, expressing what they made me think about and how they made me feel. **ENG 2-30a**

Curriculum for Excellence links – Mathematics Activity

I can use money to pay for items and can work out how much change I should receive. **MNU 1-09a**

Having determined which calculations are needed, I can solve problems involving whole numbers using a range of methods, sharing my approaches and solutions with others. **MNU 2-03a**

Victorian Family Role Cards

Lottie (Sister)

Age: 7 years old **Job:** Half-timer at Verdant Works **Wage:** 3 shillings per week

At home I share a small bed with my big brother. He wakes me up every day before going to school. I go to the mill school in the mornings and work in the afternoon. My school day starts at five in the morning. After lunch I go straight to the mill to work until six o'clock in the evening. I work as a 'picker', crawling under the machines and cleaning up dust from underneath them. I don't like being in the factory because it is always so loud with all the machines. At the end of the day I am very tired and sometimes I even fall asleep under the machines.

Harry (Brother)

Age: 12 years old **Job:** Half-timer at Verdant Works **Wage:** 3 shillings per week

I get my little sister up in the morning and help her get ready before we make our way to the mill school for five o'clock. After lunch I start work at the mill as a 'shifter'. I have to shift the full bobbins of yarn and replace them with empty ones. If I don't work quickly enough the 'Shiftin' Wifie' hits me with her leather belt. This hurts a lot so I try to work quickly even though I am always very exhausted. At six o'clock I am finally allowed to go home!

Edwina (Mother)

Age: 34 years old **Job:** Spinner at Verdant Works **Wage:** 10 shillings per week

It's a hard life working in the mills. I've been working at Verdant Works for many years now, having started there when I was young. I work long hours as a spinner. Times are tough at the moment as the wages are low. Every week we struggle to save enough money to give my children proper meals. I have to work extremely hard to provide for my family, especially since Victor can't find a job.

Victor (Father)

Age: 36 years old **Job:** Unemployed

I used to work at Verdant Works like the rest of my family, however I recently lost my job. Women and children have replaced many men at work as they don't have to be paid as much as men. Not being able to support my family financially has been very hard to accept. Now I take care of the housework, while Edwina and the children work. I am responsible for doing cleaning, laundry, ironing and cooking. In my opinion men shouldn't be doing housework but times are hard and I cannot support my family in any other way.

Victorian Life Role Card Activities

Learning Outcome:

To undertake a number of creative tasks to gain a better understanding of what life was like for a family in Victorian Dundee.

What to do:

- Divide the class into groups of four.
- Each person in the group gets one of the following roles: Sister, Brother, Father, Mother.
- Hand each child their corresponding role card.
- Tell the class the following information to set the context for their exploration:

You are a Victorian family living in a two roomed flat in Dundee in the 1860s. Due to the end of the American Civil War there has been a reduction in jute trade and the wages of workers have been lowered. The mother works as a spinner at Verdant Works and earns 10 shillings per week. The children are also employed in the factory and work there as half-timers, where they each earn 3 shillings per week. Unfortunately the father of this family is unemployed as he cannot find work in Dundee at this time.

- Allow children to read through their role card and share the main points about their character with their group.

Questions to guide group discussions:

- After hearing about the different characters in your Victorian family, what do you think it was like to live in the 1860s?
- What were the living conditions like?
- What was it like to be a child in Victorian times?
- How is this different from your life?
- How is Lottie's and Harry's routine different from yours?
- Why do you think Victor is not happy about staying at home and doing the housework?

Drama Activity – Victorian freeze frame

- Explain to the class that they are going to create a still image, which is like the image when someone presses pause on a DVD. Characteristics of a still image are that there is no sound or movement.
- Children will work in groups to come up with a still image to show a scene from Lottie's or Harry's day. They may need to refer to these role cards to remind them what the children's day was like.
- Allow time for children to discuss their ideas and come up with their still image.
- Let children perform their still image to the rest of the class.
- The audience can discuss what they think the still image is showing.

Suggested settings for the children to consider:

- Strict mill school
- The factory
- At home in their small flat

Creative Writing Activity

Learning Outcome:

To write a letter to your future self, explaining what life is like for you as a Victorian child.

