

Britain in the 1930's

Awful Auntie is set in the early 1930's, and era dominated by the effects of an economic downturn, the 'Great Depression'. For many areas of the country, particularly the North, this brought great hardship as heavy industries and mines began to close down causing unemployment figures to rise sharply. All areas of the country were affected to some degree, even the rich, forcing many to have to get rid of some or all of their servants.

However, there were signs of recovery, as new, lighter industries such as car making and electronics manufacturing gradually began to grow. For those with a job, living standards rose significantly.

New houses were built in leafy areas on the outskirts of towns and cities from which people would commute to work. These were lived in mostly by people employed in regular, professional occupations such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, bank clerks etc, who could easily get a mortgage. A typical three- bed roomed house would cost between £400 and £600 and could be purchased with a £5 deposit.



By 1933, the National Grid had been completed which brought electricity into the homes of those who could afford it and sales of new labour saving devices such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines, fridges and electric ovens increased dramatically. Few people, apart from the rich, had telephones in their home, but telephone boxes in the street were a common sight.



Broadcasting

Television was only in its experimental stages in the 1930's but by 1933 half the houses in Britain had a radio. Broadcasts were transmitted by the BBC and would provide a range of programmes including music, news bulletins, comedy and talk shows. Families regularly gather around the radio to listen to drama serials and stories.



Exercise

- In groups of three or four, imagine you are recording a radio drama series in a studio in the 1930's
- Look at the extract from the script of Awful Auntie below
- What sound effects would you need to use to bring the scene to life?
- Try making the noises with your voice to give an idea of what they would need to sound like.
- What differences would there be for the actors between performing on a stage and on the radio?
- Try recording your extract on a computer or phone and listen back to it.
- Is there anything you would like to change in order to make the scene come alive for the listeners?

THE ENGINE ROARS INTO LIFE

STELLA Hooray! It still goes. I knew the old Rolls wouldn't let us down.

SOOT Now move the gear stick forward.

STELLA Well, I know where that is. I'm getting the hang of it, Soot.

SOOT We 'aven't moved yet.

STELLA You're in for a surprise.

SOOT You're tellin me. So move it – now!

STELLA Here we go! (THE ENGINE REVS UP) Ah, we forgot one thing.

SOOT What's that, m'lady?

STELLA We forgot to open the doors!

THE CAR LURCHES FORWARD AND SMASHES THE DOORS APART

STELLA Ha, ha – we're through.

SOOT It was nearly over before we started.

STELLA Let's head for the gates.

SOOT Change gear, then.

THE CAR STARTS TO GO BACKWARDS

SOOT No, that's reverse. Move the stick, up left.

STELLA The gates are up ahead.

SOOT What's that noise behind us?

STELLA Oh, no, it's my aunt. She's on her motorcycle, with Wagner in the side car.

SOOT Keep your eyes straight ahead.

STELLA They're gaining on us, Soot.

SOOT Straight to fourth gear, then. Hard down right.

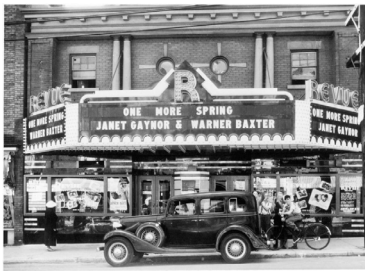
STELLA The gates are coming up. Any moment now. They'll come crashing down.

SOOT Hold on for impact.

STELLA Here we go!

THEY CRASH INTO GATES AND STOP

Cinema



The 1930's was the great age of cinema going. For many, a visit to the picture palace provided an escape from the harsh realities of life. Virtually every town, suburb or housing development had at least one cinema and many were open seven days a week. The vast majority of films were black and white, although by the middle of the decade, there were a few in colour. Almost half of Britons went to the cinema once a week, some twice. Particularly popular were the Saturday morning children's clubs where for as little as fourpence you could enjoy a whole morning of entertainment. Particularly popular were westerns or science fiction films with characters such as 'The Lone Ranger' or 'Flash Gordon'. The audience would get very involved in the action, stamping their feet booing the baddies, to the extent that sometimes you could hardly hear the film! There were ice creams and sweets available to buy from usherettes if you had money, but no giant buckets of popcorn or fizzy drinks as we have today.

Many chain cinemas ran 'Saturday Clubs', where there would be other entertainments such as fancy dress competitions and live theatre shows, as well as the films. Club members would have badges and always sang their club song before the film began, the words being projected on the screen.



Exercise 1

- Imagine you are living in the 1930s'.
- It is Saturday evening. You went to the cinema that morning for the first time to see a cowboy film.
- Write a brief diary extract about your experience.
- Try and include some of the following:
- What did the cinema look like inside? How many other children were there? How did you feel about them? What was the film like? Did you have anything to eat? Will you go again next week?

Exercise 2

Below are the words to the Odeon Saturday Morning Children's Club song:

We come along, on Saturday morning

Greeting everybody with a smile.

