

Unit 12 How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children investigate some of the ways their local area changed during the Victorian era, and some of the reasons for those changes. Children use the local area to explore characteristic features of Victorian times, how the area changed over time and the reasons for and results of these changes. Children develop their sense of chronology, and ask and answer questions, from buildings and other information sources.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

Fieldwork skills introduced in other units, as in Units 2, 6A and 8, will be developed through this unit. It also introduces a range of sources that will be new to the children. The unit complements Unit 11, 'What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?' and is particularly suited to schools located in an area with a range of buildings dating from the Victorian period.

ADAPTING THE UNIT FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Year 3 and 4 children could:

- be introduced to the concept of a census by taking part in one in class, with due sensitivity
- use census material that has been transcribed into an easier format
- spend more time developing their knowledge of building styles and materials
- be given structures to use when presenting their work

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- done some introductory work on the Victorians, perhaps from Unit 11, 'What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?'
- experience of fieldwork involving observations of domestic architecture, as in Unit 2, 'What were homes like a long time ago?', and Unit 8, 'What were the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times?'
- used simple databases

VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with local history studies, *eg census, trade directory, street directory, locality*
- words associated with Victorian housing, *eg villa, terraced house, tied cottage, workhouse, sash window, bargeboards, gable*
- words associated with industrialisation, *eg mechanisation, urbanisation, public health*

RESOURCES

- copies of census returns from now and Victorian times, *eg 1891 and 1841*
- pictures of Victorian transport and industry
- pictures of features of Victorian buildings
- pictures of local buildings, transport and industry from the Victorian period

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

some children will have progressed further and will:

make appropriate use of dates, *eg 1841, 1891*; identify changes in the locality within the Victorian period; give some reasons for the changes studied; select information from various sources to find out about aspects of the period

present selected information using some specialist terms; describe some features of the period

select and combine information from several sources to find out about the past; give results of some of the main events and changes in the locality; produce extended writing that is organised and structured appropriately

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to find out about the past from census returns
- to select and record information relevant to a chosen topic

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Who lived here in 1841?
Ask the children to find 1841 on the class time line. Ask them who they think might have lived in the local area in 1841 and how they could find this information. Introduce the idea of a census, and discuss what information might be on it. Give the children copies of a census return and ask them to list the headings under which information is collected.

Give the children returns from 1841 for the local area. Ask them to record the name and one other field of data (age, occupation, place of origin, size of family). Discuss with the children their findings, helping them to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the area in 1841.

Ask children to produce graphs for fields they have investigated.

- to make comparisons that illustrate change within the Victorian period
- to give reasons for these changes
- to identify characteristic features of Victorian transport and industry

Who lived and worked here in 1891? What has changed since 1841 and why?
Give children census returns from 1891, and ask them to research the same fields as in the previous activity. Ask them to list findings to report to the class.

Discuss with children what has changed since 1841. *Are any of the same families still living in the same homes? Are there more people living in the area who were born elsewhere? Have people's occupations changed?* Discuss why some of these changes might have taken place, encouraging the children to speculate on the basis of their own knowledge.

Let the children see pictures showing changes in transport and industry in the Victorian period and ask the children to describe some of the main changes at a national level.

Show them pictures of transport and industry in the local area in the Victorian period, *eg railway stations, canals, mills, factories*

Discuss with the children whether changes in transport or changes to industry were the most important in their local area.

- to describe the attitudes of some different people to the building of a railway in the locality
- to communicate their understanding of benefits and disadvantages of railways

How did the arrival and expansion of the railways affect our area?
Tell children about the arrival of the railways in the locality, or the nearest point to the locality. Discuss how they might have affected people living in the area, who would have benefited and who would have lost out. Ask children to compare maps from 1841 and 1891, *eg number of houses, number of streets, site of railway line or station*.

Divide the children into groups. Give each group the name of a family in the census in 1891, and ask them to consider, and make a list of, the benefits and disadvantages of the railways to that family.

Give each child a role card stating a person's name, occupation and point of view about the proposed building of a railway through the locality. Ask the children to prepare arguments that they can role-play in a debate.

Organise a class debate and vote on whether or not they favour the building of the railway.

