

Teacher Sheet 1.5

Victorian or Modern Day Britain?

Read the statements and decided if they were written to describe Victorian or modern Britain.

1. The Salmon Act makes it illegal to handle salmon under suspicious circumstances. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...Modern Britain. This is the Salmon Act of 1986.

2. Consider The Factory Acts: a series of Acts of Parliament that set out the working conditions of children and adults in factories. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...Victorian Britain. In 1833 the Government passed a Factory Act to improve conditions for children working in factories. Young children were working very long hours in workplaces where conditions were often terrible. The basic act was as follows: no child workers under nine years of age.

3. A newspaper published these words: Male, 51, of Tanners Hill in Deptford, London, appeared in front of magistrates in Shropshire on Saturday charged with holding a person in slavery or servitude. Was this publish in the Victorian or Modern era?

...The modern era, contrary to the Modern Slavery Act (2015).

4. British law states that it is illegal to be drunk on licenced premises. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...This was a law passed in Victorian Britain. Under section 12 of the Licensing Act 1872, it states that "every person found drunk... on any licensed premises, shall be liable to a penalty". It is still in action today.

5. Consider The Poor Law. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...Victorian Britain. The Poor Law (1834) ensured that the poor were housed in workhouses, clothed and fed. Children who entered the workhouse would receive some schooling. In return for this care, all workhouse paupers would have to work for several hours each day. However, not all Victorians shared this point of view. Some people, such as Richard Oastler, spoke out against the new Poor Law, calling the workhouses 'Prisons for the Poor'. The poor themselves hated and feared the threat of the workhouse so much that there were riots in northern towns.

6. It is illegal to jump the queue in the Tube ticket hall. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...Modern Britain. Made under Section 219 of the Transport Act 2000 by the Strategic Rail Authority, under the TfL Railway Byelaws, any person directed to queue by an authorised person or a sign must join the rear of the queue and obey the reasonable instructions of any authorised person regulating the queue.

7. Except with written permission from an Operator no person on the railway shall, to the annoyance of any person sing. Was this law passed in the Victorian or Modern era?

...Modern Britain. This is another law passed under the Transport Act 2000 by the Strategic Rail Authority, under the TfL Railway Byelaws.

8. This queen participated in Spiritualist séances. Was it the queen of Victorian or modern day Britain?

...Victorian Britain. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert participated in Spiritualist séances as early as 1846. Spiritualism became part of the Victorian subculture in the 1860s with its mediums, specialist newspapers, pamphlets, treatises, societies, private and public séances which included table rapping, table tipping, automatic writing, levitation, and other communications with spirits.

9. By this period, up to 18 per cent of families were being abandoned by fathers. Many other men died in accidents, epidemics and wars. As well as this, new research suggests that around a third of working-class children grew up in single-parent families. Is this reflecting the Victorian or Modern era?

...The Victorian period. This particularly described the Industrial Revolution. Victoria came to the throne during the early, frenetic phase of the world's first industrial revolution. Industrialisation brought with it new markets, a consumer boom and greater prosperity for most of the propertied classes. It also brought rapid, and sometimes chaotic change as towns and cities expanded at a pace which precluded orderly growth. Desperately poor housing conditions, long working hours, the ravages of infectious disease and premature death were the inevitable consequence.