We come along, on Saturday morning

Knowing that it's well worth while.

As members of the GB club, we all intend to be,

Good citizens when we grow up, and champions of the free.

We come along, on Saturday morning,

Greeting everybody with a smile,... smile....smile

Greeting everybody with a smile.

- Imagine you are in charge of the Saturday morning club in your local cinema.
- Write a new song for the children to sing.
- It needs to be fairly simple as some of the children are very young and may not be able to read. Can you make it rhyme?

Exercise 3

Here are a few examples of Children's Cinema badges:



- Your children's club needs a badge that the members can proudly wear.
- It is your job to design it.

Cockney Rhyming Slang



SOOT: *Well, what do ya want me to do? Tell a porky pie?*

STELLA: *A what?*

SOOT: *A lie! Never heard Cockney rhyming slang?*

Sometimes known as ‘London’s secret language’, Cockney Rhyming Slang is more of a dialect - a collection of phrases used by Cockneys (someone born within the sound of the bells of St Mary-le-Bow Church in London’s East End), and other Londoners.

Dating from the mid nineteenth century, it is popularly believed to have originated amongst market traders to allow them to talk amongst themselves in front of customers. Another theory is that it was developed to intentionally confuse non-locals and build a sense of community. Others believe it was started as a method of secret communication amongst criminals. But whatever its origins, it is a form of language still used today, although more commonly heard now in the outer London boroughs and the suburbs.

Rhyming slang phrases are made by replacing a word with an expression that rhymes with it – for example ‘Look’ becomes ‘Butchers hook’. Very often the rhyming word is also missed out too so ‘Have a look’ becomes ‘Have a butchers’.

Meaning	Slang Word	Original Phrase
telephone	dog	dog-and-bone

wife	trouble	trouble-and-strife
eyes	mincers	mince pies
wig	syrup	syrup of figs
feet	plates	plates of meat

Soot introduces Stella to several well known cockney Rhyming slang phrases:

SOOT: *I bin hidin' meself away for donkey's*

STELLA: *Donkey's?*

SOOT: *Donkey's ears, Years!*

.....

STELLA: *So how did you end up...*

SOOT: *Brown bread?*

STELLA: *Brown bread rhymes with....dead*

SOOT: *You're getting it.*

Below is a table of some well known Cockney Rhyming slang phrases and their meanings:

Apples and pears		Stairs
Ayrton	Ayrton Senna	Tenner (10 pound note)
Barnet	Barnet Fair	Hair
Boat	Boat Race	Face
Bread	Bread and Honey	Money

Brown Bread		Dead
Bull and Cow		Row (argument)
(Have a) butcher's	Butcher's Hook	Look
(My old) China	China Plate	Mate
Crackered (or creamed)	Cream Crackered	Knackered (tired)
Crust	Crust of Bread	Head
Current Bun		Sun (newspaper)
Daisy roots		Boots
Dog and Bone		Phone
Donkey's	Donkey's Ears	Years
Frog and toad		Road
Gregory	Gregory Peck	Neck
Hampsteads	Hampstead Heath	Teeth
Lardy	La-di-da	Cigar
Loaf	Loaf of Bread	Head
Mincies	Mince pies	Eyes
Mutton	Mutt and Jeff	Deaf
North and South		Mouth
Oxford Scholar		Dollar
On your Pat	Pat Malone	Alone
Pen and Ink		Stink
Plates	Plates of Meat	Feet
Taters	Potatoes in the mould	Cold
Rabbit	Rabbit and Pork	Talk
Rosie	Rosie Lee	Tea

Ruby	Ruby Murray	Curry
Syrup	Syrup of Figs	Wig
Tea Leaf		Thief
Titfer	Tit for tat	Hat
Trouble and Strife		Wife
Weasel	Weasel and Stoat	Coat

Exercise 1

Translate the following sentences:

'Last night I got on the dog and bone to my old china, Ted, - we're going down the frog and toad tomorrow for a ruby'

'Feast your mincies on those daisy roots she's wearing, bet they cost more than an ayrton!'

'My trouble and strife has gone into town to get her hampsteads seen to by the dentist'

'I'm glad I've got my weasel today, it's taters out there!'

Exercise 2

In pairs, imagine you are two Cockneys meeting at a bus stop. Using the table above, see how many rhyming slang phrases you can get into your conversation.

Exercise 3

Try inventing your own rhyming slang phrases for these words:

Dinner, Telly, Butter, Shoe, Bath, Car.

Can you make up some of your own?

Haunted Houses



Soot the Victorian ghost has been haunting Saxby Hall ever since his death, in the chimney he was sweeping:

'I didn't have nowhere else to go, did I? Didn't have a home, didn't even have a name, did I? So I couldn't even try and find me family in that place in the clouds they tell you about in church. So I just stayed here. Going up and down the chimneys all night.'

Stella now knows the cause of the strange noises she would sometimes hear in the walls.

