

THEME 6:

Did the Penny Black Change the World?

OBJECTIVES:

To make comparisons that illustrate change within the Victorian period.

To give reasons for these changes.

To develop interpretation skills.

To present their findings in different ways.

This theme brings together the different elements of the pack and considers the impact that the massive changes to the British postal system had upon Victorian society and how that continues to affect us today.

This would be a good stage to go back to the enquiry questions set at the beginning of the topic. It will enable the children to summarise what they have learnt and make their own interpretations of primary and secondary sources.

By the end of Queen Victoria's reign Britain had changed considerably. New inventions such as steam power, electricity, photography and bicycles changed the world people lived in. The education, welfare and voting reforms started to deal with the causes of poverty and change society.

Rowland Hill's postal reforms, with the introduction of the Penny Black and uniform penny postage

changed the way people communicated with each other. Changes to the post helped create some of the traditions we enjoy today, such as sending Christmas cards, postcards and parcels. The first Christmas card was produced in 1843 and Prince Albert introduced many of the traditions we associate with Christmas. Postcards were first introduced in 1870 and Parcels Post started in 1883. Both were very popular.

The Post Office's gift to the nation for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was the introduction of mail deliveries to rural areas. This was a significant step to mark 60 years of Queen Victoria's reign. It is interesting to note how little the basic design of postage stamps changed during Queen Victoria's reign. The 1887 'Jubilee issue' stamps still had the same iconic image of Queen Victoria as was seen on the Penny Black. This basic design idea is still evident in modern British definitive postage stamps with Queen Elizabeth's portrait.

facsimile 9

Look at the facsimile sheet showing a selection of stamps from Queen Victoria's reign





ACTIVITY SHEET

Activity 6.1

Create your own museum

You have been asked by a museum to create a display about the way postal communications had changed by the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Use any of the facsimiles or images from the Online Gallery.

Your task is to choose the **five** items that you think are the most important for telling the story of how postal communications changed. You will need to explain why you have chosen each item.

Draw pictures and label the 5 items you have selected and write a reason why you have selected each one.

Picture and label	Reason
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

THEME 6:

Did the Penny Black Change the World?

Activity 6.2

Reading for Information

Discuss the different ways that people can find information about a topic with the class. This includes the Internet, using reference books, interviewing people, watching a television programme, or listening to a radio programme.

Explain that the aim of this lesson is to use different information books to find out facts about the changes that happened in Victorian times.

Revise the different features of an information book such as the contents page, how to use the index, skimming and scanning the text.

This activity will lead to the creation of a class bibliography with a set of information statements about the topic.

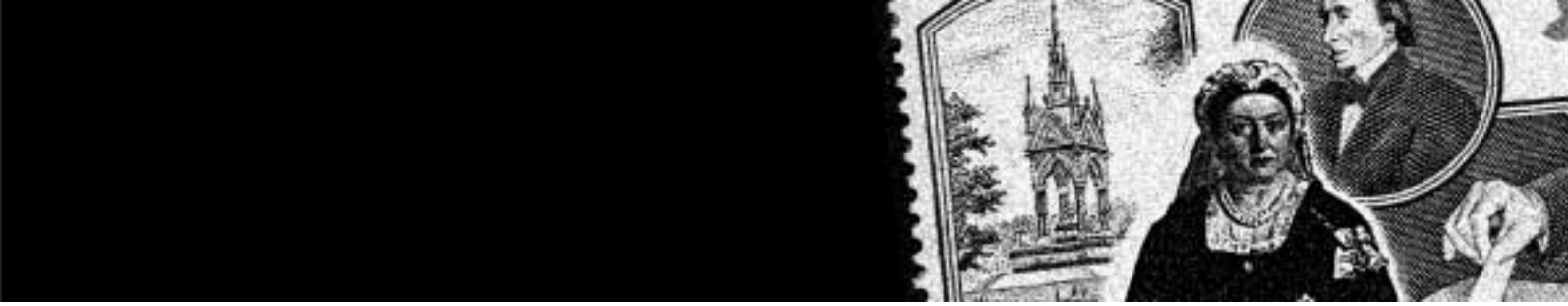
1. Children work in pairs and are given a number. This will identify who took the notes and the book they used.
2. Each pair is given an information book and they write their number on a post-it note together with the title, author, date of publication and publisher.
3. Each pair is then given smaller post-it notes and they need to write their number on these. They then have to look for information in their books relating to the categories in the table below and as they complete each post-it, come up to the board and stick their note onto the correct section.
4. Only one piece of information per post-it note.
5. Using the numbering system, the children will be able to identify the information books that they have used.

