

Victorian Era

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The **Victorian Era** of [Great Britain](#) marked the height of the British [industrial revolution](#) and the apex of the [British Empire](#). The impetus of the [industrial revolution](#) had already occurred, but it was during this period that the full effects of [industrialisation](#) made themselves felt, leading to the [mass society](#) of the 20th century.

Queen Victoria had the [longest reign in British history](#), and the cultural, political, economic, industrial and scientific changes that occurred during her reign were remarkable. When Victoria ascended to the throne, England was essentially [agrarian](#) and rural; upon her death, the country was highly industrialized and connected by an expansive railway network. The first decades of Victoria's reign witnessed a series of epidemics ([typhus](#) and [cholera](#), most notably), crop failures and economic collapses.

Social Institutions

Prior to the industrial revolution, Britain had a very rigid social structure consisting of three distinct classes: The Church and aristocracy, the middle class, and the working poorer class.

The top class was known as the aristocracy. It included the Church and nobility and had great power and wealth. This class consisted of about two percent of the population, who were born into nobility and who owned the majority of the land. It included the royal family, lords spiritual and temporal, the clergy, great officers of state, and those above the degree of baronet. These people were privileged and avoided taxes.

The middle class consisted of the bourgeoisie - the middle working class. It was made up of factory owners, bankers, shopkeepers, merchants, lawyers, engineers, businessmen, traders, and other professionals. These people could be sometimes extremely rich, but in normal circumstances they were not privileged, and they especially resented this. There was a very large gap between the middle class and the lower class.

The British lower class was divided into two sections: “the working class” (labourers), and “the poor” (those who were not working, or not working regularly, and were receiving public charity). The lower class contained men, women, and children performing many types of labor, including factory work, seamstressing, chimney sweeping, mining, and other jobs. Both the poorer class and the middle class had to endure a large burden of tax. This third class consisted of about eighty-five percent of the population but owned less than fifty percent of the land.

Industrialisation changed the class structure dramatically in the late 18th century. Hostility was created between the upper and lower classes.

As a result of industrialisation, there was a huge boost of the middle and working class. As the Industrial Revolution progressed there was further social division. Capitalists, for example, employed industrial workers, who were one component of the working classes (each class included a wide range of occupations of varying status and income; there was a large gap, for example, between skilled and unskilled labor), but beneath the industrial workers was a submerged "under class" sometimes referred to as the "sunken people," which lived in poverty. The under class were more susceptible to exploitation and were therefore exploited.

During her Reign

When Victoria began to govern Great-Britain, her mother was envious. Then in 1840, Victoria married her cousin Albert of Saxe-Cobourg. She had nine children. In twenty years, Great-Britain conquered a lot of territories. It conquered a quarter of the four continents : America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. When Victoria was forty-four years old, her husband died. She was very sad because she loved him a lot. In forty years, Great-Britain became the first colonial power in the world. The population was very happy to have a good queen who made Great-Britain a big country in the world.

The End of her Life

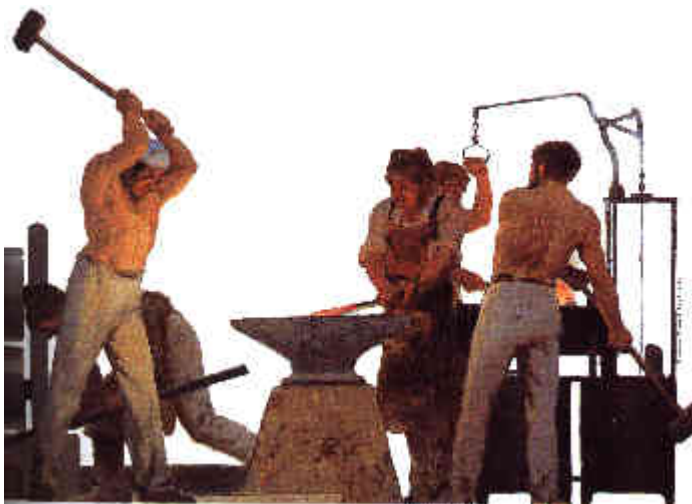
She died the twenty second of January in 1901 after a reign of sixty three years (the date is not sure). She died in her palace in Osborne when she was eighty one years old. Her death was a terrible loss for the country. Everybody, her family and the country was very sad. She gave her name to this century.

Workers of the Industrial Era

We are going to tell you about the workers' life and their work. In 1833 in factories, workers spent fifteen hours working. They had only two hours to eat potatoes and bread and they didn't have enough strength. It was a working-day for one worker and it was very hard for him in England.

Their working conditions

Many workers were very tired because they worked a lot. They didn't have enough money to get some proper food. They worked in very dirty places with much noise and pollution. It was very dangerous because they could cut hands. Accidents happened a lot. When workers were too tired, they lost their work. They didn't go on strike.