Britain has many old houses and castles which are supposed to be haunted. Whether or not you believe in them, ghosts make good stories. Like Soot at Saxby Hall, most hauntings seem to be conducted by ghosts who met unfortunate deaths.

Here are a few examples:

- Tiverton Castle , Devon

Visitors have reported seeing the ghostly figure of a young lady in a wedding dress. This is apparently the ghost of a woman who mistakenly got herself locked in a wooden chest on her wedding night, whilst playing a game of hide-and-seek. Her remains weren't found until many years later.

- Knebworth House, Hertfordshire

Some say that there is a room on the East Wing where on certain nights you can hear the sound of spinning. This is said to be the ghost of 'Jenny Spinner' a servant who was imprisoned in there by the Lady of the house, whose Son had fallen in love with her. Jenny had nothing to do all day but spin yarn until she died.

- Athelhampton House, Dorset

This is supposed to be one of the most haunted houses in Britain. One report is that one day a woman was sitting reading book in the Great Hall when two unknown men burst into the chamber in the middle of a sword fight. The woman continually pulled on the bell rope for the servants but nobody arrived. She turned to her side and carried on reading while the fight continued until one of the men were cut on the arm and left the room. When she mentioned it to the owner he was mystified as all the guests at the house at the time were at tea.

Visitors have also reported hearing a strange scratching noise coming from the walls of the Great Chamber. The story is that this is the sound of a pet ape that had been shut in a secret room with his mistress who had killed herself there following an unhappy love affair.

Exercise 1

Setting the Scene

- With the whole group sitting in a large circle, ask them to close their eyes and imagine a drawing room in an old stately home. What furniture might be in there? What would it be made of? What pictures are on the walls?
- After a minute or so, the group open their eyes. Explain that they are now going to make a physical picture of the room using their bodies to make the fixtures and fittings.
- Ask someone to suggest a piece of furniture and then 'make' it in the centre of the circle using one or two peoples' bodies joined together.
- Continue filling the circle with people objects until the whole group is involved.
- Ask for suggestions for the name of the big house.
- Select two people from the group to assume the roles of tourists and another to play a tour guide.
- The tour guide then shows the visitors around the room, pointing out the various different pieces of furniture/ notable pictures etc.
- The group relax and reform the circle.

- Tell them that there have been reports of strange occurrences in that room – strange noises, sudden drops in temperature and a ghostly figure has been seen wandering through it.
- Ask them what noises might have been heard?
- Divide them into small groups – each group is responsible for one of the noises
- Make a sound picture of the room.
- Divide the group into fours
- Ask each group of four to come up with an idea of who the ghost is that has been seen. They must decide what happened to it and why it haunts the room.
- Each group then reports back a short summary of their story
- Re- form the picture of the room and improvise one or two of the stories.

Follow up

Imagine you are working a tourist guide to the grand house. A group of ghost hunters are coming to visit. Write a leaflet explaining the story of the ghost making it sound as spooky and exciting as possible.

Exercise 2



The Haunted House

- In pairs, choose one of the pictures above.
- Each pair imagines the following scenario:
 - *One day, two friends are taking a dog for a walk in the countryside. Suddenly the dog pricks up its ears, begins to bark, and charges off.*
 - *The two friends run after it and are just in time to see it disappearing into an old, empty house.*
 - *The children, nervously follow, and find themselves inside.*
 - *Filled with curiosity, they begin to explore. Suddenly the door they came in through slams shut all by itself.....and soon they find they are not alone.....*
- Decide what / who they meet inside the house, how they are affected by it and they recover the dog and get out.
- Write a brief scenario of the main events of the story.
- Choose one event and write it as a script .

Exercise 3

Draw a picture of a haunted house. Add labels to draw attention to any particularly spooky features.

Exercise 4

Poltergeists

Poltergeists (a German word meaning 'noisy spirit') are supposedly a type of troublesome ghost or spirit. They are sometimes reported as causing physical disturbances such as moving objects, making loud noises or pinching and biting people.

Soot uses such techniques to distract Aunt Alberta to allow Stella to phone the Police:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| SOOT | What if I cause a diversion? |
| STELLA | Like what? |
| SOOT | Throw some plates around or summink. Us ghosts love a bit of plate throwin. Normally works a treat. |
| STELLA | Is that what ghosts really do? |

SOOT Oh yer! - we like to knock on doors and run away. Or put on records really loud. Or throw books around the library. Flush the toilet when yer sittin on it. My favourite is to jangle chains. Ya can't beat a good bit of janglin. But I fink plate throwin will work best.

Stella and Soot think up many different tricks to play on Aunt Alberta to make her life miserable. ' *Turn Saxby Hall into her very worst nightmare, so she'll run away screaming!* They put ants in her pants, shoe polish in her soap as well as flooding her floor with marbles.

