

Teachers' notes – Queen Victoria

Aims

This unit provides pupils with a chronological overview of the Victorian era, through some of the key events of Victoria's reign.

The task is to investigate various sources that give us clues about Queen Victoria's life, and place them on a timeline.

At the end of the unit, pupils will have gathered information that can be used to write a biography of Queen Victoria.

Method

Before attempting this unit, pupils should have completed **Start here**. This will ensure that they are familiar with the enquiry-based method, LACE, which underpins their learning. LACE gives pupils four steps to help them to think and work like a historian using sources. These are:

Look: Describe what you can see

Ask: What questions do you need to ask, and answer, to make sense of what you have seen?

Conclude: What have you learned about the issue that you are investigating from this source?

Expand: What more would you like to know about? How can you find out?

Sources

On completing this unit, pupils will have tackled a variety of different types of source. As a follow up to the on-screen work, you might like to lead a discussion on the nature of the different types of sources pupils have used in their investigation. What are the strengths and weaknesses of different types of source? What kind of information does each source provide? Why are some sources more difficult to use? Why do some objects survive? How do the four steps of LACE help us find out about the past by examining objects?

With a written source we can learn both from what is being said, and how it is being said. Ask pupils to think about the different types of document they have seen, and how these differ in terms of tone of voice. There is a huge range of different types of document included in the resource – letters, newspapers, government reports, advertisements, plans and maps. Encourage pupils to think about the different ways in which these provide insight.

It is helpful to discuss the idea that the artist or photographer has chosen to depict a scene in a particular way. Both paintings and photographs may have been made to convey a particular message.

Learning objectives

In this unit, pupils will:

- develop an understanding of the different types of historical source materials as evidence for the past
- increase their knowledge and understanding of some of the key aspects of the life of Queen Victoria
- combine information from a number of sources when presenting what they have learnt

Pupils who complete an extension activity to write a biography of Queen Victoria will understand:

- the format and content of a biography
- the need to separate fact and opinion when writing non-fiction text

Key stage 2 curriculum links

This unit is relevant to teachers following the National Curriculum History - Breadth Study: Unit 11a: Victorian Britain.

- A study of the impact of significant individuals, events and changes in work and transport on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society
- Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past

Pupils should be taught: to identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations, and changes in the periods studied.

Extension work can link to the National Literacy Strategy Year 6 Non-fiction Unit 1 – Biography and autobiography.

Using this resource

This unit is designed for use online. Children's engagement with the historical sources is augmented by full and simplified transcripts of documents, audio transcripts, the ability to zoom into images to explore them in detail. Every step features support and guidance designed to help pupils to answer the key historical question - What can we learn about Queen Victoria's life?

The unit also features an electronic notebook where pupils can record their ideas about each source they evaluate. The notes that pupils complete during this unit can be printed and used as the basis for a further piece of work.

Summary of activities

Starter

Pupils are presented with two images of Queen Victoria. One image is from her early 20s and the other from near the end of her life. Pupils should use the four steps of LACE to consider what we can learn from these images.

Main activity - create timeline of Queen Victoria

Pupils study a series of sources relating to key events in Victoria's life and date them for inclusion on a timeline of Queen Victoria's life.

What else can we learn about the life of Queen Victoria using sources?

Extension activities - write a biography of Queen Victoria

As an extension of the online activity, ask pupils to use their notes to write a short biography for Queen Victoria. The format should resemble an entry in an online encyclopaedia, such as Wikipedia.

Teachers may like to discuss the content and format of biographies prior to starting this unit.

Pupils should include information such as:

- personal details – name, the dates and places of her birth and death
- family information – who were her parents? Who did she marry? Did she have children or grandchildren?
- where did Victoria live or visit?
- what made Victoria important or famous?
- personality – what was Victoria like? What did she enjoy and dislike? Who were her friends?
- important events in Victoria's life - the Coronation, Jubilees and the death of Prince Albert

Pupils should consider other details too, such as, what did Victoria look like? Was she always popular?