A difficult life

"Living doesn't mean dying"

In big cities, workers and their families lived in dirty houses. Their working-day started at four in the morning and finished at eleven in the evening. They had four or five days of holidays. Workers were sad and some of them drank a lot to forget this terrible life. When workers broke machines, a boss could beat them.

A better society

Robert Owen was a courageous industrial because he wanted to build small houses for workers, to provide them with a better salary and good education for children. Rich workers got help when they were sick and had accidents whereas poor workers and women didn't get any help. In the middle of the nineteenth century, sensitive people tried to help them. They wanted a better society. After that, working was less difficult because machines were better and workers worked less in 1850.

Children in the Victorian Age

We are going to tell you about children in the Victorian age.

Children at work

Children had an unhappy childhood. They worked hard to satisfy the needs of their parents because families were very poor and they didn't have enough money, so children worked. They underwent very difficult conditions of employment. Days were long for them : eight or twelve hours a day, six days a week.



In this picture we can see many children at work and we see they worked in very dangerous conditions because they carried heavy stones and they didn't wear shoes because families were too poor to buy them. Children worked in very sad conditions when they were in rags. The building could collapse because at that times, streets were very poor.

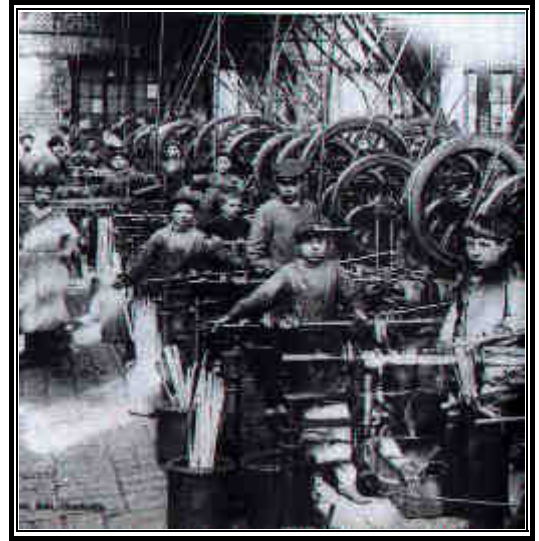
In the industrial revolution, they looked like slaves.

Children worked in manufactories.

At that time, there was no insurance and when children had accidents or were ill they didn't have any help.

Many children often worked with adults : they worked under the same conditions. Children were small, they could go into narrow spaces, children were clever too and employers appreciated these qualities.

In 2001, in poor countries, many children often work to help their parents but the conditions of employment may be better than the industrial revolution in England.



In this picture, we can see many children at work in a manufactory. We think they were very sad and weren't happy.

Life Conditions



In this picture we can see a dark , a poor street. People lived in very dangerous conditions because they didn't have hygiene. There were many people in this street.

In the 19th century, children lived in very difficult conditions because they lived near factories and in unhealthy flats or in suburbs with poor hygiene. They had bad nutrition. They ate some bread, pork, milk or cheese (not everyday). This favoured infant mortality and diseases. Towards 1830 charity associations came to help children and their families. It gave food and clothes to everybody. After 1840 school was an obligation and children stopped working. But the conditions remained very difficult for all because streets and suburbs were very dirty in England.

In this picture we can see a dirty and a poor home because they didn't have hygiene. They were many in their home ; we can see five children. We think they were very sad and sorry. It was one room for seven persons.



In this picture we can see death scything people. This document is very horrifying. This drawing comes from the news paper: "Le petit journal" on Sunday the first of December 1912. Cholera disappeared in western Europe but it remained in eastern and the mediterranean..

Children's illness

In 1830, children could be ill with cholera when they drank water. Streets in London were dirty. Conditions of life were very difficult. Children lived in the street and the industrial revolution caused pollution. Many children were very ill. Children's lungs infected and they blackened. They had tuberculosis. These diseases were the infection of the lungs. Whooping cough was practically the same as tuberculosis. It was a virus. In the 19 th century vaccins didn't exist. The rate of mortality was high.

Rich children

Parents of rich children often were bankers, merchants, industrials or [civil servants](#). They lived in beautiful suburbs, sometimes in private hotels. The upper class organized parties and could go to festivals whereas the poor worked.

Only children from rich families went to school. But these ones were not many.

Boys were in famous schools like Eton where education was very strict. Eton is a big school near London in front of Windsor.

They could go to school invented by Thomas ARNOLD, a rugbyman, where [behaviour](#), friendship, fair play were more important than others. Thomas ARNOLD and parents thought it was more important for gentlemen to learn classical authors than sciences.

Girls didn't have the same education as boys. They learned to [become](#) good wives and good mothers.

This education was very unfair so in 1870, the Education Act was passed. It offered schools for all children between the age of 5 and 13.



On this photo you can see Queen Victoria with five of her nine children. She was very strict with them. They didn't do what they wanted. Tutors came to give them lessons. Their clothes were very expensive.