- Imagine you are Soot. Make a list of other tricks you could play on Aunt Alberta and Wagner.
- In threes, take the roles of Soot, Stella and Alberta. Improvise some of your ideas – what are the results?
- Share your best trick with the rest of the group. Ask them to vote on which trick would be the most effective.

Motoring



The 1930's was an era of motoring. Developments in manufacturing and engineering made the dream of owning a vehicle a reality not just for the rich, but the rising middle classes too.

In 1931 the first £100 car, a Morris Minor, rolled off the production lines.



This was closely followed by the Austin10



And the Ford Model Y



These cars were all aimed at upper and middle class families to whom the benefits of 'days out in the countryside' were heavily marketed. They were comparatively cheap to buy too – The Ford model Y was the first car to sell for only £100. Sales rocketed.

For those who couldn't afford the luxury of a car, a motorbike was much more affordable. The typical motorbike of the 1930's was a 350 or 500 cc model, with two exhaust pipes and a shiny chrome petrol tank.



Many owners however, treated riding a motorcycle as a sport, racing one another through towns and down country lanes, with passengers riding on luggage racks or even side saddle, none of them with helmets! As with Aunt Alberta, motorbikes were also popular with women: (Note the metal stocking guards)

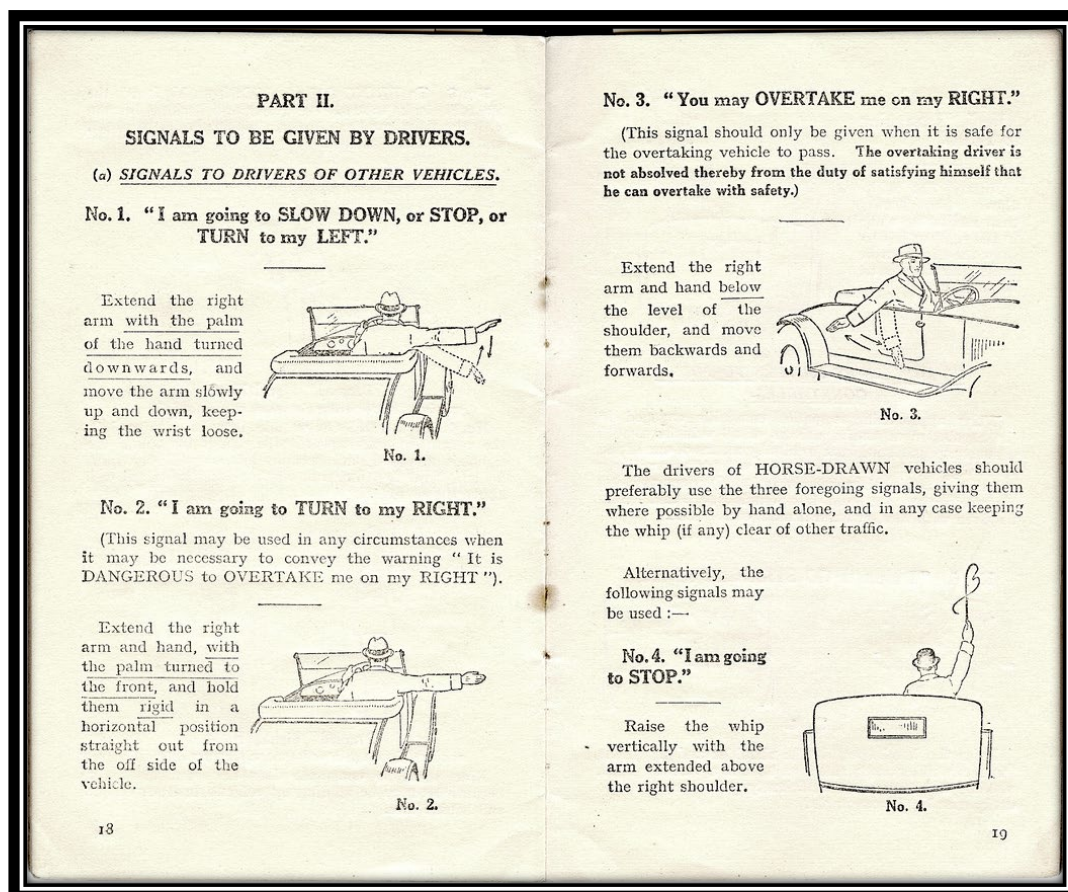


For families and couples who wanted a safer ride, sidecars became popular:



By 1934, around two and a half million motor vehicles were on Britain's roads and just over half of them were private cars.

This did not come without problems. Traditionally the speed limit had been set at twenty miles per hour, but this was abolished in 1930 as it was usually ignored and the courts were overwhelmed with speeding cases. With no speed limits and a vast number of new and inexperienced drivers, the early 1930's saw some of the highest road casualty figures ever recorded. In 1931 the 'Highway code' was introduced for the first time, but it was fairly basic. It did not cover stopping distances, or road signs but it did show hand signals:



Exercise 1

- In pairs, try out the four signals above.
- Can your partner tell which way you are going to turn?

