

# Activity: Victorian games & toys

**History  
Years (5/6)**

## ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

*As with all of our activities, this is designed to complement the work done in school – it is not meant to be a complete history unit.*

Children try a range of games and toys, including:

- Playground games, such as 'Looby Loo', 'Dollies' and Skipping.
- Playground toys, such as 'Cup & Ball', 'Whip and Top' and Skittles.
- Indoor games, such as Dominoes, Draughts and 'Happy Families'.

## WHERE THE ACTIVITY FITS IN

### to a visit to Beaumanor

The 'Games and Toys' session is an important part of a Victorian visit to Beaumanor (along with the schoolroom, cellars and phototrail), chosen because of its relevance to the experiences of a Victorian child. The visit might also include a village walk, a mystery and, if appropriate, research of primary historical sources (newspapers, oral testimony, etc.).

### to the QCA scheme

**History unit 11** What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?

## ADAPTING THE ACTIVITY FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Younger children could:

- Do the same activities, with staff help at a level appropriate to their age and abilities.

Older children could:

- Do the same activities in greater depth and learn the game of Nine Men's Morris.

## PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have learned:

- some skipping rhymes.
- that games were much simpler and more sociable than nowadays.

## VOCABULARY

In this activity, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with play, e.g. *team, fair, co-operate, share.*
- words associated with the games, e.g. *board, pieces, clockwise.*

## RESOURCES

- The games.
- Worksheets.
- Marked areas.
- Music.
- Base rooms.

## EXPECTATIONS

### At the end of this activity, due to age or ability

*most children will:*

know how to play a range of games and understand their basic sociability.

*some children will not have*

known how to play one or two games.

*made so much progress and will:*

*some children will have*

known how to play a range of games and be able to demonstrate the games and instruct other children in their use.

*progressed further and will:*

## ICT POSSIBILITIES

### In our computer suite at Beaumanor during a residential visit, or back at school after the visit

- We have an 'Internet Treasure Hunt'. Children search the web to find answers to various questions about Victorian games & toys.
- We have the Beaumanor census from 1851 to 1901 available. We use it to learn about the servants and also to learn about using databases (*Information Manager*). We can extend this work into more general work on using and creating databases.
- As with all visits to Beaumanor, we have several digital cameras available for use by groups. These could be used by staff and children during a residential visit and the pictures produced could be incorporated into multi media presentation packages such as 'Illuminatus', 'MS Publisher' and 'MS Powerpoint', initially at Beaumanor, then back at school after the visit.

## WORK BACK IN SCHOOL

The database of Beaumanor servants is available on floppy disc for use back in school. The disc contains files in "MS Works", "MS Excel" and "RM Information Manager" format.

A similar database of census material local to the school could be collected.

Classes could design and produce a similar phototrail for their own school or local area.

Children can visit churchyards to find out about local people.

Children can practice the games and toys back in school.

The children's classroom can be re-arranged in a similar manner to the Beaumanor classroom for further role-play.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

In addition to the 'Group Visits - General Risk Assessment', the following specific risks have been identified

Hazard	Risk control
Over enthusiastic game play.	Children are asked to be on their best behaviour and to be safe and sensible at all times.
Skidding and tripping in the courtyard.	Children are warned to be careful in the courtyard, especially in Autumn and during damp weather.
Skittles injuries.	Children are warned not to throw the wooden Skittles balls around.
Whip and Top injuries.	Children are warned to be careful with the whip and not to whip themselves, or get too close while watching another person.
Cup and Ball injuries.	Children are warned not to hit themselves in the face while playing Cup and Ball.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES CHILDREN LEARN	ACTIVITY	LEARNING OUTCOMES CHILDREN	POINTS TO NOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to behave as a Victorian schoolchild.</li> </ul>	<p>The group is seated in the base room and the session is explained to that they know what is expected of them. An agreement is sought to for everyone to act in role and not try to spoil the session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are able to conduct themselves properly in the context of the classroom.</li> </ul>	<p>We do treat the activity seriously and stay in role, but we don't overact and pretend that Victorian teachers were more beastly than they really were.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About cleanliness and proper conduct.</li> </ul>	<p>The group lines up outside the schoolroom to have their hands and handkerchiefs inspected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get into role before they enter the classroom.</li> </ul>	<p>If it is raining, we don't do this activity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to use slate and chalk.</li> </ul>	<p>Children do sums on the slates and hold them up for inspection by the teacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get used to acting as a group, not as individuals.</li> </ul>	<p>Younger children write letters and numbers rather than sums.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How children learned most of their lessons.</li> </ul>	<p>Children chant their tables, backwards alphabet and religious texts hung on the walls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their tables and start to learn "The Kings &amp; Queens Of England".</li> </ul>	<p>Our aim is to get children to understand how rigid and repetitive lessons normally are.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to do Drill.</li> </ul>	<p>Children practice drill in rows, out in the courtyard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to do drill and that even a fun activity is done in an uninteresting way.</li> </ul>	<p>We often miss this activity out if time or weather do not permit it.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to write properly with pen and ink.</li> </ul>	<p>Children learn how to write properly with pen and ink. They practice forming copperplate letters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How hard it must have been for children to write neatly and how much technology has improved writing.</li> </ul>	<p>There is other material on the worksheet, which can be done back in school.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the religious nature of Victorian schools</li> </ul>	<p>Children sing a hymn and repeat two prayers, at various stages while in the classroom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the importance of religion in English schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Our religious material is very general, and mentions only "Lord". We can leave it out if necessary, but prefer not to, as the session is history rather than religion.</p>