

Wk. 22.06.20 Year 6 English 1

SHQ: How do we gather information in order to create some writing?



As this history unit is mainly based on the experiences of Victorian children, it only seems fair to look at toys and games of the era. In modern times, toys and games are relatively cheap and available to all classes of people. However, this was not really the case during the 19th Century. There were certain items that only the richer sections of society could afford and those less well off had to make do with handmade creations or things lying around.

The aim in the next worksheet is to design an advert for a toy from the Victorian era. In order to prepare, some research needs to be completed to find out about what Victorian children played with. Included with this file is some information for you to look at and below is a link to a downloadable file with some toys that you can make. Also, you may be able to find other examples of toys and games by doing your own detective work.

https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/victorians_games.pdf

Questions to think about:

- What were the objects made from? How does this compare to modern materials? How were they made?
- Who would have had access to these items? Was money needed to buy them?
- Which games and toys did not exist in the 19th Century? Why?
- Was sport popular in the Victorian era? Which sports were 'invented'?

Victorian Toys and Games



Not only in Victorian times but since the beginning of humanity, toys of some type or other have been a part of children's lives. We can only imagine what children used for toys in the earliest years of human existence. A toy may have been no more than a rock or stick but it served its purpose in keeping children entertained.

It is interesting to note that some of the earliest Victorian toys and games (or even earlier than Victorian times) resemble those that are used today. The game Quoits resembles ring toss and Skittles resembles bowling. You'll learn more about these games as you read on.

It is important to note that Victorian toys and games were very expensive to buy at the time. Even rich children were allowed very few toys. Only the wealthiest could afford a rocking horse like the one shown above. The cost of many toys at that time exceeded the average weekly pay that a parent might earn. Toys were heavily associated with a particular gender i.e. only girls would play with dolls etc.

No consoles for Victorian Children – Rich or Poor

Victorian toys and games meant a lot more to Victorian children than they do in the modern era. There were no video games or computers to entertain children. Sometimes a child's imagination was his or her best friend. The poor Victorian children did not own new toys. Mothers would make dolls for the girls if they were lucky and toys were whittled out of wood for the boys. A tightly wadded piece of cloth could serve as a ball to kick around in the streets. Poor Victorian children would rarely have more than one toy and it was usually handmade or handed down through the generations. They would guard it with their lives...it was all they had!



Let's Take a Look At Some Of The Victorian Toys and Games

Skipping Rope



This is a toy or exercise that is still popular today. Rich Victorian families would buy skipping ropes with fancy hand carved handles but the poor families could easily make their own.

Automata Toys



Automata toys were usually made of wood and had moving parts powered by a hand crank. The teacher and students in the Automata toy pictured would move at different intervals depending on the gear work located under the floor.

In a world without video games, Victorian children would be fascinated for hours playing with this toy. It was mostly a toy for rich children but could be made by hand if the father of a poor family was good at working with wood.

Toy Soldiers



In these modern times, video games such as Call of Duty, Assassin's Creed and Battle field have taken the place of playing with Toy Soldiers. But a young man in the Victorian age loved playing with toy soldiers. A boy in the 1800s would use his imagination to carry out the many battles that his Toy Soldiers might face on any given day.

Marbles



Marbles were a popular Victorian Toy. You could play many games with them. Poor children usually had marbles made of clay while the rich children might have marbles made from real marble or glass.

Tea set



As with all children, there is a great desire to emulate their parents. That's why the miniature toy Tea Set was so popular with young Victorian girls. They could gather their friends around a table and have a nice little tea party of their own, just like their mother. Miniature Tea Sets were a toy that rich Victorian children played with.

Hoop and Stick



Although this toy looks very simple, it was very popular. The object of the game was to keep the hoop rolling as long as possible. Children played this game outside and many times it would be played as a competition between several children to see who could roll the hoop the farthest.

Kaleidoscope



Pictured to the left is a Victorian Age Kaleidoscope. A child could look through one end and see a brightly colored design at the other end. As the child would twist or shake the Kaleidoscope the design would change into another pattern due to the mirrors inside. Only rich families would be able to afford one of these items.

