



# A WEALTHY VICTORIAN FAMILY

The content for 'A wealthy Victorian family' 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 how life was different for rich children and poor children during the Victorian era.

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

As an outcome I am looking for a table of differences between the life of rich children and poor children.

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. Emily's life

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Education for wealthy boys and girls. Boys from wealthy families would commonly be sent away to boarding school. Girls were commonly educated at home by a governess.

Discussion question: 'What would it be like to be taught on your own by a teacher that lived in your house?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What are the differences between the ways wealthy boys and girls were taught?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of the different things that girls and boys were taught.'
- (Answers: Girls educated at home, embroidery, Boys educated at boarding schools to learn about the wider world.)

## 2. Emily and the beetle

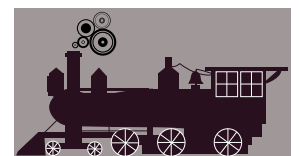
Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Discipline. In the Victorian era girls and boys were expected to behave in very different ways to each other. Both boys and girls were expected to obey their parents and teachers without any disagreement.

Discussion question: 'What would it be like to live with parents and teachers being very strict all the time?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What choices do wealthy children have in the Victorian era?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of things that you think Emily would like to do even though she is not allowed.'
- (Answers: Look after her brother's beetle, travel to India, learn about the wider world at school.)





### 3. Emily at the seaside

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Holidays. Trips to the seaside were made popular by the recently created railway network. Before that time horse drawn carriages were the best way to travel. They made travel slow, uncomfortable and expensive.

Discussion question: 'How is a trip to the seaside today different from a trip in the Victorian era?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What are the differences between a trip to the seaside now and a trip to the seaside in the Victorian era?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of things you might do differently if you were going to the seaside.'
- (Answers: travel by car or train; children allowed to run and play; allowed to watch children's shows; allowed to bathe in the sea without a bathing machine.)

### After listening

Activity: compare the lives of wealthy Victorian children with children today. Divide your page into two columns entitled 'Wealthy Victorian children' and 'Modern children'. Write a few sentences in each column for each of these subheadings:

- education for girls (Victorian: at home, arts and crafts; Modern: at school, all subjects)
- education for boys (Victorian: at boarding school, boys only; Modern: living at home, sharing school with girls)
- discipline (Victorian children: absolute obedience; Modern children: using discussions to be fair and make agreements)
- Day trips to the seaside (Victorian: train, walking and sitting only, bathing carts;

Modern: car or train, entertainment allowed, bathing and playing encouraged)

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

Teacher to demonstrate on paper or a white board how to divide up the page and where to place subheadings. Sentence starters may be provided to support individuals, groups or the whole class - eg 'Wealthy Victorian children had to..' 'Modern children are more likely to..'

#### Challenge for gifted and talented learners

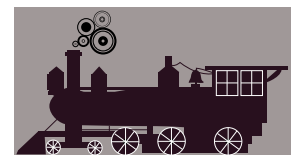
Under each subheading can you make a guess at why the people in Victorian times behaved so differently? You need to think about how technology has changed and how people feel about being seen having a good time.

### Plenary and assessment

In table groups or as a class, share and compare sentences written for each subheading. Are there any overall conclusions about differences between now and then? (Strictness, differences between boys and girls, modesty and dignity.)

### Episode synopsis:

The three episodes in this programme are about a girl - Emily Anne Barr - who lives in a well-off family with servants and a governess. If you were a child in Victorian times much depended on whether you came from a poor family or a rich one. If you came from a poor family you might expect to be sent out to work as young as 6 years old. Before 1870 you would probably have little or no schooling. And you could look forward to a tough life trying to make enough money to live.





However, things were very different for children born into wealthy families. Children would live at home and spend their time in the nursery, looked after by a nanny. When they grew older boys would usually be sent away to boarding school.

Girls would stay at home and be educated by a governess, who would teach skills like reading and writing, music and needlework. Children would not see much of their parents: often they would spend much of their time in the upstairs rooms, only coming down to see their parents for a period in the evening before bedtime.

## 1. Emily's life

As we meet Emily she is just finished off her 'sampler' - an elaborate piece of needlework. Her brother Bertie has just returned to boarding school and so Emily is now alone in the house, spending her time in the school room with her governess - Miss Stevens. In the evening Emily is allowed downstairs to show her parents her sampler and to say good-night. It's a rather stern and formal occasion. Upstairs again, Emily says her prayers before bed. She appreciates that she is fortunate to have a comfortable life...but she also feels very restricted in the things she is allowed to do.

## 2. Emily and the beetle

Emily is in the school room with Miss Stevens playing her scales on the piano. Later she takes out a little beetle that she and Bertie caught in the garden on the day that Bertie went back to school - Emily has promised to look after it for him until he returns. When Miss Stevens sees the beetle she is horrified and demands that Emily returns it to the garden at once. Emily refuses - saying that she has made a promise to Bertie to look after it. Miss Stevens tells her that if she will not obey she will have to account to her father for her disobedience that evening.

Evening comes and Emily is summoned to see her father. Her parents are very disappointed with her behaviour. Emily must apologise to Miss Stevens when she goes to bed. Emily suddenly sees Miss Stevens in a different light, as a rather sorry and lonely figure, without a family of her own.

## 3. Emily at the seaside

In the final episode Emily is granted a rare treat: a visit to the seaside, albeit in the company of her mother and Miss Stevens. They make the journey by train, the new railway network having made such day trips now possible.

At the seaside Emily discovers there is a new list of the things she mustn't do: no sunbathing, no Punch and Judy, no taking her hat off. Finally Emily is allowed to take off her boots and run down to the sea to paddle...and try to enjoy herself like other children.

