



The Victorians

P7 Term 1B



Queen Victoria ruled Britain from 1837 to 1901. During her long reign, many objects and machines we still use today were first invented. These include the telephone, the electric light bulb and the toilet!

The **Industrial Revolution** began in the late 1700s, when machines were invented to make products more easily. The full effects of this revolution only started to be seen during Victoria's reign. Steam-powered machinery meant that factories could produce items more quickly and efficiently than ever before. In particular, Britain became the world leader in iron and steel production. The country grew wealthy through international trade.

Steam power also led to dramatic changes in public transportation. Railroads were built all over Britain, giving people the opportunity to travel cheaply and easily around the country. Railroads also began to spread across other parts of the empire.

In 1851 the Great Exhibition was held in Hyde Park in London. This exhibition was intended to demonstrate Britain's industrial, military, and economic achievements. It also included many of the accomplishments pioneered by the British in its many colonies. The exhibition attracted visitors from all over the world.

The success of the steam engine and the other inventions that brought about the Industrial Revolution also led to many other new inventions. The Victorian era was one of great scientific and technological advances. In 1839 photography was invented and Victorians rushed to have their portraits taken. Queen Victoria herself was fascinated by the process of photography. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 and many other important inventions became part of life in Britain and across the British Empire.

Most Victorian families were large and only the poorest families did not have servants. Children from rich families were taught at home by a governess. Boys were sent to boarding school around the age of 10. There were few schools for girls until the end of the Victorian era, so girls from wealthy families usually continued to be taught at home.

In early Victorian Britain most poor children did not attend school, so they grew up unable to read or write. Some went to free charity schools and Sunday schools, which were run by churches.

In 1844 Parliament passed a law stating that children working in factories must be given six half-days of schooling every week. In 1870 another law was passed that required all children between the ages of five and 12 to attend school. Many more schools were built as a result of this.

We study the development of rights for children and compare them with the Rights Charter that is now in place within our society.