

# Victorian Schools



# Important Dates

- 1870 Education Act

Set up a system of 'school boards' to build and manage schools in areas where they were needed. The boards were locally elected.

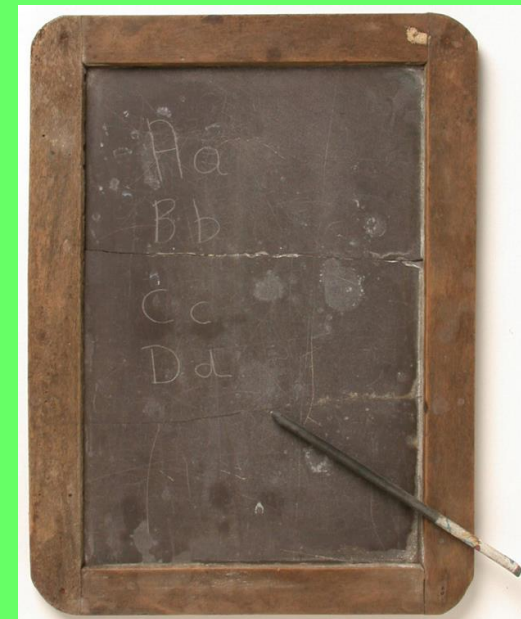
- 1891 School became free

- There could be as many as 70 or 80 pupils in one class.
- The teachers were very strict.
- Children were often taught by reading and copying things down, or chanting things till they were perfect.
- In many Victorian schools pupil-teachers helped with the teaching. The pupil-teachers were boys and girls of 13 and over. After five years of apprenticeship they could themselves become teachers.

# Equipment

**Slates** - Children wrote on *slates* with chalk. They wiped the slate clean, by spitting on it and rubbing with their coat sleeve or their finger! Slates could be used over and over.

What do we use that is similar?



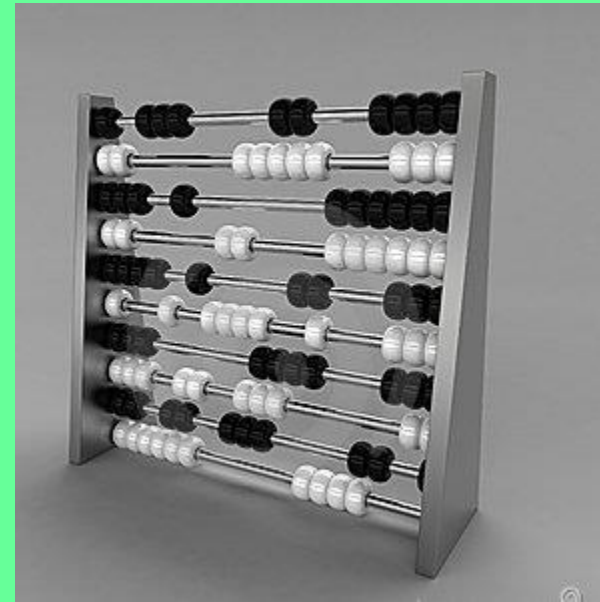
**Writing** – Older children learnt to write on paper. An 'ink monitor' distributed ink to the children, who used pens made out of thin wooden sticks with steel needles. The pen had to be dipped every few words or it would run dry.



**Tables and Chairs** - The children sat on hard wooden benches or chairs.  
Can you see the holes for the ink pots?



**Abacus** - For maths lessons, children used frames with coloured wooden beads, much like an abacus. Children learned how to multiply and divide using this apparatus.



- Typical lessons at school included the three Rs - **R**eading, **W**Riting and Dictation, and **A**Rithmetic. In addition to the three Rs which were taught most of the day, once a week the children learned geography, history and singing.
- Boys learned technology: woodwork, maths and technical drawing, to help with work in factories, workshops or the army when they grew up.
- Girls had lessons in cooking and sewing, to prepare them for housework and motherhood.



# PUNISHMENTS!

Discipline in schools was often strict. Children were beaten for even minor wrongdoings, with a *cane*, on the hand or bottom. A teacher could also punish a child by making them stand in the corner wearing a 'dunce's cap'. Another, very boring, punishment was writing 'lines'. This meant writing out the same sentence (such as 'Schooldays are the happiest days of my life' 100 times or more.



# Uniforms

Victorian schools were often very strict about appearances. 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness' was a frequent saying. Children were inspected regularly. They were expected to have clean clothes, hair and nails. Boys had to have short hair while girls were expected to tie their hair back neatly.

