

Rich and Poor in Victorian Times – Teacher Notes

Starter Discussion:

- When were Victorian times?

1837-1901

- Does anyone know why they're called Victorians?

Slide 2 – They lived during the reign of Queen Victoria. Slide 2 is a letter written by Queen Victoria from Windsor Castle.

We're going to find out about two families who lived in Cardiff in Victorian times, and about the lives they lead.

A Rich Family (Slides 3 – 13)

Slides 3 – 5 show census returns:

- What is a census?

This is when the government records details about everyone such as age, job and how many people live in each house.

Census returns: Bute family at Cardiff Castle, 1891

- How many people were living in this house?

There were 6 family members, 70 servants and their families. The record takes up 3 pages for one household!

- What jobs did they do?

The owner was a gentleman so had no job, but we know the Marquess of Bute was a successful businessman. Others were servants, with jobs like maid, butler or gardener.

- Do you think the children went to school?

They were educated by a governess in their home.

- Would you have liked to have had a governess?

It would mean you didn't have to go to school but you wouldn't have friends, and your teacher would be living with you!

- Look at the map showing the Castle

Slide 6 – Ordnance Survey map, 1st edition, of Cardiff Castle (in the top left corner) and local area.

- What things can you see that are still there today?

Cardiff Castle, Cardiff Gaol, the river, Cardiff Station

- What things are different?

No Millennium Stadium, no St. David's Shopping Centre, lots of houses have been demolished

Slide 7 – The same map, zoomed in on Cardiff Castle

- How big was the house?

It was very big, especially compared with others in the area.

- What sort of house is it?

It is detached, separate from any other houses.

- Does it have a garden?

Yes, a lot of land surrounding it.

- Are there many houses nearby?

Only some and they aren't very close

- What else is nearby?

There are parks, a moat, etc.

Slides 8 – 9 – Catalogues showing items for rich Victorians to buy for their homes.

- What sort of furniture did they have?

They have lots of things to make life easier for example cake and bread makers, stoves, lights and even flushing toilets! They also have decorative things to make the house look nice like cake moulds and different styles of lights.

Slides 10 – 13 - Photographs of a rich Victorian family (Insole Court, Cardiff)

- What sort of clothes are they wearing?

They are wearing smart, clean clothes.

- What are they doing in the photographs?

Getting ready to go out in a carriage, having afternoon tea in the garden.

- What is the house they live in like?

It is a big house with a garden.

- In slide 13 there is a lady with two children. Do you think they are boys or girls? What makes you think that?

We don't know for sure. Little boys from rich Victorian families often wore dresses until they started school.

A Poor Family (Slides 14 – 45)

Slides 14 – 15 show census returns for 1891

[You can choose any address to look at but **7 Manor Street** on Slide 14 is a good example]

- How many people were living in this house?

There were 6 people at this address in total - the head of the house, his wife, their two children and two boarders under the age of 18.

- What jobs did they do?

Usually manual work. 7 Manor Street shows the head of the house was a gardener and his 14 year old son was an errand boy. On the census it also shows people working as a shopkeeper, a railway clerk, in the coal industry or wool factories.

- What were the children doing?

The younger ones were in education, the older ones were already working.

Slide 16 is the Dowlais Iron Company register for 1st May 1866 which shows there were 505 boys and 64 girls between the ages of 10 – 13 working there.

Slides 17 - 18 - Ordnance Survey Map of Cardiff, 1st and 2nd editions

- Can you find Manor Street on the map on slide 17? Can you find it on the later map on slide 18?
- What's changed in this area?
- What's stayed the same?

Slide 19 – a building plan for a house in Cardiff in 1883

- Was it a big house?

No, not really. This would have been a fairly typical house at the time.

- How many rooms did it have?

4 downstairs rooms, 3 bedrooms. 7 in total

- What were the rooms used for?

