



# Victorian School Activities

## Handwriting Activity

Victorian school children used slates for writing in schools, but were also taught to write with split nib pens and ink in the cursive style. It took lots of practice and many ink accidents to perfect. To try this out you could use a calligraphy pen if you have one, if not use a pencil. Cursive writing is a fluid joined writing style with ascenders and descenders.

### Open writing template



### Did you know...

Writing with your left hand was not allowed. Children were forced to use their right hand and punishments included tying the left hand behind the back using "finger stocks".

## Food Activity

One of the most popular and traditional meals in Scotland is porridge. Cheap, nutritious and filling, it's a slow-release form of carbs which sets you up nicely for the day. In a Victorian family, just like today, Mum was a terribly busy woman and so she'd often make an entire weeks' worth of porridge all at once in a big cast iron pot on the range, stirring it with a spurtle. Whatever didn't get eaten that morning would be poured into a lined kitchen drawer and left to harden. The next day, she'd cut off however much she needed and reheat it, or she would carefully wrap bits of it up and send them off with her children for their play-piece at school.

**While we don't necessarily recommend using a kitchen drawer, here's a simple recipe for porridge you could try. You could try setting some in a baking tray overnight to see if it's still edible. (Adult supervision is recommended).**



## Porridge

(Serves 2 to 3 people)

- 100g quick cook oats
- 600ml water or milk
- A pinch of salt

Place your ingredients in a large pot and cook on a medium to high heat for a few minutes until the mixture thickens, stirring it frequently to make sure it doesn't burn.

If you prefer your porridge to be sweet, omit the salt and add sugar, maple syrup or whatever you prefer. But be aware that this is sacrilege in Scotland.

### Did you know...

It was once said that when you stir your porridge, you should always do it in a clockwise direction...stirring it the wrong way round meant you risked Auld Cloutie (the Devil) coming for you!

## School Days Activity

Nowadays the school experience is very different to Victorian times and also different to your parents' experience and grandparents' experience.

To interview and write a report about the school days of your family members.

**Pupil. Parents. Grandparents. Great-grandparents.**

### Ideas to get you started:

- Dates at school
- Name of school/s
- How long was the school day?
- Subjects taught
- Favourite subjects
- Friends
- Favourite teachers
- Getting in trouble/or not.
- Best Memorable incident
- Playground games
- Aids used in school eg computers, smart board.



# Toy Activities

Toys in Victorian times were very expensive especially for poorer families. Lots of children had home-made toys to play with. Here are a few ideas of simple toys that you can make. You may need adult supervision.

## Wooden Spoon Dolls

### You will need:

A wooden spoon • A short piece of wood to use for arms • Material • Wool Buttons (optional) • Scissors • Needle and thread • Glue • Sticky tape •

### Adult help may be needed

1. Lay the wood across the handle like a cross. Make sure it is near the top of the handle. Use glue and tape to hold it in place.
2. The top of the spoon is the doll's head, the handle is the body and the wooden stick makes the arms.
3. Stick on wool around the back of the head to make hair. Leave to dry.
4. Draw on the face with pens or pencil or stick on button eyes, nose and mouth.
5. Use material to make clothes for the doll.
6. You have made a wooden spoon doll.



## Peg Dolls

### You will need:

Old fashioned dolly pegs.  
Pipe cleaners  
Material  
Scissors  
Glue  
Beads or buttons (optional)  
Adult help may be needed

1. Draw a face on the round top part of the peg.
2. Wind a pipe cleaner round the peg to make arms. Secure tightly.
3. Cut and glue material round the peg to make clothes.
4. Decorate with buttons or beads if you like.
5. You have made a peg doll.



## Shoe Dolls

### You will need:

One old shoe (a gym shoe works well)  
Material • Scissors • Drawing pins  
String or ribbon • Sewing needle and thread.

### Instructions

1. With the heel facing you, use drawing pins to make a face on the heel.
2. Lay the shoe on the piece of cloth with enough cloth to be able to wrap it round the shoe and keeping the heel free.
3. Use the ribbon or string to tie round the shoe and cloth to keep it closed.
4. Make a slim roll of cloth and stitch on to use as arms.
5. Use a small square or triangle of cloth to tie round the head for a hat.
6. You have made a shoe doll.