Create a large copy of the table below on the wall or board.

Changes in Victorian times from 1837-1901

	1837	1901
Postal system Use photocopied sections of this booklet.		
Transport		
Work		
Leisure		

The post-its with the book titles can be stuck onto the wall. This is a way of creating a simple class bibliography and introducing the children to the idea that they have to write down where they find their information.



Activity 6.3

Design your own commemorative stamp

ACTIVITY SHEET

A commemorative stamp is a postage stamp issued to honour or commemorate a person, place or event. The first commemorative stamp was issued in Britain in 1924. Imagine that they had commemorative stamps in Victorian times.

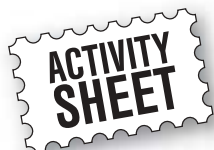
What do you think was the most important achievement or invention during the Victorian era? Who do you think was an important person who should be remembered? Design a stamp commemorating your chosen idea.



A large rectangular area with a decorative scalloped border, intended for designing a commemorative stamp.

THEME 6:

Did the Penny Black Change the World?



Activity 6.4

'The Penny Black Changed the World'

Think about all the changes that happened since the introduction of the Penny Black in 1840. These included:

- :: All letters weighing less than half an ounce could be sent for one penny anywhere in Britain.
- :: Improvements in the transport networks meant that letters could be transported more quickly.
- :: The Post Office set up a Savings Bank in 1861 to encourage people to save money.
- :: Postcards were introduced in 1870 and were very popular.
- :: Postal Orders were introduced in 1881.
- :: Parcels Post was introduced in 1883.



This was a song sheet for the new Parcels Post, with a postal worker sorting parcels inside the van.

Imagine you are a journalist for the **Illustrated London News** in 1890, fifty years after uniform penny postage was introduced.

Plan your article by making notes about how changes to the postal system affected everyday life.

Think about how it changed for:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| :: People reading and writing | :: People in villages |
| :: Families | :: Businesses |
| :: The Empire | :: The Poor |

THEME 6:

Did the Penny Black Change the World?

Activity 6.5

Timeline activities

The timeline poster can be used as a basis for exploring the key developments during this period. The worksheet on the following page can be used to develop the pupils' chronological understanding.

