

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

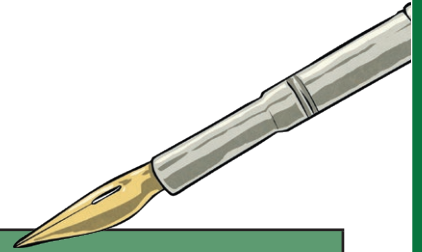
What They Used

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?