

THEME 2:

Rowland Hill

OBJECTIVES:

To understand that the work of individuals can change aspects of society.

To find out about important figures in Victorian times.



Who was Rowland Hill?

Use the fact sheet to introduce the class to the life and achievements of Rowland Hill.

Look at the portrait of Rowland Hill in the Online Gallery.

Activity 2.1

Who was Rowland Hill?

These questions could be discussed as a class or in small groups.

- :: Why were portraits painted in Victorian times?
- :: Did most people in Victorian times have their portrait painted?
- :: How old do you think Rowland Hill was when this portrait was painted?
- :: What other jobs do you think he did before he started working on post office reform?
- :: Do you think he was rich or poor?
- :: Do you think he really looked like this?
- :: Describe his clothes.
- :: How are his clothes different from what we wear today?



Information sheet – Rowland Hill (1795-1879)

Rowland Hill invented the prepaid postage stamp. He was an important Victorian reformer who wanted to improve living conditions for everyone. This included making it possible for all people to be able to afford to send letters to their friends and families. He believed that if more people were able to send letters, then more people would learn to read and write which would greatly improve their lives.

He was born in 1795 in Kidderminster, near Birmingham. He had five brothers and sisters. His parents encouraged them to be inventive and question everything. In the 1830s there were many things which people thought needed changing, such as who could vote and what kind of education should be available to boys and girls. At first, Rowland worked as a teacher in his father's school but he really wanted to come up with new ideas to change the way people lived.

In 1837 he wrote an important booklet called 'Post Office Reform'. He wanted to change the way people paid for postage. People used to have to pay a certain amount depending on how many sheets of paper they used and how far the letter travelled. This was very expensive. Rowland wanted to make postage cheaper, so that people paid for the letter by weight. His idea was that it should only cost one penny to send a letter. This would normally be paid for by the person who sent the letter. In 1839 he was asked to oversee the work of introducing the world's first postage stamp. The stamp was called the Penny Black and went on sale in 1840.

Rowland Hill did a lot more than just introduce the postage stamp. In 1846 he became the Secretary to the Postmaster General. Then in 1854 he became the Secretary to the Post Office. This meant he could make bigger changes such as introducing the Post Office Savings Bank to encourage all people to save.

Rowland Hill died in 1879 and was buried in Westminster Abbey in London. His ideas still have an impact on how we live today.

THEME 2: Rowland Hill



Rowland Hill's reforms

Activity 2.2

How did Rowland Hill change the Post Office?

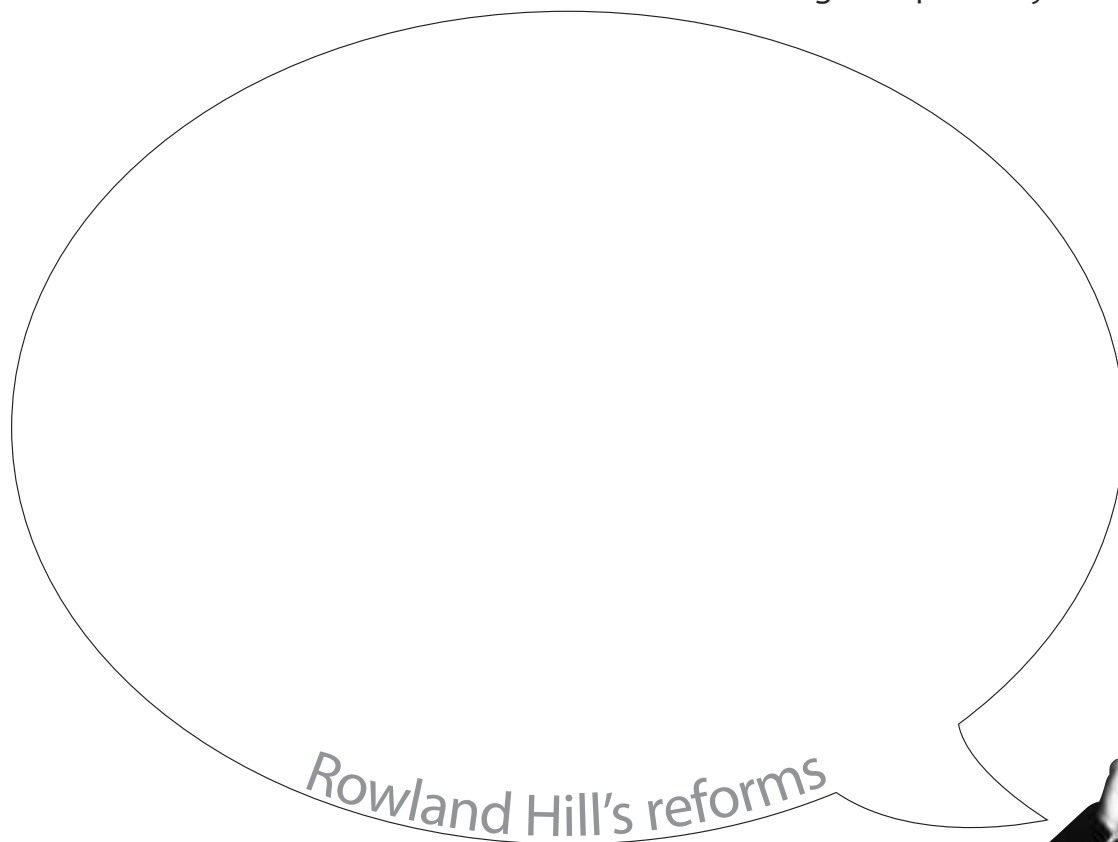
Rowland Hill is remembered as one of the great reformers of the Post Office. What does being a reformer mean? Use your dictionary to look up the meaning.

Reformer: _____

What do you think Rowland Hill would have said in 1837 about his ideas for post office reform? Think about these points:

- :: What did Rowland Hill think was wrong with the postal system?
- :: How was it unfair?
- :: How did he want to change it?
- :: Who did he think he would help?

Complete the speech bubble with three or four sentences explaining why he wanted to change the postal system.





Rowland Hill's life

Activity 2.3 Chronological sequencing

Read through all the statements below. They are all jumbled up. Cut out the different statements and put them in the right order. Use the information sheet to help you.



Rowland Hill became Secretary to the Postmaster General in 1846.

He thought that postage was too expensive for ordinary people and he wanted to change the system to make it fairer.

Rowland Hill was born in Kidderminster in 1795.

In 1839 Hill was invited to oversee the work of introducing the world's first postage stamp.

At first, Rowland worked as a teacher in his father's school.

In 1837 he wrote his important booklet called 'Post Office Reform'.

In 1854 he became Secretary to the Post Office. This meant that he could make bigger changes to the Post Office, like setting up the first Post Office Savings Bank.