# Girls



White Blouse

Pinafores (to protect their dresses from getting dirty)

Blue dress

# Boys



Cap (not to be worn inside)

Tie

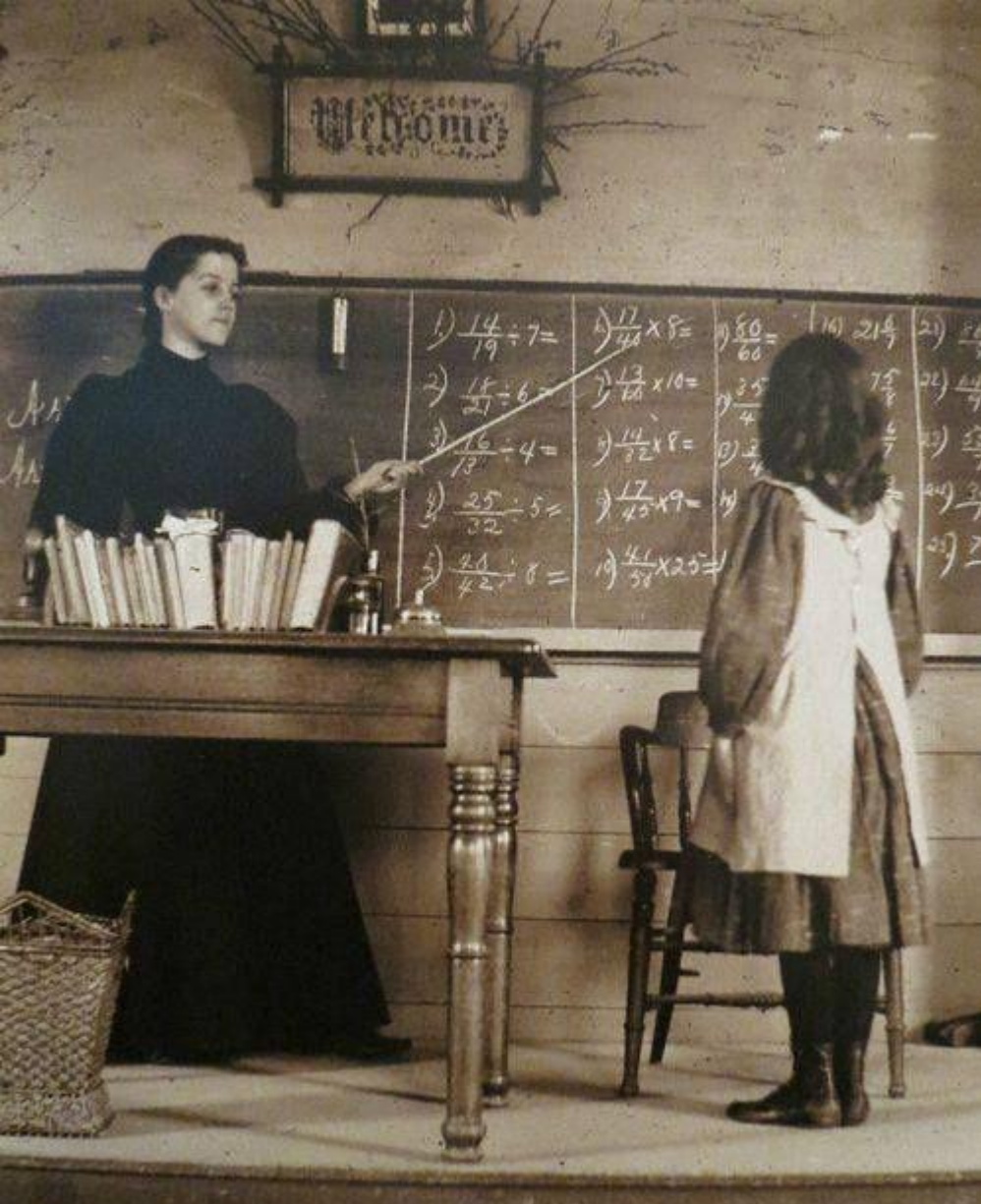
White shirt

Blazer

Shorts

Long socks

# Teachers



# Playtime

Although most of the Victorian school child's life was rather dull, the bright light was playtime. Children would play with a wide variety of toys: hoops, tops, skipping ropes and marbles. There would be games of tag, British bulldog, hopscotch and football.

