TEACHING PACK

by Natalie Kinrade

GCSE English Literature

A Christmas Carol

Free Sample

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Introduction

This GCSE pack is designed as a 'route through' *A Christmas Carol*, with teaching ideas, accompanying resources and suggestions for differentiation. The pack is based on core assessment objectives for GCSE English Literature (2015) and is designed to be flexible, creative and engaging. It contains all of the Teachit resources you need for teaching this unit of work, many of which were specifically commissioned for this pack.

The pack has been devised for use with the English Literature AQA, Edexcel, and WJEC Eduqas specifications. There are specific resources and exam practice questions for each of these specifications included within the pack. The activities and ideas will help students to develop a close understanding of the text, explore its social, cultural and historical contexts, consider Dickens' ideas and perspectives, and analyse his use of language and structure.

The novel, *A Christmas Carol* is composed of five staves, and the pack is organised into five weekly parts with a selection of starter, main and plenary activities (that you can mix and match), as well as exam practice questions specific for each board.

Throughout the pack you'll find activities which directly address the various English Literature GCSE exams. To help you select activities relevant to the outcomes for which you're teaching, we've included specification grids and matched the activities outlined in the route through to the appropriate Assessment Objectives.

Accessing the resources in this pack

This pack includes copies of the resources featured within it. Many of the pack's resources are available in adaptable formats on the Teachit website, making it easy to differentiate the tasks by ability. Where we've referenced Teachit resources, we've also included the file number and name in case you'd like to access it on the Teachit website. To do this, simply pop the filename into Teachit's search engine.

Our thanks go to contributor Natalie Kinrade who has written this pack and to the following contributors whose resources are also included:

Bethan Hopkins, Clare Suss, Alison Powell, Shirley Bierman, Hannah Roberts.

If you have any questions about the pack, please get in touch: email support@teachit.co.uk or call us on 01225 788850. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit members – you can do this by adding a comment on the *A Christmas Carol* resource page on Teachit. (Please log in to access this.)

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Stave One

Lesson one – Understanding Dickens and Victorian London

Starter activity

1. **Victorian London:** As a precursor to researching into the background to the novel, show students a series of images linked to Victorian London. You can find some appropriate images in the **Teachit resource 24027** **Reactions to Victorian London**. As you do so, get students to write down their impressions of what they see. You could include some video clips from other Dickens' novel adaptations which depict life at the time, for example:

   ***Oliver Twist* – www.youtube.com/watch?v=Icymw_K_d3A**

   ***Great Expectations* – www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9RUEgT9zcc**

   ***David Copperfield* – www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQh2eAhZogM**

   This is an engaging way of immersing students in the time period and getting them to put themselves in the position of people at the time, before their context research (see below). *AO3*

Main activities

1. **Genre introduction:** Give students the names of genres that *A Christmas Carol* could potentially fit into:

   - parable
   - social criticism
   - ghost story
   - Christmas story.

   Get them to consider and mind map the main features of these genres/styles of stories (depending on the class's prior knowledge this may require being given some examples, as in the **resource** **Genre extracts**). They could do this as groups then feed back as a class, or do 'think, pair, share'. Alternatively, researching definitions and finding examples of these could be set as a homework task. *AO3*

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2. **Context research:** To develop students' understanding of the social, historical and cultural context, get them to research Dickens' life and details about life at the time he was writing using the **Teachit resource 19590** **Pre-reading webquest**. Alternatively, you could give students in groups a topic each to research and ask them to create a presentation, with an emphasis on making this interesting and engaging through visual aids and method of presentation.

   Topics could be:

   - Dickens' life
   - Dickens' other novels
   - Christmas in Victorian Times
   - the rich and the poor in Victorian Times
   - the Industrial Revolution
   - children's lives in Victorian Times.