Zoetrope



One might say that this was actually the beginning of movies and eventually television as we know it today. Actually some of the early Disney cartoons were made using this principle. There were other names for moving picture toys such as Phenakistoscope, Thaumatrope, Cinematrope and Praxinoscope. They would usually come with extra cardboard or paper inserts so a child could change the moving picture inside. Think about who might afford one of these toys.

Doll



Dolls of some form have been around for thousands of years. china dolls became popular during the Victorian age. One reason for their popularity might have been because it was said Queen Victoria had a large collection of china dolls from her childhood. China dolls were very expensive because of the materials involved and were typically owned by rich children. Dolls owned by the poorer class of children were usually handmade.

Hobby Horse/
Rocking Horse



There were no cars for most of the Victorian era so horses were a main source of transportation. This made the Hobby Horse or Rocking Horse very popular (bicycles were for adults!). Wealthy Victorian children could afford the expensive rocking horse while the poorer children played with a Hobby Horse as they could be constructed from waste materials.



The Whip and Top



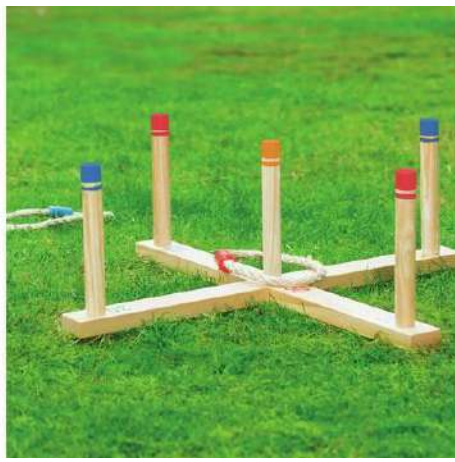
A Whip and Top consisted of a cylinder type object (The Top) with a pointed bottom and a stick with a string or piece of leather tied to the end (The Whip). A child would set the top to spinning by wrapping the string around the top and give the stick a pull. This would make the top spin at a high rate of speed. The child would keep the top spinning by whipping it on the sides with the string or leather strap.

The Yo yo



The first historical mention of the yo yo is from as far back as 500BC. These became very popular in the Victorian era and is an example of a toy that has stood the test of time into the modern era.

Quoits



Ring toss most likely evolved from Quoits. It was a game that had anywhere from one to 9 poles or pegs and several rings. The rings were usually made of rope. As with ring toss the object was to throw the rings over the pegs to score points.

Toy Theatres



As seen earlier, a lot of the Victorian toys and games involved the child's desire to emulate or copy their parents or adults in general. Toy Theatres were no exception. While the parents were going to the Theatre children were pretending with their toy theatres. Toy Theatres were copied after the grown up theatre shows of the day.

Diabolo



This toy originated in China but became very popular in Britain in the 1800s. It is made of a spool type object and two sticks with a string tied to each stick. The goal was to throw the spool in the air with the sticks and string and catch with them. There were many tricks that could be perfected with a lot of practice.

Clockwork Trains



These toy trains were not made popular until the latter part of the Victorian era. A company called Marklin was the first to make complete toy train sets out of soldered tin. A basic toy train set could be bought and then additional parts and sections could be purchased to add to it as time went by. Sadly, poor Victorian Children could only dream about owning a clockwork train. Only rich Victorian families could afford one. Model train sets didn't really reach its height as a hobby until the Edwardian era, circa 1901 or later.

Leather Football



Variations of this football and/or soccer have been around since between 2500-5000 B.C, and leather or animal skins have been used to make them just about as long. Football was played on the lawns or in the streets by all classes of people.

Skittles



Skittles is a predecessor of many of the games of today, such as, bowling and lawn bowling. In the Victorian era this game was typically played outside but had indoor variations as well. It is still a popular indoor pub game in some areas of the UK and United States. It consisted of a round hard ball and several Skittles, usually around nine. The object of the game was to roll the ball and knock down as many skittles as possible. Although wealthy families could buy fancy and extravagant Skittles sets, this game was played by the rich and the poor since it could easily be made by hand.