- to identify and record characteristic features of Victorian buildings
- to recognise ways in which buildings have been changed over time, and consider reasons for the changes

What evidence of Victorian times remains in our area?
Explain the characteristic features of Victorian buildings, *eg typical windows, doors, roofs, building materials*, showing pictures of local examples. Explain about the expansion/decrease in local population during the Victorian period. Discuss with the children where Victorian buildings might be found, using local maps.

Arrange a visit to look at local Victorian buildings. Ask the children to record the external features of buildings, *eg by sketching, taking photographs, recording on video*.

On their return to school, show children pictures of the same buildings in the nineteenth century. Ask them to identify those that have remained as they were, those that have changed, and how they have changed, *eg replacement doors, windows, conversion, cladding*. Discuss with the children reasons why the buildings might have been changed.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- understand what a census return is and what can be learnt from it
- extract data from a census return and record it in a graph

- identify changes between the census of 1841 and that of 1891
- speculate about possible reasons for change

- speculate how people might have been affected by the railways
- present ideas to the class in oral, visual or written form

- identify features of Victorian buildings
- record features of Victorian buildings
- identify changes in buildings and suggest reasons for the changes

POINTS TO NOTE

This activity uses a variety of sources of information that are available for most localities. Census and other information for a different year can be substituted where none is available for 1841. Most local councils have archives that can supply copies of census returns. They are also available from local study centres, which are usually located in local libraries.

Census returns are often handwritten in copperplate writing, so may need to be transcribed. This activity could be adapted by transcribing some pages onto a simple database for some children.

Children's conclusions could be very simple, *eg typical names, ages of people working, types of jobs*.

Census returns need to be for the same streets as those used in any previous activity. This activity could be extended by using street directories and trade directories. These show the owners of and the uses of the buildings in a given street. Children could look at increases or decreases in the numbers of shops or changes in the use of buildings.

Many people in 1840 were alarmed by the idea of railways and opposition was strong. The railways affected: journey times, trade (range of goods), leisure industry, landscape, property ownership, coaching companies and inns (closure) and canals (loss of business). Examples from other localities could be used to make comparisons and extend the range of ideas.

Additional resources will be needed to support this activity, *eg textbooks, video, illustrations*.

When considering advantages and disadvantages, children could be guided to consider the use of trains for holidays and leisure travel as well as work.

The children can develop their writing skills by encouraging them to consider the way that an argument can be made more persuasive, *eg through the use of emotive language*, as a prelude to the debate.

The debate provides opportunities for developing skills related to citizenship education.

This should be the core activity of the unit if your local area has a number of streets or buildings that can obviously be identified with the Victorian period. The amount of preparation needed for any visits will depend on the class and their familiarity with the locality. The children may need worksheets or discussion points to focus their observations and deductions.

Where possible, children should visit streets studied when looking at census returns, street directories or the railway.

Children could also look in the local church and churchyard for evidence of Victorian times that may lead to further investigations, *eg typical grave inscriptions, memorials*

English Heritage publishes a range of teacher resources on finding out about the local area from its buildings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to recall information about the area in Victorian times
- to organise their knowledge and use it to summarise their learning about the changes

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?
Discuss with the children what they have learnt about their locality in Victorian times. Focus on the main changes that occurred in the locality over the period and the causes and effects of these changes. Use flow diagrams, other charts and a collection of pictures to illustrate what they discuss.
Identify categories, *eg population, place of origin of inhabitants, occupations and sources of employment, buildings.*
Ask the children to choose one of the categories and use a range of sources to find out about and summarise the changes that took place.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- suggest the ways in which the locality changed in the Victorian period
- summarise what they have found out about one way the local area has changed

POINTS TO NOTE

A speaker from a local history society could be invited to talk about the local area in the Victorian period.
Information can be presented in various ways, *eg visually, in written form, as a class presentation (assembly), electronically.*
Children’s writing skills can be developed by using the activity as a means of revising the features of explanatory texts, including presentational devices like charts and diagrams. Children could be taught how to use these devices to support the making of a summary, and as notes for an oral presentation.
This activity could be linked to IT. Children could construct databases and present data in graph form, or as data files using multimedia programmes. They could use desktop publishing programmes to produce leaflets for other children, visitors to the school, or even for display in local museums.