In 1934 there were 7343 deaths and 231,603 injuries, mostly of pedestrians, on Britain's roads. Something had to be done, and that year saw the

introduction of a 'Road Traffic Act' by Leslie Hoare-Belisha, the Minister for Transport, which set a limit of thirty miles an hour in built up areas where there were street lights, and brought in a compulsory test for every new driver. Before this, anyone could drive a car provided they had a Doctors' signature confirming they were physically fit to do so – no matter how incompetent they were behind the wheel. Cat's eyes reflectors were also introduced, which indicated the centre and sides of the road at night. To keep pedestrians safer, Hoare-Belisha introduced pedestrian crossings at designated safe points. These were marked on the road, but also highly visible from a distance because of the electric beacons by them – named Belisha beacons by the press rather than the minister. Penalties for dangerous driving were also made harder hitting.



Exercise 2

- Imagine it is 1934 and you are working in the Department of Transport.
- The new traffic act is about to be introduced and it is your job to make sure it is understood by everyone.
- In groups of three or four, devise a presentation for young children to teach them how to cross the road safely.
- Try out a few of your ideas with the rest of the class acting as children.

Exercise 3

- In order that this information gets to the widest possible audience, you need to produce the information in booklet form.
- The instructions need to be as clear and precise as possible yet the leaflet must look attractive enough to make all children want to read it.

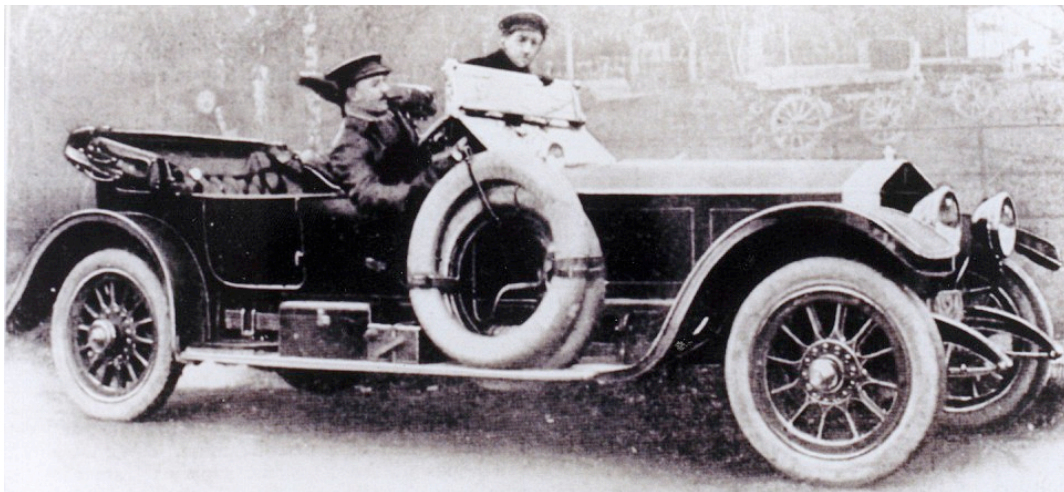
Rolls Royce



'Strive for perfection in everything you do. Take the best that exists and make it better. When it does not exist, design it.' Sir Henry Royce

Despite the downturn in their finances, Stella's family managed to hang on to their Rolls Royce. Like today, a Rolls Royce car in the 1930's would have been a great luxury only affordable to the rich.

The Rolls - Royce Company was founded in 1906 by Henry Royce, a motor manufacturer and Charles Rolls, one of the first car dealers in Britain. That year they produced the first 'Silver Ghost' which soon gained a reputation as the best car in the world.



The company quickly grew, branching into aircraft engines during World War One, as well as expanding manufacturing into North America during the 1920's.

From the start, their aim was to focus on '*excellence in engineering*' with their attention to detail both mechanically and aesthetically. So much so that it is estimated that 60% of Rolls Royce cars ever made are still in existence today.

With its iconic 'Spirit of Ecstasy' emblem, (a woman with her arms outstretched behind her) on the bonnet of every car, Rolls- Royce cars are still globally considered to be the height of motoring luxury.

The Saxby family owns a 'Phantom II'. These cars were first launched at the Olympia motor show in 1929, and would have cost around £1800 - £1900. (Those still in existence today sell for around £120,000!

