



Queen Victoria

Early Life

Born on May 24th 1819, the fearsome lady we came to know as Queen Victoria was actually named Alexandrina Victoria. This was in honour of her godfather, Tsar Alexander I. However, from a young age, she preferred to go by her second name and so it stuck throughout her life. Her early life wasn't without hardship. Even though she was only fifth in line to the throne when she was born, the deaths of a number of her uncles and her beloved father when she was only one year old soon catapulted her up the ladder. At this time, her mother was concerned that Victoria might ascend to the throne before she was of age. To make sure her daughter was ready, she raised her with a very strict code of discipline. This became known as the "Kensington System" and involved a strict timetable of lessons often on her own. She was also forced to share a bedroom with her mother until she was crowned queen!

Queen at Last

Early on June 20th, 1837, Victoria was woken by her advisers and informed that her uncle had died in the night. Suddenly, only a month after turning 18, Victoria was to be made queen. One of her first jobs as Queen Victoria was to move into Buckingham Palace. She was the first royal in history to live in the palace, and she soon set about rectifying its many shortcomings, especially after her marriage to her cousin, Albert, in 1840.

Being a queen is never easy, and Queen Victoria wasn't always popular. Throughout her reign, there were many assassination attempts. Luckily, none of them was successful and she went on to have 9 children, 40 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, many of whom married into other royal families around Europe.



A Period of Mourning

14th December 1861 marked a dark day in Queen Victoria's life. Prince Albert passed away from typhoid fever aged 42. She never really recovered from his death and went into a long period of mourning. In fact, from that day until her own death, the Queen wore only black clothes.

Her Legacy

Throughout her 63-year reign (the longest of any British monarch at that time), Great Britain changed a huge amount. Under her guidance, the British Empire stretched far and wide. At one point, Britain ruled a quarter of the world's population.

Back home, the population of England was doubling as well. This led to the Industrial Revolution that changed the lives and landscape of Britain forever. The invention of the steam train meant that people could travel far and wide and the idea of seaside holidays soon took off.

Death of a Queen

Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901, at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. She was aged 81. In the years after her death, the country found itself growing even stronger thanks to the Empire that she had built. Throughout both World Wars, the people of the British Empire lay down their own lives to help defend a country they had never seen; many of them were treated terribly both during and after the wars.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. When was Queen Victoria born?
2. When she was born, how many people were ahead of her to rule?
3. How old was she when she became queen?
4. What happened in December 1861?
5. Why did Queen Victoria only wear black towards the end of her life?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Which word tells you that there were things wrong with Buckingham Palace?

V

Write a definition for the word "mourning".

S

What happened after her uncle died during the night?

P

How do you think people of the British Empire felt when they fought in the World Wars?

E

What effect does the use of sub-headings have on the reader?

Answers:

1. May 24th 1819
2. 4
3. 18
4. Prince Albert Died
5. To mourn her husband

V: Shortcomings

V: Express sadness or sorrow for somebody's death

S: She became Queen

P: Any ideas relating to information in the text i.e. proud to serve their Empire, upset/frustrated at how they were treated.

E: It helps guide the reader towards specific information