



# Rainford High School English Department – Year 8 Victorian Literature Knowledge Organiser

Social and Historical Context	Key Themes	Key Texts and Characters
<p><b>Childhood &amp; Education:</b> Many children did not go to school and working class families relied on their children to work to bring in extra money to survive.</p> <p><b>Social Class:</b> The Victorian society was divided upper, middle and working class. The Upper Class was in a powerful position giving them authority, better living conditions, and other facilities. Middle-class people also owned and managed vast business empires. The working class was the worst affected class in the Victorian times.</p> <p><b>Health:</b> Infectious diseases such as cholera, smallpox, tuberculosis and influenzas, were the greatest cause of Victorian mortality</p> <p><b>Industrialisation:</b> The Industrial Revolution brought about drastic changes in the standard of living of the Victorian Middle-Class people. These revolutions opened the doors for more job opportunities and earn a decent living. This, in turn, had a positive impact on the education of children. Women also participated in the paid workforce in increasing numbers. However, working class people suffered during the Industrial Revolution. They were replaced by machines in factories and thousands converged upon the major cities. When they arrived, there were no jobs and they suffered from poverty, starvation and homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Gender:</b> Rights and privileges of Victorian women were limited, and women had to live with hardships and disadvantages. There were sharp distinctions between men's and women's rights during this era: men were allotted more stability, financial status and power over their homes and women; women did not have the right to vote, sue, or own property.</p> <p><b>Class:</b> Victorian Britain was a society dominated by class distinction. With an elite dedicated to leisure while many in the working class struggled to eat, the gap between rich and poor seemed insurmountable.</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> The people of England were very religious. There were many who regularly visited the church. People were not only very religious but also were god-fearing.</p>	<p><b>William Blake – London:</b> The poem has a bleak, tragic tone and reflects Blake’s frustration and unhappiness with his life in London. Blake describes the disquieting socio-economic and moral decline in London and the increasing sense of hopelessness that can be found in the city.</p> <p><b>William Wordsworth – Westminster Bridge:</b> This sonnet features a speaker sharing his impressions of the view from Westminster Bridge. The poem takes shape as the speaker describes the sights and feeling of a quiet early morning before the city springs to life.</p> <p><b>Charles Dickens – Hard Times:</b> Louisa and Tom Gradgrind have been harshly raised by their father, an educator, to know nothing but the most factual, pragmatic information. Their lives are devoid of beauty, culture, or imagination, and the two have little or no empathy for others. Louisa marries Josiah Bounderby, a vulgar banker and mill owner. She eventually leaves her husband and returns to her father’s house. Tom, unscrupulous and vacuous, robs his brother-in-law’s bank. Only after these and other crises does their father realize that the manner in which he raised his children has ruined their lives.</p>
	<p><b>Literary Terms</b></p> <p>Imagery – words and phrases that create pictures in the reader’s mind</p> <p>Simile – a comparison of two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’</p> <p>Metaphor – a comparison of things not using ‘like’ or ‘as’</p> <p>Motif – a recurring symbol throughout a story</p> <p>Pathetic fallacy – using the weather to reflect a character’s mood or emotions</p> <p>Personification - giving human-like qualities to objects, ideas or animals.</p>	<p><b>Linguistic Terms</b></p> <p>Adjective – a word that describes a noun</p> <p>Adverb – a word that describes verbs, adjectives and other adverbs</p> <p>Article – a word that defines a noun as being specific or unspecific</p> <p>Conjunction – a word that connects separate clauses or sentences</p> <p>Noun – a name, object or emotion</p> <p>Preposition – a word that shows time and place</p> <p>Verb – an action</p>