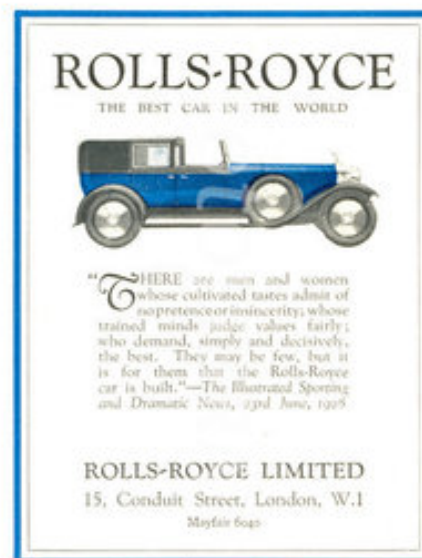
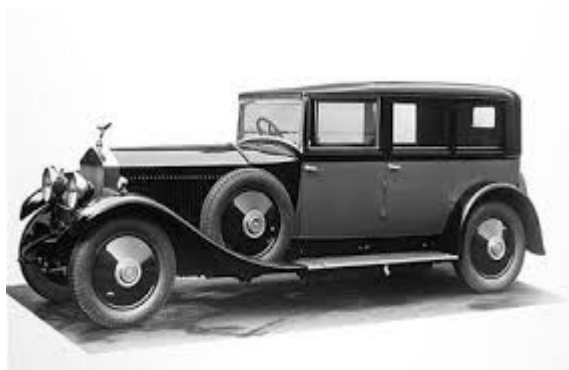
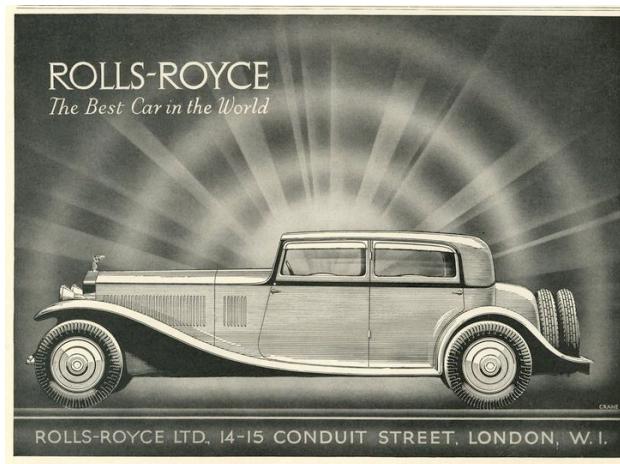
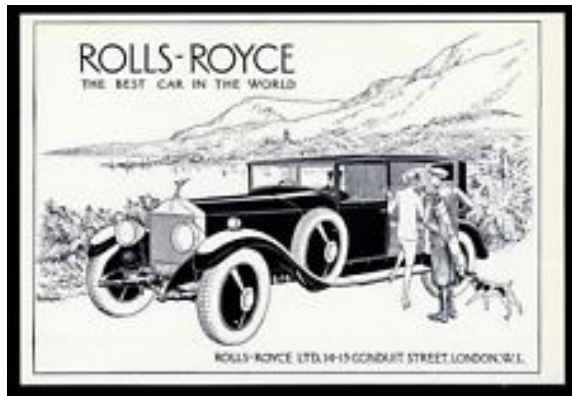


Exercise

- Imagine you are a Rolls Royce salesperson at the 1929 Olympia Motor Show promoting the new Phantom II.
- You have an audience of very rich motoring enthusiasts in front of you who are interested, but cautious with their money.
- Write your sales pitch including as many details as possible as well as your own observations.
- Your job is to make the car sound as inviting as possible.

Phantom II details:

- All round suspension, so it is as comfortable in the back seats as it is in the front.
- It has a top speed of 70 miles per hour
- It does up to 14 miles to the gallon of petrol
- The elongated bonnet adds to its elegance of design
- It has a rear luggage grid to strap suitcases to as well as a trunk (boot)
- There are two fold out extra occasional seats in the back
- The front and back seats are divided by a glass partition which can be wound down.
- Try out some of your best sales lines to the rest of the group.



Child Labour

Today it is illegal for children under the age of sixteen to work full time, but this was not the case in Victorian Britain. A boy like Soot working as a chimney sweep would not have been unusual in the early Victorian period. With no state financial support, and big families to feed, sending children out to work was often the only means of survival for poor people whose only alternative would have been the Workhouse. It suited employers too, as pay rates for children were far lower than those of adults. All over the country, in towns and cities, big factories and mills were springing up. Children were particularly useful, as their small, dexterous fingers were excellent for picking fluff out of machines to ensure they ran smoothly, or crawling under them to pick up any stray fibres. Children were employed to work underground in coal mines as well as street sellers, bird scarers or rat catchers on farms or as domestic servants in big houses. Children as young as seven would work for around seventy two hours a week usually doing the dirtiest and most boring jobs in dreadful conditions. They had few or no rights, and could suffer horrible punishments.

Exercise 1

Look at the pictures below. Can you guess what jobs they are doing?



The working conditions children faced were dreadful. For many, the risk of injury even death was very high. Whilst several laws were passed limiting an Employers use of child labourers, it wasn't until 1880 that the practice was finally outlawed, and the Government made schooling compulsory for all children up to the age of ten.

Exercise 2

Below is a description of some of the most dangerous jobs children would have done in Victorian times.

