

Victorian schooling

In the early 19th century, there were no state-run schools, and no law to say children had to go to school. Few working-class children had any formal education. By the end of Victoria's reign, the government had recognized that working people needed an education, and made all children attend school until they were 13.

School funds

Church-run or charity schools provided education for the poor, but parents often could not afford to let their children stop work to attend. In 1870, a national system of Board Schools was set up, funded out of local rates (taxes).

Dinner time at a ragged school



Ragged schools

Founded in 1780 by philanthropist Robert Raikes, Sunday Schools for the poor spread rapidly. Known as "ragged schools", they provided free basic instruction, meals, and clothing for thousands of poor children until Board Schools replaced them with weekday education.

Pupils sat in rows at metal-framed wooden desks



Pupils faced the blackboard and copied lessons or to a slate using slate pencils

Slates were used in schools as they were cheaper than paper

A white cotton apron kept school clothes clean

Not all parents could afford to buy school books - some children went barefoot

School subjects

To equip them for work, poor children were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic - the "three Rs". They also did sport, geography, and history. Girls learned how to cook, boys took woodwork lessons.



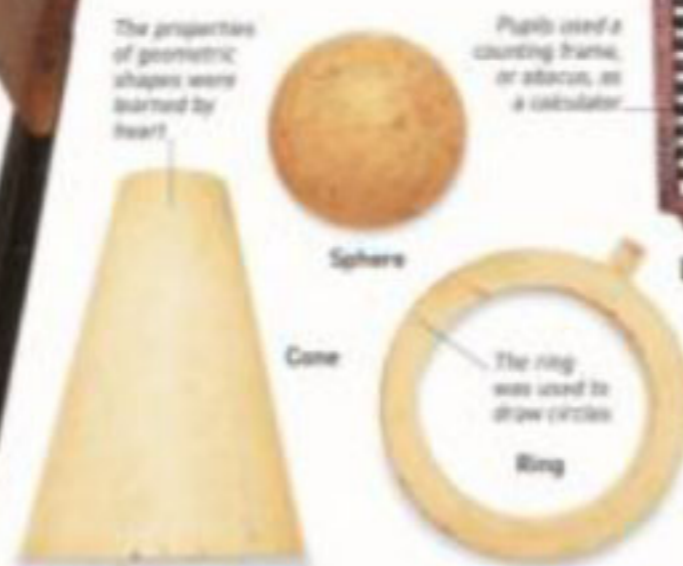
Religion and reading

In many schools, the school day, which ran from nine to five o'clock, began and ended with prayers. Pupils also read from the Bible and studied its teachings.

Children learned about the animal kingdom from the Bible

The properties of geometric shapes were learned by heart

Pupils used a counting frame, or abacus, as a calculator



Learning by heart

All children learned arithmetic, or mathematics. Teachers write maths problems on the blackboard, and the children copied them down. They learned by heart, chanting aloud their times tables and other facts, over and over again.

Teaching practice

Early Victorian teachers had little formal training and were poorly paid. Sometimes older pupils would repeat the lesson to the younger ones. From 1839, the government appointed school inspectors to check standards, and test children's progress.

Teachers used canes, or leather straps, to strike naughty pupils

Good attendance medal



Good attendance

Children often skipped school because they had to work, or look after younger children at home. In 1880, school became compulsory for all children aged 5 to 10 years old.

Punishment

Discipline was strict. Pupils who did not learn their lessons stood in a corner, wearing a large cone-shaped hat called a dunce's cap. Talking was forbidden and teachers could hit children if they misbehaved.

Teacher's bamboo cane



Public schools

Sons of rich families went to expensive public schools, such as Eton, Rugby, or Westminster (above). Pupils were taught classical subjects such as Latin and Greek, and educated to become leaders and statesmen. There were few schools for rich girls, who were taught mainly by governesses at home.

Education reforms

As industry grew, the state saw the need to educate working people, and introduced school reforms. These were mainly for children aged 5 to 13; after that, most working-class children went out to work.

1833

Government provides first grant to church schools.

1839

Government appoints first school inspectors.

1840

First teachers' training college opens in London.

1844

Factory Act states children in factories must have six half-days' schooling a week.

1870

Education Act sets up a nationwide system of Board Schools; their school fees are abolished in 1891.

1880

School is made compulsory for children aged 5 to 10; the leaving age is later raised to 13 years old.

1891

School fees abolished in Board Schools.

The railways



Transport of all kinds, on land and sea, developed rapidly in the Victorian period, but the arrival of the railways had the biggest impact on British society. By moving raw materials and finished goods quickly around the country, railways boosted industries, trade, employment, the growth of towns, and a new world of travel. Goods, people, mail, and ideas travelled faster than ever before.



Building the railways

Railway planners such as George Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunel hired huge gangs of skilled workmen, known as navvies, to build tracks, bridges, tunnels, and embankments.

19th-century transport

Before the 1830s, people travelled long distances in horse-drawn transport. In the Victorian period, forms of public transport changed dramatically.



