

The Victorians

Learning Objective:

To find out about the life of Queen Victoria.

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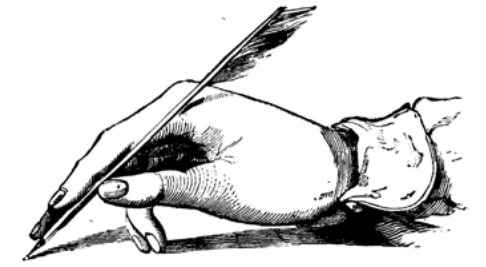
What do you
know about this
woman?



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What we know about Queen Victoria:



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Princess Victoria,
aged 4

Victoria was born in Kensington Palace in London on 24th May 1819. She was the daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent and Victoria of Saxe-Coburg. Her father was the son of King George III and brother to King George IV and William IV. At first, no one thought Victoria would ever be queen but her father's older siblings had no surviving children and she became next in line to the throne. Victoria's father died when she was still a baby and her mother gave her a strict and lonely upbringing. She rarely had friends to play with and spent a lot of time on her own drawing, painting or playing with her toys. The young princess had no brothers or sisters.

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A self-portrait of Princess
Victoria, 1835

As Princess Victoria got older, it became clear that she would one day be queen. Her mother prepared her for this by giving her a good education and making sure that she was aware of what her role as queen would entail. She could speak several different languages and was also a talented artist. At the age of 13, her mother took her on a journey around England to see how ordinary people lived. This helped her to understand what England was really like. It was at this time when Victoria first started writing a journal, a habit she continued every day until her death.

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On 20th June 1837, King William IV died leaving Princess Victoria to take her place as queen. She was just 18 years old. The painting below shows the moment when Victoria was told she was Queen.



How do you think Victoria would have felt at that moment?



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When Victoria first became queen some people thought she would be too young to rule effectively and that other powerful people would be able to influence her. However, Queen Victoria had a strong sense of what was right and what was wrong and could be stubborn when she needed to be. Most people in Britain were delighted that someone young and energetic was coming to the throne as the old kings that had come before her had been very unpopular.



The coronation of Queen
Victoria

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In 1840, Queen Victoria married Prince Albert. In her diary she wrote that her wedding day was the happiest day of her life. Albert became an important advisor and helped Victoria in the day-to-day running of the country. They had 9 children. At the time of her death, Queen Victoria also had 40 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren.

Queen Victoria's children
Victoria, Edward, Alice,
Alfred, Helena, Louise,
Arthur, Leopold, Beatrice



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Queen Victoria had many official duties to perform and she spent a lot of time every day signing papers. She had meetings with her ministers and other important people as well as being a wife and mother. It was important that she always knew what was going on in her kingdom. She had to have a weekly audience with the prime minister to discuss government business which often lasted hours.

Queen Victoria took her duties very seriously and made a promise at the start of her reign that she would always do her best for her country.



Queen Victoria holding a meeting of the Privy Council

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Queen Victoria and her family
hunting in Scotland



Despite her busy schedule Queen Victoria had time for fun in her early years as queen. She would often go to the theatre with Prince Albert or go to balls and parties. She was very energetic. When the royal family stayed in Scotland at Balmoral Castle, they would go walking in the hills and dress in simple highland clothes so they wouldn't be recognised.

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In 1861 Queen Victoria's life was turned upside down. First her mother died and then in December her beloved husband Albert also died. Queen Victoria was devastated. She was only 42 when Albert died and she spent the next 40 years of her life dressed in black mourning clothes. After Albert's death, Queen Victoria found it difficult to perform her duties and for a time she rarely appeared in public.



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Eventually, Queen Victoria's grief over the death of her husband lessened and she was able to fulfil her duties as queen again. She created several memorials to her husband, such as the Royal Albert Hall and the Victoria and Albert museum.



The Royal Albert Hall

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Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901 at the age of 81. She had been queen for 63 years. Even though photographs of her in her later years show a severe looking lady, those who knew Queen Victoria remembered her for her kindness, her strength, her humour and her sense of duty. Queen Victoria was extremely popular in her later years as her reign had seen a period of great growth, peace and prosperity in Britain. Many people wore black clothes when she died and hung black banners out of windows to mourn her death. Her eldest son, Edward VII, became king when she died.



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What have we found out about Queen Victoria's character so far? Complete the word wall below by adding an adjective for each brick.

moral				
			stubborn	
	wise			

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