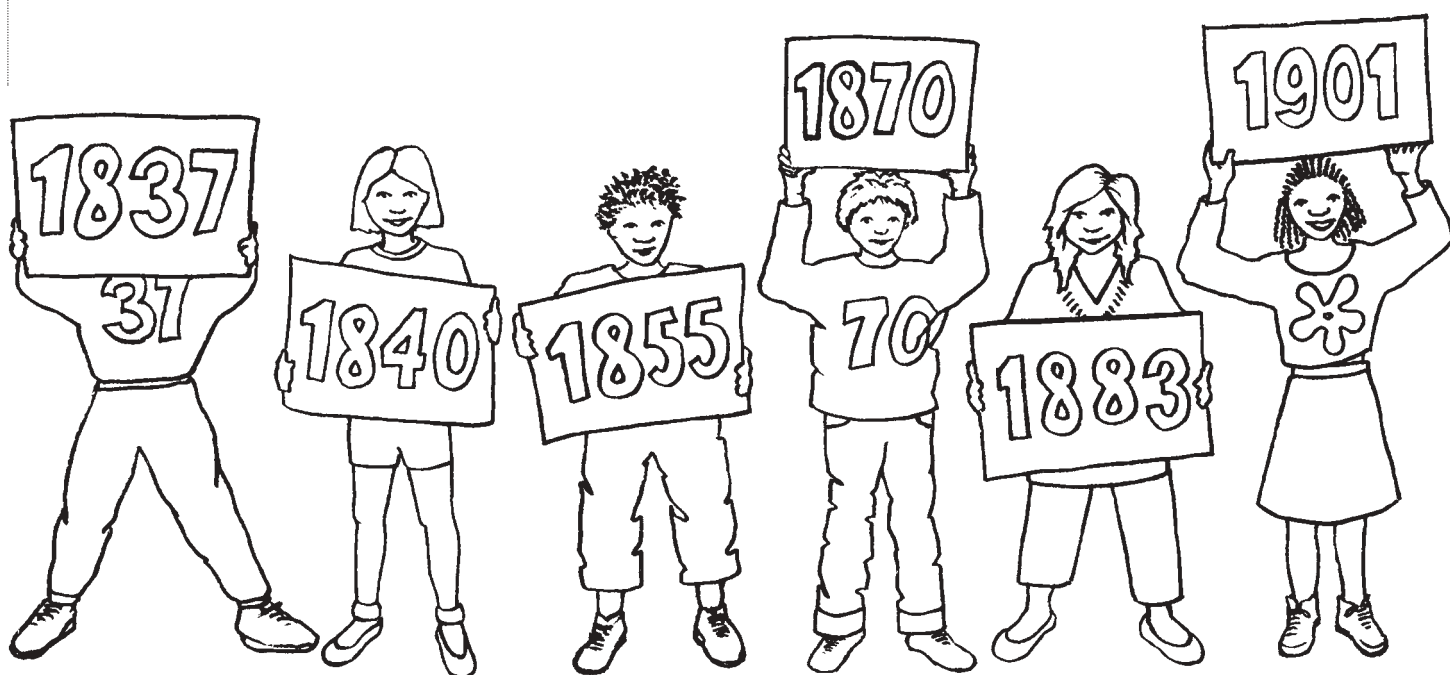
Post-it notes would also be useful for creating timelines or jotting down when various developments happened. This would enable pupils to see when clusters of change happened (i.e. transportation in Victorian times).

Working in groups the children could also create their own timeline using the information books. Split the class into different groups and give each a topic such as communications, transport, work and childhood. Using information books, the groups have to find ten different dates and events and write the dates and events on separate post-it notes. After

twenty minutes of research time, ask the groups to swap their notes and then set out the other group's timeline in chronological order matched with the correct event.

These could be displayed in the classroom as separate posters with the children finding additional photos or illustrations. This activity could be extended by asking the pupils to write information paragraphs about the topic.

The pupils could also create a human timeline. Each child finds out one fact using a reference book and writes it on a large piece of card. The children are then asked to stand in chronological order in a line and have to find the correct place. The cards can then be pegged onto a timeline 'washing line' and could form the basis of individual research on the topics.



Activity 6.6 Timeline activity

Complete the gaps with the correct dates and events on the timeline below.

ACTIVITY SHEET

1858	?	?	1859	1863	1870	1877	1881	1883	1889	1894	1897	
Queen Victoria sent a telegram to the President of the US to mark the successful completion of the transatlantic cable	Darwin's Theory of Evolution	London Underground opened to the public	First pedal bicycle	Education Act introduced free mass elementary schooling	Postcards introduced	Role of Telegraph Messenger Boys introduced	Queen Victoria became Empress of India	Thomas Edison invented the first light bulb	Parcels post introduced; 'letter carriers' became known as postmen	Picture postcards introduced	Queen Victoria died	

THEME 6:

Did the Penny Black Change the World?

ACTIVITY
SHEET

Activity 6.7

How did life change between 1840 and 1890?

facsimile 10

What information does this card tell us about how everyday life had changed during Queen Victoria's reign? In what other ways had life changed? Complete the boxes.

*Example:
More people could
read and write*



This card was produced by the Post Office in 1890 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Penny Black. Find out what a Jubilee is and complete the definition box.

Jubilee:

Golden Jubilee: