



Queen Victoria, in 1897.

Queen Victoria and the British Empire

Queen Victoria ruled the United Kingdom from 1837 to 1901. She had the longest reign in British history. This period is called "Victorian times". During her reign, Britain had a vast and powerful empire.

A few facts:

- 1819: Birth
- 1837: Coronation*
- 1840: Marriage with Prince Albert
- 1876: Empress of India
- 1901: Death
- 9 children
- Queen Elizabeth II is her great great granddaughter

* coronation: couronnement.

The industrial revolution

Thanks to the invention of the steam engine, the exploitation of coal mines and new machines, British industry developed. New mills¹ and factories opened. The British got raw materials² from their colonies. People and goods³ could travel more easily thanks to new means of transportation⁴: railways and steam boat developed. By the end of Queen Victoria's reign, Britain was the world's richest country.

1. mills: - 2. raw materials:
 - 3. goods: - 4.
 means of transportation:



The Royal Mail travelling by train, 1845.

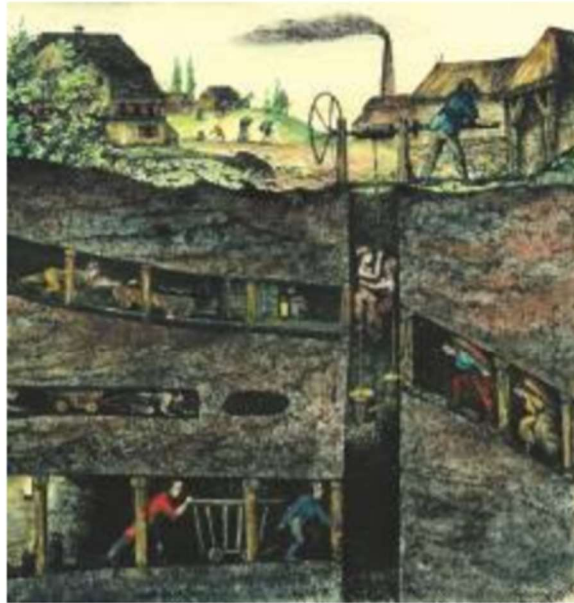
Child labour in Victorian times

Industry needed a lot of labour and many children had to work. Until 1880 school attendance was not compulsory. After 1880 children could leave school as soon as they were ten. They worked for long hours in coal mines (carrying coal or stones), mills, factories (many accidents happened when they cleaned the machines) or in the street (working on the open markets). In the country, children had to work for hours in the fields scaring crows* or picking fruit or vegetables.

* crow: corbeau.

A few dates:

- 1842: The Mines Act stopped children under 10 from working in mines.
- 1880: The Education Act made school compulsory for children between 5 and 10.



Child labour in a coal mine in England (1844).

1. Have a good look at the documents and read the texts.
2. In the texts, find the words which mean: machine à vapeur, charbon, usine, effrayer.
3. Are these statements true or false?
 - a. Queen Victoria reigned in the 19th century.
 - b. She had the longest reign in British history.
 - c. People could travel by train, steam boat and plane.
 - d. In 1850 children under 10 could work in mines.
 - e. In 1890 children from 5 to 10 had to go to school.