



WORKING IN SERVICE - THE MAID

The content for 'The maid' 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 domestic servants during the Victorian era.

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

As an outcome I am looking for a diagram or mind map showing a range of different roles and their functions within a typical Victorian household.

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. Martha's first day

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Jobs and Ranks. There was no electricity supply to most houses during the Victorian era. There were no vacuum-cleaners or washing machines.

Discussion question: 'What different jobs do you think needed to be done in a large Victorian house?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What different jobs are done in the house?'

- Instruction: 'Make a note of the different jobs you hear about during the episode.'
- (Answers: Martha Tibbot - Chambermaid, Mrs Arnett - Housekeeper, Mr Jones - Head Butler, Sally - Scullery Maid.)

2. Martha's duties

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Rules and Duties. In the Victorian era it was popular to be very strict about rules and politeness.

Discussion question: 'What rules and duties do you think a Victorian maid needed to stick to?'

During listening: one question to focus on

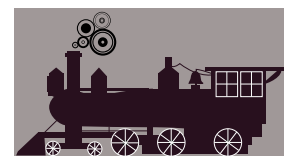
- Key question: 'What rules does Martha have to follow?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of the rules that servants had to follow.'
- (Answers: curtsying or bowing, making space, not speaking unless spoken to, pay for all breakages, honesty at all times.)

3. Christmas for servants

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- Celebrations. In the Victorian era it was unusual for workers to be given holidays.

Discussion question, 'How different do you think Christmas celebrations were in the Victorian era?'





During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'How are the Christmas celebrations in the Victorian era different from Christmas celebrations today?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of any differences you notice between now and then.'
- (Answers: No time off, separate parties for different classes of people.)

After listening

Activity: create a diagram or mind map of the different jobs within a large Victorian house. Three things to include in your diagram or mind map:

- the different jobs in the household (Martha Tibbot - Chambermaid, Mrs Arnett - Housekeeper, Mr Jones - Head Butler, Sally - Scullery Maid, etc.)
- extra information about rules servants had to follow, rules during celebrations and how the law applied to servants.

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

Teacher to model the skeleton of a diagram and provide the names of the roles for children to put into place. The Master and his family above the Head Butler who was superior to the Housekeeper who was in turn superior to the Chambermaid and the Scullery Maid of whom the Scullery Maid is the lowest ranked.

Challenge for gifted and talented learners

Can you add additional information to your diagram about the different roles of each worker? What do you think the difference is between the work of a Chambermaid and a Scullery Maid?

(A Scullery Maid's would be mostly responsible for the room where most of the washing took place. A Chambermaid would be mostly responsible for cleaning rooms and serving in the house.)

Plenary and assessment

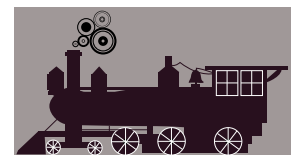
Select and share examples of diagrams with the class. Ask children to point out highlights from each other's work.

Episode synopses

The three episodes in this programme follow Martha Tibbot as she begins a new life as a maid in a big country house in the 1870s.

One of the most common jobs for a girl in Victorian times was going 'into service' - which meant becoming a maid in the house of a wealthier family. Servants were common in Victorian times and a wealthy family in a large house might employ several different servants - butlers, housekeepers, cooks, gardeners and several different types of maid - while even middle class families often had one maid, called a 'maid of all work'.

Girls often went into service aged just 12 or 13, sometimes younger. Girls from rural villages were in demand as maids, as it was often thought that they would work harder than children from cities. It was common for young girls to be placed in a house 30 or 40 kilometres away from their family home because it made it harder for her to run away to be with her family again.





1. Martha's first day

It is Martha's first day as a maid. She arrives at 'the big house' at 7 in the morning and is met by Mrs Arnett, the housekeeper. She changes into uniform and is introduced to Mr Jones - the butler - and to Sally, a chambermaid.

When Sally plays a trick on Martha by spreading ash on her pinafore she knows her new life is going to present some challenges...

2. Martha's duties

It is a little later and Sally has begun to learn her daily routine as a maid: up at 6, then constant work until about 10 in the evening, with just half a day off on Sunday to recover. She has also learnt some of the rules of being in 'service' from Mrs Arnett: always 'give room' to the members of the household; never speak to any of them unless asked a question; no friends or family to visit.

One day Martha is helping Sally when a mirror belonging to her ladyship – smuggled into some bedclothes – falls to the ground and smashes. Clearly Sally was trying to steal the mirror but she attempts to put the blame on Martha. Mrs Arnett is able to deduce what has happened and Sally is dismissed on the spot.

3. Christmas for servants

Martha's first Christmas is approaching and she is feeling lonely. She would like to be spending Christmas Day with her family just a few miles away, but this year Martha will be expected to work throughout the festivities.

Mrs Arnett and Mr Jones take pity on Martha. While carols are being sung upstairs, the servants downstairs organise their own Christmas celebrations...and at the height of the celebrations Martha's family arrive at the servant's entrance.

