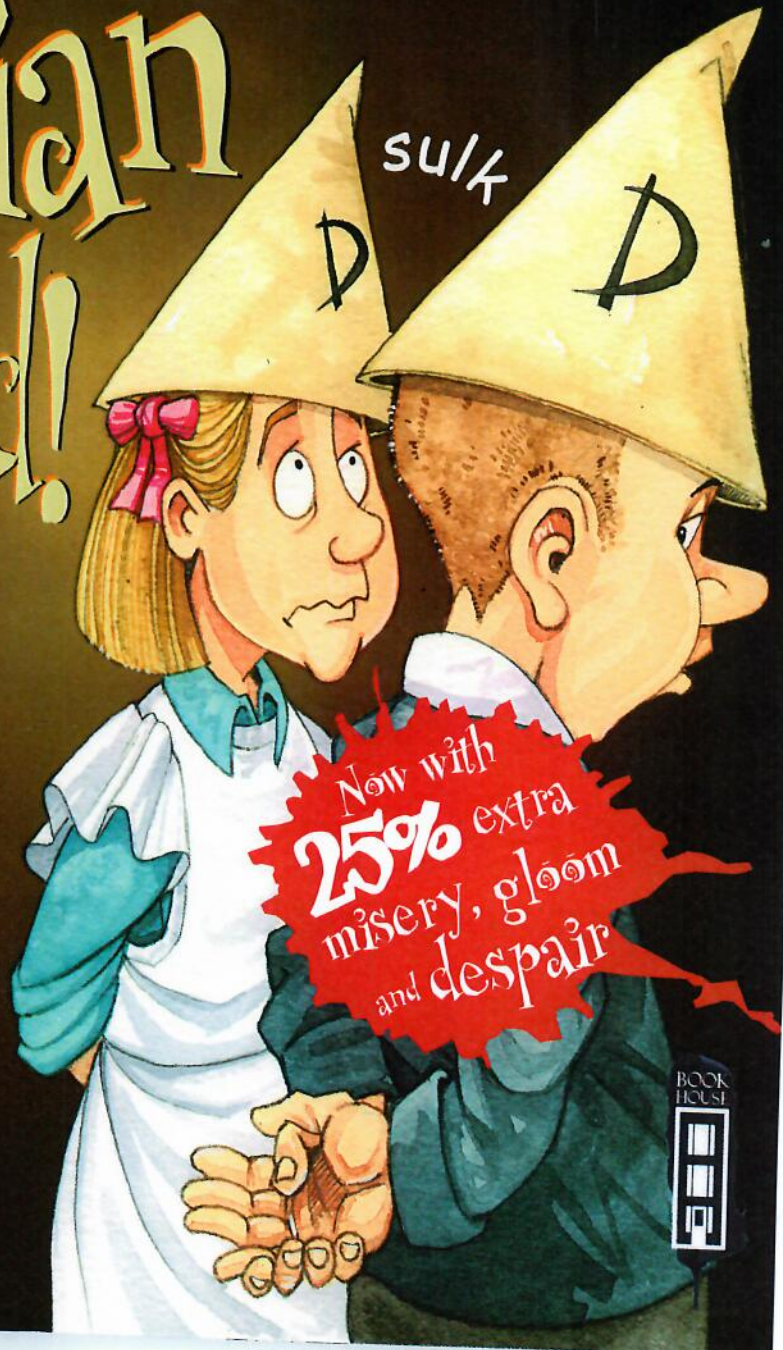


# You Wouldn't Want to Be a Victorian Schoolchild!

Lessons you'd  
rather not learn

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Illustrated by  
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BOOK  
HOUSE

# School - the place for you

## Ready for school:

**SLEEP WELL**  
the night before school starts so you don't come to lessons tired. Yawning in class will land you in trouble.



**WASH PROPERLY** before you come to school. Scruffy urchins will be sent home.



**EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST.** An empty stomach is as bad as an empty head at school.



**DON'T BE LATE.** School starts at 9 o'clock sharp. If you're late you'll be sent to see the headteacher for a telling-off.



