



2. STREET CHILDREN

The content for 'Street children' consists of three episodes - each about 6 minutes long - which can be listened to individually or sequentially. A synopsis of each episode clip is below.

Lesson plan:

Learning intention 'We are learning to...'

We are learning what life was like for city children working to survive in the Victorian era.

Assessment criteria 'What I'm looking for...'

As an outcome I am looking for a short piece of writing that describes three key features of working life for a child in Victorian times.

Share and discuss a listening focus for each episode by asking the key question and instructing the children to make the following notes.

Resources needed: note-making paper and pencil.

1. Maddy's story: finding the 'pure'

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Mortality. There were few chances to find any medical help during the Victorian era. People often died suddenly because they were not looking after their health.

Discussion question: 'What would you do if you were ill and you couldn't afford to see a doctor?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What is "the pure"?' (Dog excrement collected from the streets to be

sold to tanners for use during the process of softening cow's hide into leather.)

- Instruction: 'Make a note of any other words you hear that might be slang words.'
- (Answers: Pick-pockets; Dip, knick, swipe, filch. Run away; scarper, leg it, caught, nabbed, transported to Australia, sent across the herring pond.)

2. Jacko's story: dogs and rats

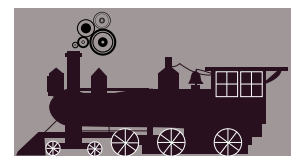
Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Disgusting jobs. Poor children wanted to work for money because otherwise they would go hungry. Better jobs were often taken by older people so poor children were forced to do the worst jobs of all or starve.

Discussion question: 'What jobs are done for you in your life that you find disgusting?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'Why were rats caught?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of all the reasons why the rats were caught, notice what they are used for after they are captured.'
- (Answers: Caught to protect the grain stores; sold afterwards to fight against dogs in betting contests.)





3. Eliza's story: mudlarking

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Slang words. People, places and things are sometimes known by names different to their usual name. These names might be very different to names on signs.

Discussion question, 'What names have been invented around your school for different playgrounds or parts of the building?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'Why would people go into the sewers?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of reasons for and against going into the sewers.'
- (Answers: lots of valuable items lost down the drain might be sold to buy food; dangerous gases; controlled flooding to clean the sewers and rats.)

After listening

Activity: write a description of life for poor children living in cities in the Victorian Era. Three things to include in your description:

- possible jobs - pure-finder, rat-catcher, mudlark, sewer-hunter
- how it feels to do those jobs – working conditions might be hot, cold, smelly, scary, dark, wet, dirty, painful, etc
- dangers of that sort of work – disease, bites, drowning, etc.

Differentiation and teacher support for SEN / Focus group / Whole class

Teacher to model phrases beginnings of sentences that would be useful to guide writing. Such as, 'One job is called... I would describe the job as... It is dangerous because...'

Challenge for gifted and talented learners:

When describing the different jobs can you compare them to each other and decide which jobs are the best and the worst giving reasons for your answer?

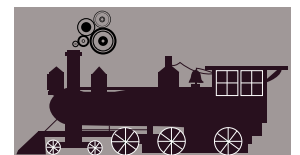
Plenary and assessment

In table groups or as a class, 'interview' a member of the group or class for one of the jobs. Ask them why they want to do the job and why they think they would be good at it.

Episode synopses

It's been calculated that in 1848 there were as many as 30,000 homeless children living on the streets of London.

This programme focuses on three 'street children', each sleeping rough at Billingsgate Fish Market. Each describes how they have come to be homeless, living with the many other street children at the market. The three stories may be listened to independently of each other or as a sequence.





1. Maddy's story: finding the 'pure'

Maddy introduces herself and describes how she came to be sleeping rough at Billingsgate. She used to work with her father, a pick-pocket.

One day they are at a public execution outside Newgate prison when Maddy's father picks a pocket too many and is caught. Maddy escapes from the scene and goes to find her grandfather.

Maddy's grandfather explains that her father will probably be transported - taken to Australia. If Maddy wants to stay with him she will have to earn her keep, helping him to 'find the pure'.

'Pure-finding' was a popular Victorian occupation and involved collecting dog faeces to sell to the tanneries that used it in the process of making leather. The job required no skill and so became very popular...leading to a dramatic fall in the value of a bucket of pure.

Maddy has no choice other than to do as her grandfather urges. However, when he dies suddenly she is left homeless and goes to join the other children on the street.

2. Jacko's story: dogs and rats

Jacko is another of the children sleeping rough in Billingsgate Market. He recounts how he used to work with a rat-catcher called Vic. Their job is to keep the granaries in the London dockyards free from vermin.

Jacko's job is to attract the rats out of their hiding places a steer them over to Vic, who places them in a large basket. Jacko describes how Vic was very particular about catching the rats alive and not harming them...because the rats will later be taken to a pub in Soho where they will

be slaughtered in a dog pit - and the best rats achieve the best prices.

One day Jacko arrives at the granary to find Vic convulsing. Jacko decides to continue with the Soho trade, but when he is paid off with a fraction of the usual price he decides to pick a punter's pocket. He is nearly caught and now, without any occupation, arrives at Billingsgate to join the homeless children.

3. Eliza's story: mudlarking

Eliza recalls how she used to work with her uncle Dick 'mudlarking' on the shore of the River Thames, picking up any items they can find to sell - usually pieces of coal. It's dirty, smelly work. But it gets even dirtier...

One day Dick tells Eliza that he's met a man called 'Tosher' who works in the filthy sewers underneath the city and that they're going to do the same. Tosher shows them how to prod in the filth to find anything valuable that has been washed into the sewers.

Unfortunately one day they stray up one of the tunnels washed out by the opening of the sluice gates: Tosher and Dick perish in the flood, but Maddy is somehow miraculously carried back to the bank of the Thames.