1850s Double-decker bus
In 1829, the first horse-drawn omnibus appeared in London. By 1850, buses were open-topped double-deckers. By 1902, motor buses had replaced them.



1863 Underground
The world's first underground railway opened in London in 1863. Steam engines pulled carriages along the roofed trenches.



1870 Penny-farthing
The first pedal bicycles appeared in 1817. Later, "penny-farthings" were popular. By 1885, bicycles had equal-sized wheels and a safety chain.



1885 Electric tramcar
Horse-drawn tramcars on rails came into use in the 1840s. Later, steam replaced horses. The first electric tram hit Blackpool in 1885.

1886 Motor taxicab
The first successful car, made in Germany in 1886, looked like a horseless carriage. Gradually motor cars spread to Britain, too.

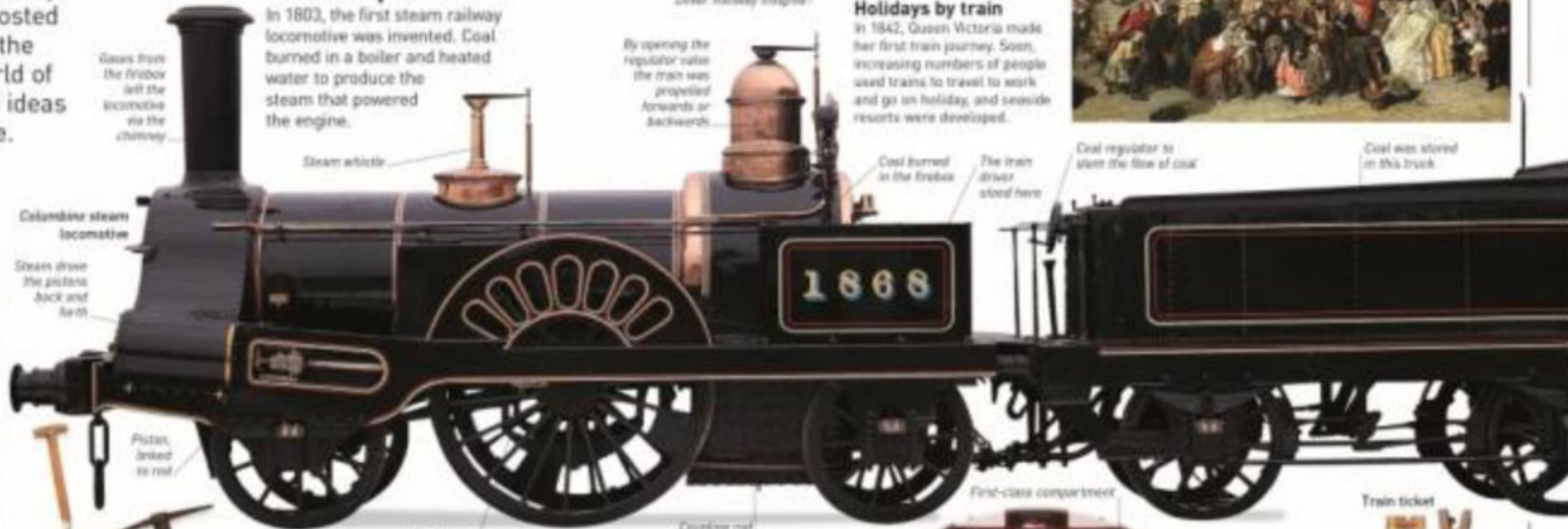


A great engineer
One of the greatest Victorian engineers, Isambard Kingdom Brunel created the Great Western Railway, planned the Clifton Suspension Bridge, and designed the Great Western, the first trans-Atlantic steamship, as well as the Great Britain, the first screw-propelled, ocean steamship.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Steam power

In 1803, the first steam railway locomotive was invented. Coal burned in a boiler and heated water to produce the steam that powered the engine.



Gases from the firebox left the locomotive via the chimney.

Steam whistle

By opening the regulator valve the train was propelled forwards or backwards.

Coal burned in the firebox

The train driver stood here

Coal regulator to stem the flow of coal

Coal was stored in this truck

Columbiad steam locomotive

Steam drove the pistons back and forth

Pistons linked to rods

Rod drove wheels around

Coupling rod

First-class compartment

Train ticket



Workman's shovel



Workman's pick



Ticket clippers

Railway "mania"
Most of Britain's railways were built during the 1840s and 1850s. Private individuals built separate lines, forming companies to raise money. Shareholders then shared in the profits. During the railway "mania" of the 1840s, people made profit from investing in the railways. By the 1850s, the boom, and profits, were over.



London, Chatham, and Dover Railway insignia

Great Western Railway station master's hat

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway whistle

Holidays by train
In 1842, Queen Victoria made her first train journey. Soon, increasing numbers of people used trains to travel to work and go on holiday, and seaside resorts were developed.

Railway stations

Stations appeared as railway lines arrived in different cities. This painting, *The Railway Station* (1853) by English artist William Frith, captures the excitement and bustle of the Victorian station at Paddington, in London.

