**PAGE 1**

**Life as a Child in Victorian Cardiff**

Using facts, photos, objects and stories from the Victorian period, you will explore how, and in what ways children’s lives were different compared to growing up today.

**Image**:

“East Dock, Cardiff, April 14th 1883.”

A sepia tone photograph filled with dozens of ships. Two ships are clear to see, they are ‘tramp steamers’ with chimneys for their coal fueled engines as well as masts. Behind them is a forest of masts, more than can be counted.

The photograph has a handwritten description at the bottom. “East Dock, April 14th 1883. Looking about north west, from no.4 tip, East side of East Dock.”

East Dock is still there today, although there are no ships anymore.

**Cardiff during the Victorian Period**

**Any word with an \* symbol will have its meaning explained beneath in the “Glossary” section.**

Cardiff grew up from being a small town into a busy industrial port\* during this period.

Coal that was mined\* from the South Wales Valleys was sent from Cardiff Docks to different parts of the world.

The coal industry and growth of the docks created new jobs and opportunities. This led to many people from different parts of the world moving to Cardiff.

Coal was used for lots of different things. It could be used for fires to heat people’s homes, to cook with and to give power to steam trains.

**Three Facts:**

The Victorian period started in 1837 and ended in 1901.

The Victorian period is named after Queen Victoria, who was the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during that time.

In 1811 there were only 3,000 people living in Cardiff. By 1891 the population had grown to 129,000 people.

**PAGE 2**

**IMAGE:**

Cartoon illustration of a young boy polishing the shoes of an adult.

The man is smartly dressed in a brown suit with a straw boater hat. The child is scruffily dressed in shabby trousers, shirt, and a flat cap. The man is resting his foot on a small box while the boy kneels to polish his shoe with a brush.

**Changes to Children’s Lives**

Conditions and rights of children were very different in the past.

Children from poor and working class families went to work because they had to. They needed to earn money to help their families.

During the Victorian period, new laws were introduced to protect children.

In 1842 and 47 The Factory Act stated that children under 9 years of age could not work in factories. The act also limited children’s working hours to 10 hours per day.

**IMAGE**

“School children using abacuses in the classroom.”

A brown and black sepia photograph of a Victorian classroom. There are four straight rows of desk benches with seventeen young children. Each child has an abacus, which is a wooden frame holding round beads which can be slid along poles to assist with counting.

The children are mostly girls with long hair and frilly white frocks. There are also a few boys in dark frock coats with wide white collars over the top.

None of the children are smiling, they’re all looking at the camera with rather serious expressions. Every child is actually sat identically with their right hand resting on the top of their abacus, they’ve clearly been told to pose that way and look serious for the photograph.

**Fact:**

The Education Act of 1870 made it compulsory\* for children aged 5-10 years old to attend school.

**Question:**

What do you think school would have been like for children during the Victorian period?

**Write your answer here...**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Glossary Words\***

Port- A port is a place by the sea or river where ships can come and go.

Mined- Coal is mined from the ground. Coal miners dig coal from a mine.

Compulsory- Compulsory means that you have to do it. Example: there are rules that are compulsory for people to follow.

**PAGE 3**

**Activity: Mary’s Story**

Read Mary’ story and then answer the questions.

**Mary’s Story**

**“**Hello! My name is Mary.

It is the year 1852 and I live in Newtown, which is a place in Cardiff near the docks.

My parents were both from Ireland. They came to Cardiff in the 1840s because they heard people were needed to help build the docks.

I’m the oldest of eight children. I don’t go to school because I have to work as a maid. At home, I help take care of my brothers and sisters.”

**Questions:**

Where in Cardiff does Mary and her family live?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Why did Mary’s parents move to Cardiff?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

What is Mary’s job?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

What do you think Mary’s life at home is like? Why do you think this?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

How many years did the Victorian period last?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Fact:**

The Victorian period started in 1837 and ended in 1901.

**PAGE 4**

**Activity: My Victorian Life**

For this activity you will be asked to imagine that you are living during the Victorian period. You will learn about everyday objects and write about your daily life.

**Candle Holder**

**IMAGE**

Photograph of a candle stick holder. It is a wide shallow dish.

On one side is a little loop handle, enough to put your finger through and carry it. In the middle of it is a round hole that a candle can be placed in. The dish has a shallow lip around the edge to catch any dripping candle wax.

**Question:**

Who would have used this?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

Candles were important to Victorian daily life as there was no electric lighting until a few decades later, at the start of the 20th century.

Candlelight was used for most ordinary activities throughout the era, from dining and playing games to cooking. Every upper class Victorian household used candles and candle stick holders.

**Chamber Pot**

**IMAGE:**

Photograph of a simple chamber pot. It is a large, tall, and round ceramic bowl. It has a hand sized handle sticking out on one side so that the carrier can hold it as far away from their body, or nose, as possible.

**Question:**

What is a chamber pot?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

Chamber pots were used as toilets in Victorian houses before there was indoor plumbing.

Chamber pots were nicknamed ‘Guzunders’. They were called this because a chamber pot ‘goes under’ the bed. Chamber pots were used for a long time after the Victorian period ended.

**PAGE 5**

**Activity: My Victorian Life**

**Carpet Beater**

**IMAGE:**

Photograph of a wicker carpet beater. It has a long thin handle and a wide triangular end for beating the dust out of carpets.

It’s made of light wooden strands wound together to make light wicker. The triangular end has a wicker lattice with lots of holes, making it easier to swing.

**Question:**

What is a carpet beater?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

Most commonly known as a carpet beater, this object was a common household cleaning tool, before vacuum cleaners.

**Question:**

What did it do?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

When carpets, rugs, clothing, cushions, or bedding were hung over a clothesline, a person would take the carpet beater and hit what was on the clothesline to get the dust out.

**Question:**

What was it made of?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

Beaters were often made of wood, rattan, cane, wicker, spring steel, or wire. Modern carpet beaters are made from plastic or wire.

**Copper Kettle**

**Image:**

Photograph of an orange coloured copper kettle. It’s very different to a modern plastic electric kettle. The copper kettle is more the shape of a teapot, with a round body, a lid on top, and a long spout.

Instead of a handle on the side, like a teapot, the copper kettle has a long handle attached over the top. This tells us how the kettle would be sat over a fire, so its user would want the handle on top to keep their hand as far away from the heat as possible.

**Question:**

What is it made from?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Answer:**

While the lower classes were eventually able to afford silver. Copper was used instead, because it was cheap, bright and easy to heat. Copper kettles were flat-bottomed to stand on a hob grate or range.

**PAGE 6**

**Activity: My Victorian Life**

Imagine that you are a child growing up during the Victorian period. Write about a day in your life. Try to include some of the Victorian objects in your story.

**Example:**

“My name is Ann and I am 9 years old. I life in the Grangetown area of Cardiff. I have 5 siblings and my father works in Cardiff Docks.

I live in a terraced house with my family and I share a room with my 3 sisters. On wash day I help my mother with the cleaning. I use a carpet beater to hit dust out of our rugs.”

**IMAGE:**

A hand sketch of the wicker carpet beater.

**My Victorian Life:**

*Write describe your Victorian life in the box beneath...*

|  |
| --- |
|  |