Chimney Sweeps

This was probably the most dangerous. The job involved climbing down the inside of a chimney from the roof to the fireplace below, cleaning the soot off the walls. The chimney stacks were narrow and sweeps would find the skin being scraped off their arms, elbows, legs and knees. The biggest dangers were falling down or becoming stuck, as well as a forgetful occupant lighting a fire. Breathing in soot caused lung damage and sweeps rarely made it to middle age. Children were underfed by their bosses so they would stay small. Often orphans were used, and would be dumped on the streets when they grew too big to be useful. Children as young as three years old are thought to have been used to sweep chimneys.

Factory and Mill Work

In towns and cities, children would be employed in factories doing the simple, repetitive jobs, making a huge variety of goods. Being in close contact with huge machines was perilous as there were very few safety guards and injuries, even deaths were frequent. Breathing in dusty air caused lung damage and the constant noise caused hearing problems. They were expected to work long hours with very little time for meals.

In cotton mills children would work as 'Piecers' – crawling under the machines to tie broken threads together, 'Can Tenterers' – carrying huge cans of cotton yarn to the weaving frames and 'Scavengers' – picking up any bits that had fallen under the machines. Children also had to clean the machines, often while they were left running.

Coal Mines

The manufacturing boom brought a huge need for coal to power the steam driven machines. Mining companies were keen to employ children, not only to dig out coal from inaccessible places, but also to work as 'trappers'. This involved working underground, opening and closing the wooden doors (trap doors) that allowed fresh air to flow through the **mine**. They would usually sit in total darkness for up to twelve hours at a time, waiting to let the **coal** tub through the door. The constant darkness caused eye problems, the lack of ventilation affected their lungs and many children suffered spine deformities from working hunched over for such long periods. There was a constant danger of explosions, floods or cave ins.

What's my job?

Imagine you are a Victorian child worker. In groups of five or six, make a still picture of yourselves at work.

If you are in a factory, decide what you are making and what sort of machines you have to work with. If you are in a mine, what job does each person do? If you are chimney sweeps, what age are you? Are the older ones in charge of the youngsters?

Share it with the rest of the class and ask them to guess what job you are doing.

Petition for better working conditions

- Imagine that there has been another injury or death in your factory / mine/ Chimney sweeping group.
- You have had enough of working in such dangerous conditions for such low pay.
- In your group, discuss your predicament. None of you can risk losing your jobs as your families all need the money, but you cannot go on as you are.
- Devise a list of the essential changes that you want to see.
- Asking employers for better pay and conditions is very dangerous as there is a real risk of losing your jobs. By way of practice, each group

presents their list of 'demands' to the rest of the class, who assume the roles of employers.

- What advice can each group be given on how to present their case in a way that would be most acceptable to their bosses?
- Each group writes a formal letter asking for changes.
- The teacher, in role as the employer, replies to the letters stating what changes he/she is prepared to make, if any, and why.

Victorian Workhouses



Soot tells Stella how he was abandoned as a baby and grew up in a workhouse. This was the fate of many poor people in Victorian times, adults as well as children. Introduced in 1834, the workhouse provided a place to live, a place to work and earn money, food, clothing, free medical care (people had to pay to see doctors in Victorian times) and education. They were huge buildings providing everything onsite – dormitories, kitchens, dining hall, laundry, school rooms, nurseries, a sick bay, chapel as well as a vegetable garden and often a small farm. But workhouses were feared. The conditions and harsh regimes made life inside was similar to that in a prison. Men, women and children had different living and working areas so families were split up. Often they were punished if they even tried to speak to one another. The work was hard: for example ‘picking oakum’, which involved untwisting the strands of old ropes and unrolling the individual strands so they could be used again.



Workhouse women picking oakum – National Archives

The food was tasteless and often the same every day – such delights as: ‘Pease pudding’ (made from boiled split peas) ‘Hasty pudding’ (a type of thin custard made by boiling up milk, flour and oatmeal) and ‘Gruel’ (thin oatmeal porridge). None of it was very nutritious. The education children recieved was usually very poo and often did not include reading and writing, key skills for getting a good job. Punishments were very harsh. As Soot says: *‘The old man who run the workhouse used to thrash all us boys with his belt – even when we ‘aint done ‘nuffink’*. Children were seen as expendable and were often sold to owners of mines or factories where they would be put to work.

The famous author Charles Dickens realistically portrayed the cold reality of life in a workhouse in his novel ‘Oliver Twist’ and its publication did much to bring the suffering of the poor to the attention of Victorian society. It is no wonder that Soot ran away.

Exercise 1

The document below shows the daily routine for children in a Victorian workhouse.