What to do:

- Read out the following prompt to the class:

Close your eyes.

Imagine you are on the school playground, when you notice a strange metal object shimmering in the distance. Intrigued by the light reflecting off the huge, shiny box, you decide to have a closer look. As you approach the enormous metal object you are able to make out the words 'Time Machine'. Excited by your new discovery, you decide to open the heavy, squeaking door and step inside what appears to be some sort of time travelling device.

Now that you have entered the machine, you see a dashboard full of buttons and flashing lights. You have decided to see if the time machine still works by setting the date to 1865. You press the rusty red button labelled 'TRAVEL' and wait in anticipation. Unfortunately nothing seems to have happened. Disappointed you push open the metal door again and step outside. At first glance everything seems normal but suddenly you realise the world you just entered is nothing like the one you came from. You have been transported to Victorian Dundee!

Things to consider:

- What is your day like in 1865 as a Victorian child?
- Where do you live? Who do you live with?
- Do you have to work after school? How much do you earn?
- What sort of things are missing that you take for granted?

E.g. no electricity, communal toilets

Word Challenge

Can you include the following words in your letter?

1. Mill
2. Shilling
3. Half-timer

Mathematics Activity - Money

Learning Outcome:

To understand how difficult life was for a Victorian family working in the jute mills financially.

What to do:

- Set your pupils the following tasks:

1. Work out how much money your family earns each week?

$$10s + 3s + 3s = 16s$$

2. What sort of things do you think you will need to spend your 16 shillings on?

E.g. food, rent, etc.

- Tell the class the following information to set the context for their exploration:

This week Edwina and Victor still need to buy wood and coal to heat their stove and fireplace. They also need to pay rent for their small flat, which only consists of two rooms. Their weekly shop for food has also not yet been done.

3. In your groups discuss how much of the 16 shillings you think would be spent on the different areas (coal and wood, rent, food)?
4. Compare the money distributions different groups decided on.
5. Reveal how much actually was spent on each area per week.

Coal or wood: 1s

Rent: 10s

Food: 5s

Victorian Money:

Pound - £ £1 = 20s

Shilling – s 1s = 12d

Penny – d

Specific prices for certain foods:

Loaf of bread: 8d

1 lb sugar: 6d

Dozen eggs: 7d

Steak: 1s

Note: the mothers wage would only cover the rent. This meant that it was vital for the children to work as well, as the little money they made was needed to cover other areas.

Make a Victorian Toy

Learning Outcome:

Increased learning about children's lives and lifestyles in the past, an improved understanding of how the past differs from the present, improved enquiry when answering questions about the past and a raised awareness of materials used in the past through creating 'Victorian' toys and games.

Curriculum for Excellence links:

People, past events and societies:

SOC 0-02a , SOC 0-04a, SOC 1-04a

English and Literacy. Listening and Talking:

LIT 1-02a, ENG 1-03a, LIT 1-07a, ENG 2-03a, LIT 2-07a.

Hopscotch

You will need:

Chalk or masking tape

A marker – this would traditionally have been a flat stone, but you can use a bean bag or a ball of plasticine/modelling clay

What to do:

1. Draw the square hopscotch board on to the floor with chalk – or you could use masking tape.
2. The object of the game is to throw the marker onto the board and hop over it onto the next square (or set of squares), working your way up and down the board without making a mistake.
3. To begin the game, the first player throws their marker onto square 1. They must hop over that square and land on squares two and three with one foot in each. Then they try to hopscotch up to the top of the board – hopping in single squares and landing with two feet in double squares – once they reach the end of the board they must turn and come back down, stopping to pick up the marker on the way back.
4. If no mistakes were made, the same player continues by throwing their marker to square two and repeating the process, always avoiding contact with the square that contains the marker.
5. The next player starts their go when the board is complete or if...
 - A player does not throw the marker in the correct square.
 - A player loses balance and places a hand or second foot down.
 - A player steps on a line, hops on the wrong square or hops on the square containing their marker. – A player puts both feet down in a single box.