Here we can see rich families with their children in Hyde Park in London.

The British Empire

Queen Victoria reigned in England from 1837 to her death in 1901. Her reign lasted 64 years. She made her country richer, stronger, more powerful. England was at its best.

Queen Victoria's Conquests

In her life, Queen Victoria conquered many countries : Egypt in 1881, Canada in 1867, India and she became Empress of India in 1876. After her death in 1901 Edward VII conquered Australia and New Zealand in 1907, South Africa in 1910, Ireland in 1922.



Map of Queen Victoria and Edward the VII's Empire in 1890.



The jubilee of diamond in 1897

The popularity of Victoria.

On this picture, we can see flags of Queen Victoria's conquests. We can see a beautiful parade. Everybody is very happy. Before the reign of Victoria, England was poor, dirty. During her reign, the Empire became rich, beautiful and happy. It was a very good period for the history of England. Victoria's popularity was finally in the twenty last years of her reign. The golden Jubilee (1887) and the diamonds Jubilee (1897) were a very big party. Her reign was the longest of British history.

The end of Queen Victoria's reign.

In 1899 the war of Boers started and Victoria died during this war. This war finished in 1902. When Victoria died, Edward VII became king of the British Empire. During this time, France and England were closer.

Words

authoritative : (adj) likely to be obeyed.

austere : (adj) strict and serious.

became : (v) past tense of become.

become : (v) start to change and develop other characteristics.

began : (v) past tense of begin.

behaviour : (n) the way people do and say things.

blacken : (v) become black.

boring : (adj) dull, uninteresting.

brooch : (n) piece of jewellery to pin on a dress or a coat.

call : (v) give the name of.

came : (v) past tense of come.

carry out : (v) do.

civil servants : (n) people who worked for the queen.

clever : (adj) intelligent, witty.

collapse : (v) fall down.

conquer : (v) take complete control of another [land](#).

coronation : (n) ceremony at which someone [becomes](#) king or queen.

decade : (n) ten years.

descendant : (n) one of the later generation.

diary : (n) a book in which you can write what happens in your everyday life.

disease : (n) illness.

earrings : (n) [jewels](#) on one's ear.

the eldest : (adj) the superlative form of the adjective old.

emperor : (n) a man who [rules](#) an empire.

empire : (n) a number of nations that are controlled by the ruler of one country.

factory : (n) a large building where men use machines to make large quantities of things.

gave : (v) past tense of give.

get on well (with) : (v) have a friendly relationship.

go on strike : (v) stop working.

govern : (v) be in charge of a country.

granddaughter : (n) someone's granddaughter is the daughter of their son or daughter.

gun : (n) object used to hunt, to kill.

hairdo : (n) the way someone combs one's hair.

handkerchief : (n) small piece of cloth you use to blow your nose.

hard : (adj) difficult.

for instance : (adv) for example.

jewel : (n) precious ring, [necklace](#) etc...

jubilee : (n) a special anniversary.

knew : (v) past tense of know.

land : (n) area of ground, rather than sea or air.

last : (v) go from a period of time to another period of time.

leader : (n) someone at the head of something.

look like : (v) resemble.

loss : (n) when you lose something.

lungs : (n) the two organs inside your chest which fill with air when you

breathe in.

made : (v) past tense of make.

may : modal of suppose (50% sure).

narrow : (adj) very small distance from one side to another.

necklace : (n) jewel to wear around your neck.

parade : (n) procession of people or vehicles through a public place to celebrate something important.

plump : (adj) rounded, rather fat.

power : (n) a lot of control over people.

proper : (adj) good for health.

protective : (adj) looking after someone and showing a strong desire to keep safe.

provide (with) : (v) give.

a quarter : 1/4.

in rags : (n) in old and torn clothes, full of holes. (rotos vestidos llenos de agujeros)

recover : (v) become well again.

the Riviera : (n) *La Côte d'Azur*.

rule : (v) lead, govern.

safe : (adj) not dangerous.

self-confident : (adj) self-assured.

sensitive : (adj) showing understanding to someone's problems, feelings.

show : (v) put in exhibition.

sick : (adj) ill.

silk : (n) *soie*.

slave : (n) someone who is the property of another person.

spend : (v) use time doing something.

stones : (n) rocks.

strength : (n) physical energy.

suburb : (n) small area outside the center of the city.

succeed to : (v) be the next person to have a position.

towards : in the direction of.

undergo : (v) endure, cannot avoid or escape.

underwent : (v) past tense of undergo.

unhealthy : (adj) dirty and likely to cause illness and infection.

veil : (n) a piece of cloth to put on one's head to hide hair.

wear : (v) have on one's body (clothes).

whooping cough : (n) *coqueluche*.

wore : (v) past tense of wear.

would : (v) past tense of will.

wrote : (v) past tense of write.