Teacher’s notes

1. Show students the images of life in the Victorian period.
2. Elicit possible differences between then and now.
3. Give students five minutes to read the passage and find which of those differences are mentioned. They do not need to understand everything at this point.
4. Now give students ample time to read the passage again, and assist with any difficult vocabulary.
5. Get students to complete the T/F questions.
6. Feed back on T/F answers and discuss any issues arising.
7. Ask students to think of ‘then’ and ‘now’ sentences comparing Victorian Britain and present-day Britain.

Answers to T/F questions

1. The air in towns was clean in Victorian times.  
   False
2. Children worked in factories.  
   True
3. The factories were very safe.  
   False
4. Victorians often had a lot of children.  
   True
5. All Victorian houses had bathrooms.  
   False
6. All Victorian children went to school.  
   False
7. Teachers sometimes hit children.  
   True
8. Rich children often played with their parents.  
   False
9. Women could not work.  
   False
    False
Britain in Victorian times

Queen Victoria was Queen of the United Kingdom from 1837–1901. This period is called the 'Victorian era'.

The Industrial Revolution began in the Eighteenth century. When Victoria became queen, thousands of people lived in towns and worked in factories. The factories made a lot of products and Britain became very rich. However, they also made a lot of pollution so the air was very dirty. What is more, the factories were dangerous places. Children worked in them and many had accidents.

Poor families lived in small houses. The houses were crowded because families were big. People often had five or six children, or sometimes more. There were no toilets or running water in poor people's houses. Families shared toilets and a water pump with their neighbours. Many people died of diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

Many children did not go to school and half of Victorian children could not read or write. Some children went to school but if they were naughty the teacher hit them with a stick.

Most rich children hardly ever saw their mother and father. A nanny looked after them. The parents paid her to wash, dress and play with the children. Some rich parents also paid a governess to educate their children at home.

Rich women did not go to work. They got married and stayed at home, and they had servants to do the housework. They learned to sing, play the piano and sew. Poor women cooked, cleaned and looked after their children. Some poor women also worked in factories.

There were no cars so people walked, took the train or travelled by horse and carriage. There was no electricity, but people used gas lights.

True or false?

1. The air in towns was clean in Victorian times. true / false
2. Children worked in factories. true / false
3. The factories were very safe. true / false
4. Victorians often had a lot of children. true / false
5. All Victorian houses had bathrooms. true / false
6. All Victorian children went to school. true / false
7. Teachers sometimes hit children. true / false
8. Rich children often played with their parents. true / false
9. Women could not work. true / false
10. Rich people had electricity. true / false

Write some sentences about then and now.

E.g. In Victorian times, children worked in factories. Now, children do not work.  
     Then, no-one had TV. Now, everyone has TV.  
     Then, there was no electricity. Now, there is electricity.