Peg Dolls

Peg dolls are easy to make. Just get a traditional wooden dolly peg and decorate it with a face and clothes!

The toys children played with in Victorian times often depended on how wealthy their family was. Children from rich families played with rocking horses, train sets, doll's houses and toy soldiers, whereas children from poor families tended to play with home-made toys such as peg dolls, spinning tops and skipping ropes.

Thaumatrope

A popular toy during Victorian times was the thaumatrope. The thaumatrope is a disc or card with a picture on each side which is attached to two pieces of string. When the strings are twirled quickly the two discs spin round and animate the pictures! A popular Victorian thaumatrope featured a picture of a bird and a cage. When you spun the thaumatrope, the two images became one and it would appear that the bird was actually in the cage.

Follow the instructions to make your own thaumatrope. You can find templates online or design your own.

You will need -

Cardboard

Scissors

pencil

coloured pens

string

glue

What to do:

1. If you're designing your own thaumatrope, cut out two circles of card. You could draw round a cup to get a perfect circle.
2. Use a hole punch to punch two holes through each of your circles of card.
3. Now you can add your design. If you are using your own design, draw it on to your circles of card. You need to choose two images that will form an animation - like a fish and a fishbowl, a bird and a cage or a smiley face and an unhappy face.
4. Use some glue to stick the back of the two circles together. One of the pictures needs to be upside down to ensure the animation works. Also, make sure the holes you made with the hole punch are lined up with each other.
5. Cut two pieces of string about 20cm long each and thread them through each hole. Pull the string back on itself so you have two loops on each side. 6. Wind the string up by twisting it between your fingers and then pull tight to release. As the circles of card spin around, watch the two pictures appear as one moving image!

Make a spinning top

Another popular toy during Victorian times was a spinning top. Victorian spinning tops would have been made out of wood but you can make a simple version using some card and a pencil.

You will need -

- A short pencil
- A piece of cardboard
- Scissors
- Coloured pens
- Blu-tack
- Selotape

What to do:

1. Draw a circle on a piece of card, 7cm in diameter. You could draw around a mug to create a perfect circle.
2. Cut the circle out carefully with scissors.
3. Draw a pattern on the card with coloured pens. Patterns that start at the centre of the cardboard and work out to the edge will look really good when the top is spinning.
4. Take your pencil and poke it through the centre of the circle of card so the point sticks out by a couple of centimetres. Push the pencil into some sticky tack to protect the point. Ask an adult to help you with this. Use a little sticky tape to hold the pencil in place.
5. Your spinning top is finished! It will work best on a flat surface, but remember it is a pencil so will leave a mark. Use it outside or on paper if you use it indoors.

Paper weaving

Learning Outcome:

To understand the weaving process and to create their own 'jute' bag with company stamp/ bail mark.

Curriculum for Excellence links:

I have the opportunity to choose and explore an extended range of media and technologies to create images and objects, comparing and combining them for specific tasks. **EXA 2-02a**

What to do:

Show children examples of jute bags – these are available from supermarkets or show internet images.

Discuss how jute is woven and how it is strong and durable.

Use an online template for step-by-step process.

The children should then design their own 'company logo' which should go on the bag at the bottom corner. This should be individual to each child – they could create a stamp block to create their logo if appropriate.

Dundee skyline

Learning Outcome:

To create a silhouette of Dundee skyline showing the mill buildings

Curriculum for excellence links:

I have the opportunity to choose and explore an extended range of media and technologies to create images and objects, comparing and combining them for specific tasks. **EXA 2-01a**

What you need:

Different coloured paper – black, brown, fawn (dull colours)

Glue

What to do:

1. Show children pictures of mill buildings in Dundee – either printed copies or on the interactive whiteboard
2. Explain to the children that during the Victorian period Dundee city centre was full of mills and the chimneys dominated the skyline. Explain that we are going to create a Dundee skyline showing these mills.
3. Using a sheet of A4 paper as a background, the children then rip pieces of paper to create the shapes of the buildings to show the skyline. They should pay particular attention to varying the height of the buildings. Keep the pictures of the mills on the whiteboard/in front of the pupils.