   Encourage students to search out interesting and unusual facts as well as key dates and more general information. *AO3*

Plenary activities

1. **Facts:** Give each student a revision card and get them to write down five interesting facts they have discovered about Dickens or Victorian life. They should choose facts which are quite obscure, not just key dates. Students should then try to find five different people within the room who have each written down the same fact as them, ticking them off as they go. Students with unusual facts can then be encouraged to share their findings. *AO3*

2. **Context summary:** Use the **Teachit resource 16995** **Victorian times** or use the interactive activity to summarise students' knowledge following their research into the Victorian period. This includes a short summary as well as a series of true or false statements which students can respond to. Answers are included! *AO3*

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Extension/homework activity

1. Students could create mini videos which demonstrate their understanding of Dickens' life and times. They should be encouraged to be creative in their presentation of facts, for example they could create a news report, a role play, or an interview. Alternatively, they could think about presenting a monologue in role as a character to the camera. They could also use a montage of images, music and words in order to present their ideas. *AO3*

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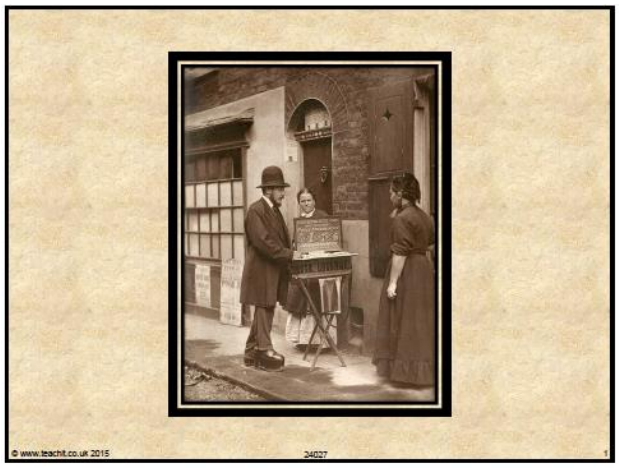
As you view the PowerPoint images from Victorian London, make a note of the four images that spark your interest the most. Write down your reactions to them in the spaces below.

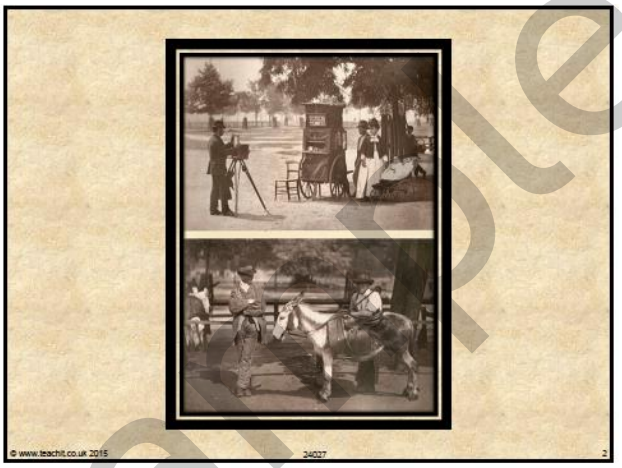
What is happening?	Imagine you are one of the people (or objects) – what are you thinking?	What question would you ask about this image?
Image one		
Image two		
Image three		
Image four		

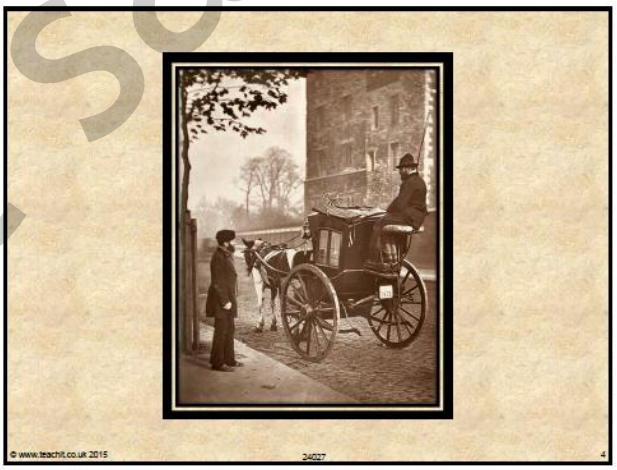
Having looked at these images, what overall impression do you have of Victorian London?

