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Victorian School Days

This workshop can be adapted for P4-7. The maximum group size is ideally one class approximately 30 pupils.

The session will start with an introduction to the Museum, its history and the Collections.

Pupils work in groups to map out information about their own school days. This will form the starting point for the subsequent activities. The key themes of heat/light, subjects taught, class size, behaviour, uniform, attendance will be established to consider school life in Victorian times.

A Victorian child's satchel will be unpacked and the contents discussed, explained and compared to today.

Pupils will again work in groups to examine an object, photograph or quote from Victorian school days. They will work to explain to the other groups what the object/photograph is and what it tells us about Victorian school life.

Consideration will be given to differences experienced by girls/boys, rich/poor and rural/urban children.

Pupils will have the opportunity to try on elements of Victorian costume and have a go at typical class activities such as rote spellings and tables, handwriting, drill and inspection. There will be a short discussion of corporal punishment, was it fair and why might it have been used?

Format for a typical visit:

10:00 – 10:15am	Welcome and first group work session
10:15 – 10:30 am	Satchel activity
10:30 – 10:45am	Second group work activity
10:45 – 11:30am	Victorian school activities



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Aim: Introduce the features and routine of a typical school day in Victorian times.

Objectives:

- Consider key aspects of school life today and during the session explore contrasts and comparisons with Victorian school days.
- Examine the themes of heat/light, subjects taught, class size, behaviour, uniform, attendance etc.
- Consider the differences between rich/poor, girls/boys and rural/urban children.
- Structure a typical school lesson.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- These outcomes are based on the workshop in combination with school-based follow up.
- Pupils will be able to:
- Participate in a group to discuss their own school days and record key points.
- Describe and explain the contents of a Victorian child's satchel.
- Work in groups to explore a school object, quote or photograph and explain to the class its significance and what it tells us about Victorian school days.
- Discuss the fairness of corporal punishment.
- Define key terms such as the 3Rs, toe-the-line and half-timers.
- Name a subject studied by girls and one studied by boys.
- Give a reason why an urban child may not have gone to school everyday and a reason for a rural child's absence.
- Try on part of a Victorian school girl's or boy's costume.
- Participate in activities from a typical school lesson.
- Try copy script.

Back at school:

- Discuss the layout of a classroom.
- Discuss school life in Victorian times: did they like it? What was good and what was not so good? Was it harder/easier than today?

Curriculum Links: World Around Us; PDMU.

To develop the following skills: Communication, working with others, creativity, thinking and enquiry skills.

Workshop duration: 1½ hours.



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Use the table below to re-cap what you saw and heard at the Museum.
Work in pairs or groups.

	Our School	Victorian School
Heat and lighting		
Number of classes and teachers		
Start and end of day		
Age of pupils		
Subjects studied		
Objects used for learning		
Uniform		
Punishment and behaviour		
Attendance (hint Half-timer!)		
Other information		



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To discuss in groups and as a class:

Do you think you would have liked to have gone to school in Victorian times? Explain.

What was good and what was not so good about schools in Victorian times?

Why did some children not attend school? How did this impact on their learning?

Do you think the cane and dunce's hat were fair? Why were they used?

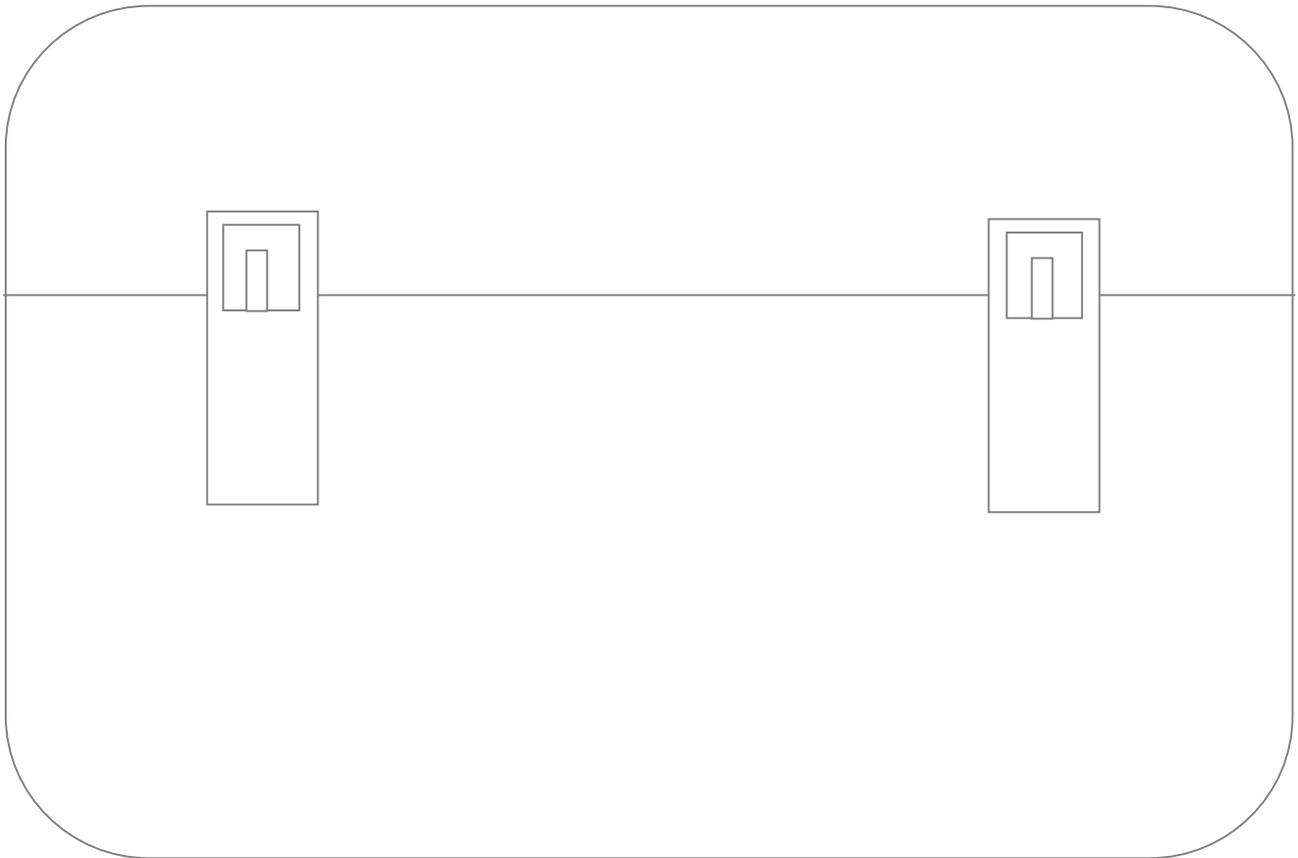
Was going to school harder or easier than school today, and why?



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A Victorian School Bag

You have to pack a Victorian child's satchel. On the satchel below draw and label what things will be in it and be ready to talk about why those things are included.





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A Victorian Classroom

In the school room below draw and label where the fire would have been. Draw in the desks. Label where the teacher would have sat and which pupils sat at the front or back and why? Draw in what was used for counting and for geography. Remember to include the line!