Hours.	Minutes.	From the 1st of April to the 1st of October.
6	—	To rise at the ringing of the Bell.
"	10	Prayer.
"	15	In the Lavatory.
"	45	General muster and examination as to cleanliness.
7	—	School Lessons.
"	50	Muster at the sound of the Bugle.
8	—	Enter to Breakfast.
"	20	Return to Play-grounds or Employments.
9	15	Muster at the Sound of the Bugle for School.
"	30	School to commence.
12	30	" to cease.
"	50	Muster at the sound of the Bugle.
1	—	Enter to Dinner.
"	30	Return to Play-grounds or Employments.
2	15	Muster at the sound of the Bugle for School.
"	30	School to commence.
5	30	" to cease.
"	50	Muster at the sound of the Bugle.
6	—	Enter to Supper.
"	20	Return to play or Employments.
8	—	Muster in the Lavatory.
"	35	Enter Dormitories.
"	40	Prayer.
"	50	All in Bed.
Variations from the 1st of October to the 1st of April.		
7	—	To rise.
"	10	Prayer.
"	45	General muster and examination as to cleanliness.
"	50	Muster at the sound of the Bugle.
8	—	Breakfast.
7 to 8	P.M.	School Lessons.

NOTE.—*Practice for Singing.*—On Thursdays and Fridays from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 2 to $\frac{1}{4}$ past 3 P.M., and on Saturdays from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 11 to $\frac{1}{4}$ past 12 A.M.

Practice for Band.—On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 2 to $\frac{1}{4}$ past 5 P.M., and on Thursday and Friday from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 3 to $\frac{1}{4}$ past 5 P.M.

The *Half-holiday* of the Children to be on Wednesday afternoon.

Imagine you are a Victorian pauper living in the workhouse. Write a diary entry for your day following this routine. Include details of some of the following:

How many others are there in your dormitory? What temperature was the water you had to wash in? What did you have for breakfast? What were you learning in your lessons? What did the teacher do to keep order? What job were you assigned to do in the afternoon? What did you have for dinner? Were you involved in the singing or band practice? What do you dream your life will be like in the future?

Exercise 2

- Imagine the whole class are a group of Victorian children living in a workhouse, who, like Soot, cannot tolerate it further.
- In groups of four or five, devise a plan to escape.
- Act out your plan to demonstrate how it can work
- Each group takes it in turns to present their plan to the rest of the class
- Vote on which plan would be the most likely to succeed.
- If the plan worked and you managed to escape, how would you survive in the outside world?
- Would it be best to stick together or go it alone?



Oliver Twist asks for more

Villains

Stella's Aunt Alberta is a dreadful villain. As the story unfolds, we learn more and more about the wicked deeds she has committed throughout her life. Horrible as they are, villains are an essential part of storytelling.

Children's author, Lynda Waterhouse, describes the necessity of villains thus:

'Villains are great fun to write because they can be rude and cheeky and commit dastardly deeds. They can break the rules, be scary and blow great big raspberries at the world. (Something that a scaredy-cat like me can't do in real life). Villains make stories happen. They give our main characters something to react against. But Villains can't be all bad because where's the fun in that? They have to have a soft spot or a weakness.'

Aunt Alberta has a passion for owls and her dream is to open her own 'Owleum', filled with stuffed owls from all over the world. Whilst this is a comic idea, its inclusion makes her a little more human and believable, adding to the irony of her final demise.

Exercise

Below are some illustrations of villains from some famous children's stories. What would you describe as their individual soft spot or weakness?

Aunts Spiker and Sponge



James and the Giant Peach

The Red Queen



Alice in Wonderland By Lewis Carroll

The Giant



Jack and the Beanstalk. Mother Goose Tales

By Roald Dahl , illustrator Quentin Blake

Illustrator John Tenniel

Illustrator Margaret W Tarrant

Mr and Mrs Twit



The Twits By Roald Dahl,

Illustrator Quentin Blake

Captain Hook



Peter Pan by J M Barrie,

Illustrator Alice B Woodward

The Wicked Queen



Snow White by The Brothers Grimm

Illustrator Joseph Jacobs

Exercise 2

- Imagine you are a children's author. You need a villain for your story. Make a list of nasty characteristics that he/she possesses.
- Decide how old your villain is, where he/she lives, what do they do for fun?
- Your villain has a weak spot, something he/she is passionate about. Maybe, like Captain Hook, there is something they are scared of?
- Did something happen in their life which made them 'turn bad'? If so what?
- Write a character description of your villain.
- Draw a picture, adding labels to highlight any notable features



Awful Auntie.- Illustrator Tony Ross

Sidekicks

Aunt Alberta has Wagner her owl, as her 'Sidekick', in other words: *'another character who works with someone who is more important than they are'*, and Wagner is willing to carry out the evil instructions of his mistress.

Here are a few more examples of baddies who have sidekicks:

Peter Pan: *Captain Hook and Mr Smee*



The Wizard of Oz: *The Wicked Witch of the West and her flying Monkeys*



Mr Gum: *Mr Gum and Billy William the Third*



Exercise

- Invent a sidekick for your villain.
- Your character can be an animal, a bird or a human
- Write a list of the characteristics that make your character a really wicked sidekick
- Why does your character work for your villain? Do they do it willingly?
- Draw a picture of your character with labels showing his/her meanest features.