The parlour was a more formal sitting room, mainly used when guests visited. The scullery was a kind of extra kitchen used for washing dishes and cleaning clothes. There is no bathroom as the toilet would have been outside and people would not have bathed very often (maybe once every week, and they would have shared the bath water!).

Slides 20 – 21 – Photographs of Kingston Court, near Caroline Street

- What sort of clothes are they wearing in these photographs?

Their clothes look old, tatty and dirty.

- What do you think their conditions are like?

Cramped (in slide 20 you can see a lot of windows close together) and dirty (in slide 21 you can see the walls don't look very clean)

Slides 22 – 23 – Victorian prison records. These are juvenile convictions. Slide 22 shows Thomas Barry stole 6 rhubarb tarts and was sent to a reformatory school. Slide 23 shows Mary Jones stole a shawl and was sent to jail for 14 days.

- Why do you think so many children were going to jail for stealing?

They were so poor they had to steal to have food and clothes. Punishments for stealing were very strict to try and stop people doing it.

Slides 24 – 25 – Log book entries showing the kind of illnesses children got.

- Were children often ill? What sort of illnesses did they have?

They were often ill and caught illnesses such as scarlet fever, small pox, diphtheria, whooping cough, etc.

- Why were they ill so often? And why did they get illnesses that we don't get anymore?

Vaccination; we have better, and cheaper access to doctors, hospitals and medicines.

Slides 26-27 - Log book entries showing why children got time off school

- Why did children get time off school when it was wet and rainy?

They would have to walk to school, sometimes a long way, and they may not have had coats - certainly not waterproof ones - and could have had holes in their boots. If they got wet and caught a cold it could turn into a very serious illness.

Slides 28-29 – Log book entries show why the school was closed

- Why did they get days off?

To celebrate the opening of a new college, because there was a picnic or other events such as sports days.

Slide 30 shows the school rules for Llantwit Major National School.

- What are some of your school rules?
- Are they the same as these or different?
- What happens if you break your school rules?

Slide 31 shows students got punished for not paying attention in a maths lesson. They were often punished by being hit with a cane or ruler.

Slides 32 – 33 show lists of subjects taught at school. Girls and boys studied different things. The girls did things like cookery and needlework while the boys did things like woodwork and drawing.

Slide 34 is the exercise book of a little girl called Emma Edmund

- Why do you think boys and girls learnt different things at school?

Because boys often went to work in factories or workshops while girls were expected to stay at home and look after the family and house.

Slides 35 -37 are photographs of schools in Penarth and Cardiff

- What did children wear to school?

There was no proper uniform but girls had to wear dresses and boys wore trousers or shorts and jackets.

- What are the children doing?

In the first photo (slide 35) they are weaving to make baskets, in the second (slide 36) they are practising maths on an abacus and in the final photo (slide 37) they are doing school drill which was their version of P.E.

- What does the teacher look like?

Quite serious!

Slide 38 shows the approved school drill which involved lots of marching and staying in the correct order.

- Is it different from the P.E. you do at your school?

Slides 39 – 40 are photographs of children at the workhouse. Children went here if they were very poor.

- What do the children look like?
- Are they happy or sad?

Slide 41 shows some of the rules for the workhouse

- What time did people get up?
- What time did they go to bed?

Slide 42 shows a list of food from the workhouse. They mainly ate things like broth (a soup) or gruel (like porridge).

- Would you enjoy this?

Plenary ideas:

- Would you have liked to live in Victorian times? Why/Why not?
- What questions would you like to ask a Victorian?
- What are three things you have learnt today?

Possible activities based on this workshop

- Create a school timetable for a Victorian School. Remember boys and girls will have some different lessons.
- Draw an outfit for a typical Victorian and another outfit for a typical person today. How are they the same/different?
- Find out what these children's jobs were: wheelwright, errand boy, sawyer, apprentice, and nursemaid. Can you find any other jobs that children might have done in Victorian times?
- Write a diary entry as either a rich or poor person. What do you do on a normal day? How do you spend your free time? How do you feel about your life?