**Victorian Lives**

Victoria and Albert had a great influence on the people of Britain. Their way of family life was copied by many people. Those who were prosperous but not rich (the middle classes) wanted to be thought of as respectable members of society.

They went to church, gave expensive dinners, dressed smartly and were strict with their children just like the upper classes.

In Victorian times people who owned land or factories, or had important jobs, became very rich. They could afford a large house with beautiful furniture and could pay for a good education for their children.

They were proud of their houses and their many possessions.

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**Victorian** refers to the time when Victoria was queen from 1837 to 1901. Anyone who was alive at that time is called Victorian. Buildings that were built at that time were also called Victorian. So were things that were invented during that time.

If you have ever been to London you may have been to Victoria Station or seen the Victoria and Albert Museum. They are named after Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert.

Victoria and Albert were married on February 10th 1840. Their first child, Victoria, Princess Royal, was born on November 21st.

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Those who had money lived well away from smoky, noisy Victorian factories and railway lines. Many had several servants and their own carriages. They ate well and dressed smartly.
The father (papa) was the head of the household. He sat at the head of the table, carved the meat on Sunday and led the family in their daily prayers. He was often stern and strict with his wife and children.

His wife (mama) would be in charge of servants, running the household and raising the children who were expected to be obedient and respectful.

The servants would do all of the jobs around the house including cooking, cleaning and the laundry. Maids would look after the wife’s hair, clothes and jewellery.

Servants were often very badly paid but they were given food, clothing and a room to live in.

The household had a strict daily routine. Meals were at the same time every day and the family were called to the table by the sounding of a gong.

Children were told off if they were late for meals. They were expected to eat up all of the food on their plate. If they didn’t they would have the left over food presented to them the next day.

Many children from wealthy and middle-class families saw very little of their parents. They were looked after by a nanny while they were young and nanny would present the children to their parents before bedtime so that their parents could see them.

In Victorian England, rich families employed a male tutor to teach their boys at home and a governess to teach the girls. Until almost the end of the Victorian era there were very few schools available for girls. Girls from wealthy families were mostly educated at home.

Once a boy from a wealthy family turned ten, he was sent away to a boarding school.

Some public schools such as Eton or Harrow had high standards and gave a good ‘gentleman’s education’. It was important for a boy who wanted a good career to go to the right school.

The upper classes were surrounded by servants and lived pampered lives on their country estates.

For those who had money - the upper and middle classes - life was very comfortable.

Middle class men were employed as lawyers, doctors, bankers and clerks, surveyors or accountants.

They tried to copy the lifestyle of the upper classes but couldn’t afford a house full of servants. They might have a cook or a young girl to work for them doing the chores around the house.
When their children were young they’d have a nursemaid (a nanny), then a governess, then the boys would go to the local school. They would probably have a horse and carriage but their house wouldn’t be a large one so their children would have to share bedrooms.

But did everyone live like this?