

Phase 1 – School Days (Victorians)

Education

In England, schools were not free until 1891. Until then, children had to pay to go to school.

Poor children went to free charity schools or schools run by women, called 'Dame schools'. They also went to Sunday Schools run by churches.

Children from rich families were often educated at home until they were 10 years old. Boys were then sent to Public schools like Eton or Harrow. However, very few schools took girls. Rich girls were usually educated at home.



Victorian Schools

Victorians decided that all children should go to school. In 1880, a law was made to make sure every child in Britain between the ages of 5 and 10 went to school.

In the schoolroom, the pupils sat at desks, in rows, facing the front. The windows were high so that pupils could not look out and it was probably a cold room so you would have wanted to sit close to the fire. The walls would have been quite bare. The school morning started at 9am and lasted until 12 noon. Children were sent home for lunch and then returned for afternoon classes which ran from 2pm until 5pm. There were no school lunches and, sometimes, no breaks!

Punishment

Pupils in Victorian schools were punished very harshly if they misbehaved.

Sometimes teachers used a cane. Canes were made from wood and were used to hit children. Boys were usually caned on their backsides and girls were caned across their hands or bare legs.

If children were finding the work difficult and struggled to keep up in class, they were often made to wear a 'dunce's cap'. A dunce's cap was usually made out of newspaper with the word dunce or a letter D on it.



Samuel Wilderspin

Who was he?

Samuel Wilderspin was born in 1791. He didn't like school because his teachers were strict.

Why do we remember him?

- He became a teacher at an infant school and made learning fun.
- He played games with the children.
- He invented the school playground.
- He wanted children to play outside.

What is his legacy?

- He wrote many books about teaching.
- He set up Wilderspin Schools.
- His ideas are still used in schools today.



Key Vocabulary



CANE: A long, thin, flexible. Stick which was used in Victorian schools to hit children with as a punishment.



CENTURY: A period of 100 years.



CHALKBOARD: A dark coloured board that you can write on with chalk.



CHRONOLOGY: A series of past events in the order they happened.



DUNCE'S CAP: A cap with the letter D on that children were made to wear in Victorian schools if they struggled with the work.



SCHOOLROOM: A Victorian classroom.



SIGNIFICANT: Something or someone important.



TIMELINE: A visual representation of a series of events.