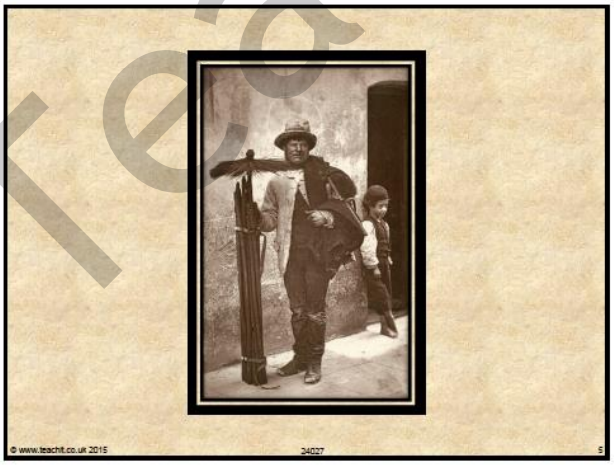
Teachit sample

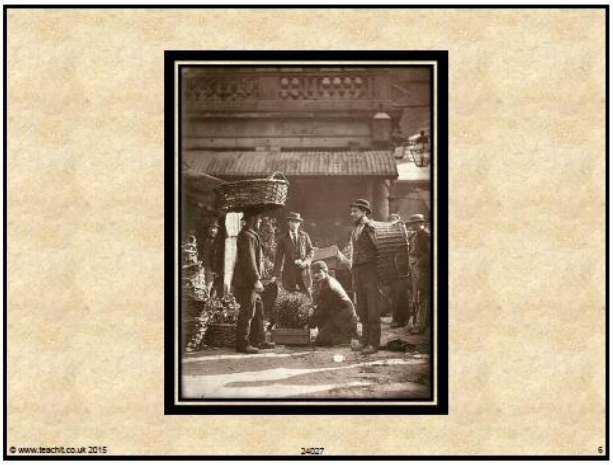
We've included a screenshot of the PowerPoint slides here so you can see the resource. To access this resource please **log in** to the **Teachit website** and search for '**24027**' or click **here**.











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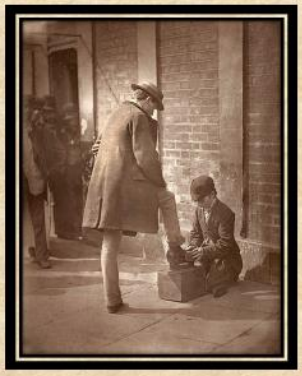

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Ghost Story

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Washington Irving

What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind,—the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless!—but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle! His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong downhill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story; and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

Other possibilities:

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte, Chapter 3, where Lockwood sees Cathy's ghost.

The Turn of the Screw, Henry James, Chapter 4, where the governess sees the image of Grint in the window.

Teachit sample

Parable

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) *English Standard Version* (*ESV*)

And he said, 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Other possibilities:

The Parable of the Rich Fool

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Teachit sample

Social criticism

Hard Times, Charles Dickens

COKETOWN, to which Messrs Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage.

It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled.

It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

[…] All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchasable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

Other possibilities:

Oliver Twist, Charles Dickens, Chapter 2, describing the conditions in the workhouse.

North and South, Elizabeth Gaskell, Chapters 17-20, discussions regarding the workers' strike.

Teachit sample

Christmas story

Papa Panov, Leo Tolstoy

He was feeling tired now, and the further he read the sleepier he became. The print began to dance before his eyes so that he closed them, just for a minute. In no time at all Papa Panov was fast asleep.

And as he slept he dreamed. He dreamed that someone was in his room and he knew at once, as one does in dreams, who the person was. It was Jesus.

"You have been wishing that you could see me, Papa Panov." he said kindly, "then look for me tomorrow. It will be Christmas Day and I will visit you. But look carefully, for I shall not tell you who I am."

When at last Papa Panov awoke, the bells were ringing out and a thin light was filtering through the shutters. "Bless my soul!" said Papa Panov. "It's Christmas Day!"

He stood up and stretched himself for he was rather stiff. Then his face filled with happiness as he remembered his dream. This would be a very special Christmas after all, for Jesus was coming to visit him. How would he look? Would he be a little baby, as at that first Christmas? Would he be a grown man, a carpenter- or the great King that he is, God's Son? He must watch carefully the whole day through so that he recognized him however he came.

Papa Panov put on a special pot of coffee for his Christmas breakfast, took down the shutters and looked out of the window. The street was deserted, no one was stirring yet. No one except the road sweeper. He looked as miserable and dirty as ever, and well he might! Whoever wanted to work on Christmas Day - and in the raw cold and bitter freezing mist of such a morning?