Pupils should use the sources they have studied to illustrate their biography and back up any assertions they make.

Other useful tips for pupils, include:

- write in the past tense - 'Victoria was crowned' not 'Victoria is crowned'
- write in the third person – he, she, they, Queen Victoria, Prince Albert (not 'I')
- present facts in date order
- use quotes and images to back up facts
- use time connectives, for example next, then, first, at the end of her life
- use words that show your opinion - 'She had an unforgettable face'

Historical source credits and captions for Queen Victoria (closing full stops removed from items)

- The popularity of the young Queen Victoria coincided with a period when large numbers of illustrated music sheets were being published. This one was printed in 1840 (V&A: E.2452-1914)
- Photograph of Queen Victoria, 1882 (TNA: COPY 1/57f388)
- Memorial card for Prince Albert (1819-1861) with a list of his titles and honours, 1861 (V&A: E.1507-1987)
- Document recording Queen Victoria's wedding signed by both Victoria and Albert, 1840 (TNA: PRO 30/19/1/f86 and 87)
- Ticket from the Great Western Railway, 1901 (TNA: RAIL 1014/9)
- Extract from coronation roll giving details of Victoria's accession to the throne and the Coronation in 1838 (TNA: C/95/9)
- Medal celebrating the Diamond Jubilee, 1897 (V&A: A.23-1932)
- Extract from the London Gazette, May 185. (TNA:ZJ 1/272)
- Photograph of Victoria, Albert and their nine children at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in 1857. Princess Beatrice, the youngest child of Queen Victoria and Albert, was a month old in this photograph (V&A: 68:021)
- Drawing of the crowds celebrating the Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (TNA: COPY 1/136f418)
- Photograph of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, 1861, nine months before he died (V&A: 3504-1953)
- Wallpaper design celebrating the Golden Jubilee for fifty years of Victoria's reign in 1887 (V&A: E.791-1970)
- Illustration of the wedding ceremony of Victoria and Albert (TNA: Work 21/19b (portion))
- Photo of the royal train passing through Carshalton taking Queen Victoria's body to London in February 1901 (TNA: COPY 1/449f231)
- Design for a poster with Queen Victoria, Edward Prince of Wales and India female figure, 1899 (TNA: COPY 1/146(ii) f330)
- Jet mourning jewellery worn by Victoria after the death of Prince Albert. Victoria made mourning jewellery very fashionable (V&A: M.944-1983)
- Document sent to Queen Victoria from the people of Birmingham, 1858 (TNA: HO 45/6669)
- Handkerchief from 1838. A souvenir to mark the coronation (V&A T.128-1971)
- Police record listing some crimes against Queen Victoria, 1837-1852 (TNA: MEPOL 2/44)
- Photograph of Queen Victoria smiling in 1887 during her Golden Jubilee celebrations (TNA COPY 1/ 381f350)
- Silk hand handbag, 1850s. Victoria's love of Balmoral and Scotland made tartan very popular. This type of bag was hung from a belt over women's wide crinoline skirts which did not have pockets (V&A: T.67-1961)

- Souvenir plate for the Golden Jubilee in 1887, featuring the extent of the British Empire (V&A: CIRC.198-1966)
- Photograph by Francis Frith (1822-1898) of Balmoral Castle. The castle was rebuilt and designed by Prince Albert on the site of an existing fifteenth century castle in 1856 (V&A: 2008BW0073-01)
- Mutoscope 'film' of Queen Victoria's last of last public engagement in 1899 (V&A: E.5700-2000)
- Census return for Queen Victoria and family in 1851 at Buckingham Palace. This is a single page from a larger document (TNA: HO 107/1478 f646 page 19)
- Census return for Queen Victoria and family in 1881 at Windsor Castle. This is a single page from a larger document (TNA: RG 10/1325 f98 page 1)
- An extract from The Graphic newspaper with an account of an assassination attempt on Queen Victoria in 1882 (TNA: ZPER 35/9)