Papa Panov opened the shop door, letting in a thin stream of cold air. "Come in!" he shouted across the street cheerily. "Come in and have some hot coffee to keep out the cold!"

The sweeper looked up, scarcely able to believe his ears. He was only too glad to put down his broom and come into the warm room. His old clothes steamed gently in the heat of the stove and he clasped both red hands round the comforting warm mug as he drank.

Papa Panov watched him with satisfaction, but every now and then his eyes strayed to the window. It would never do to miss his special visitor.

"Expecting someone?" the sweeper asked at last. So Papa Panov told him about his dream.

"Well, I hope he comes," the sweeper said, "you've given me a bit of Christmas cheer I never expected to have. I'd say you deserve to have your dream come true." And he actually smiled.

When he had gone, Papa Panov put on cabbage soup for his dinner, then went to the door again, scanning the street. He saw no one. But he was mistaken. Someone was coming.

The girl walked so slowly and quietly, hugging the walls of shops and houses, that it was a while before he noticed her. She looked very tired and she was carrying something. As she drew nearer he could see that it was a baby, wrapped in a thin shawl. There was such sadness in her face and in the pinched little face of the baby, that Papa Panov's heart went out to them.

"Won't you come in," he called, stepping outside to meet them. "You both need a warm by the fire and a rest."

Teachit sample

The young mother let him shepherd her indoors and to the comfort of the armchair. She gave a big sigh of relief.

"I'll warm some milk for the baby," Papa Panov said, "I've had children of my own- I can feed her for you." He took the milk from the stove and carefully fed the baby from a spoon, warming her tiny feet by the stove at the same time.

"She needs shoes," the cobbler said.

But the girl replied, "I can't afford shoes, I've got no husband to bring home money. I'm on my way to the next village to get work."

Sudden thought flashed through Papa Panov's mind. He remembered the little shoes he had looked at last night. But he had been keeping those for Jesus. He looked again at the cold little feet and made up his mind.

Other possibilities:

'The Little Match Girl', Hans Christian Andersen

'The Elves and the Shoemaker', The Brothers Grimm

Teachit sample

Answer the following questions, using the internet to help you:

1. Where and when is the novella set?
2. Where and when was the author born?
3. Name three other novels by the same author.
4. Who were the two kings and one queen ruling during the author's lifetime?
5. What was the industrial revolution?
6. What were conditions like in England during this period?
7. What was the state of education for children during this time?
8. What was the New Poor Law?
9. What were the Ragged Schools for poor children?
10. What was the population of London in 1800 and 1900? What was the reason for the growth?

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Teachit sample

Teaching 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. Feedback 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**
10. Rich people had electricity. **False**

Teachit sample

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.

Teachit sample

Victorian lounge

Horse and carriage

Teachit sample

Classroom

Victorian era family portrait

Teachit sample

Children in street

Image credits

Victorian lounge: Victorian Family Home, Montreal, Quebec, circa 1800s / *Credit:* Roderick Chen / First Light / Universal Images Group / *Copyright:* Copyright First Light Associated Photographers, Inc.

Horse and carriage: July 1909: British transport suffered from overcrowding even in the 1900s, as this overcrowded carriage demonstrates. / *Credit:* W. G. Phillips / Hulton Archive / Getty Images / Universal Images Group / *Copyright:* Copyright Getty Images

Classroom: ADULT NATURALIZATION CLASS C. 1861-1900 / *Credit:* Omni / Omni-Photo Communications, Inc. / Universal Images Group / *Copyright:* Copyright Universal Images Group

Victorian era family portrait: VICTORIAN ERA FAMILY PORTRAIT. / *Credit:* Grace Davies / Omni-Photo Communications, Inc. / Universal Images Group / *Copyright:* Copyright Universal Images Group

Children in street: London Slums, Twine Court - By English School - English Artist - Private Collection - MEDICAL SCENES, HARDSHIP & POVERTY - 19th Century - photograph / *Credit:* Bridgeman Art Library / Universal Images Group / *Copyright:* Copyright Bridgeman Art Library

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