Listen out for the school bell at the start of each new day, calling all children to their lessons. Your brand new school is called a Board School because your town's Board of Education built it. The school is a modern red brick building with room for around 1,500 pupils. Boys and girls don't mix much at school so they have separate entrances. It's almost like two schools in one building - one school for the boys and another for the girls.

**SCHOOL PENCE.** Education won't be free of charge until 1891. Until then you'll pay 2 pence (2d) a week.



**DING! DONG!**  
School bell

Girls' classrooms

Boys' classrooms

BOYS

GIRLS

**Handy hint**

Know where school is as you might have miles to walk. If you get lost, ask a policeman.



# School begins at 9 o'clock!

## Who's who:

### HEADTEACHERS.

There are three: a headmaster for the boys, a headmistress for the girls and a head of infants.

### TEACHERS.

Men teach boys, women teach girls. You call a male teacher 'Sir' and a female teacher 'Miss' or 'Madam'.

### PUPIL

TEACHERS. Older pupils sometimes help to teach younger pupils.

### TENDANCE

OFFICER. You play ant, this is man who I catch you.

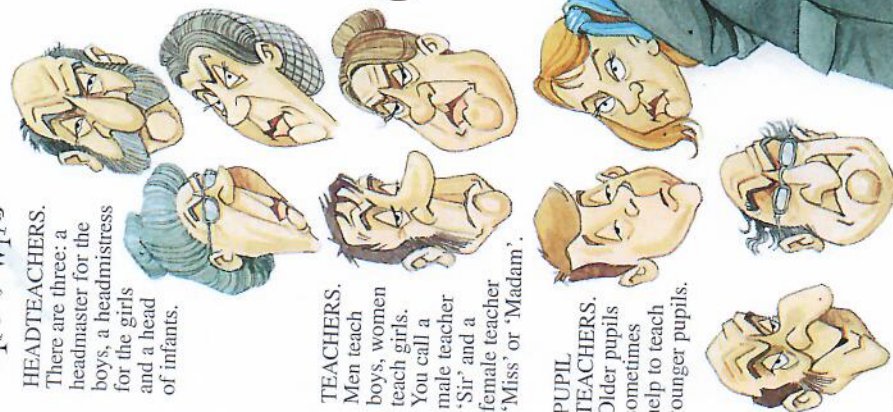
### SCHOOL

INSPECTOR. He visits the school to check up on the teachers and pupils.



nce you're through the school gates you will be in school for the rest of the day. If you get there early, you'll have some time to meet your friends – and enemies – in the playground. As 9 o'clock approaches you are called into the school building by a teacher ringing a handbell. Get a move on – don't dawdle!

What a lovely bunch...



The first thing you must do is go to the school hall for assembly. There are separate assemblies for boys and for girls. Stand still, stand in line and most of all, be quiet! Face the front and pay attention as the headteacher leads the assembly. You will say the Lord's Prayer and sing some hymns. If there are any announcements to be made, this is when the headteacher will make them.

## Handy hint

There are no smelly toilets inside the school building. They're outside in the fresh air. It's a good idea to go before lessons begin.

## NIT NURSE.

When assembly is over you'll be inspected by the nit nurse. If she finds lice in your hair, she will shave your head.



ILLNESS. Don't come to school with infectious diseases such as chicken pox or measles. If you do, you'll be sent straight back home.



CLEANLINESS. Make an effort to look clean. If you insist on looking like you've been rolling in mud, you will be sent to the washroom or maybe even home.



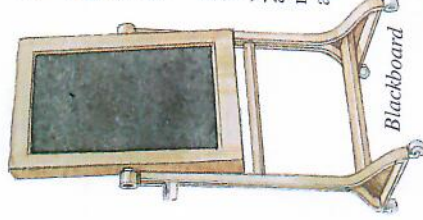
a feather flack together. An apple a day keeps the teacher away. All work and no play makes a dull boy. Write with attention. There is safety in numbers. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. Empty vessels make noise.

# 'Here Miss! In the classroom

## Around the classroom:

### BLACKBOARD.

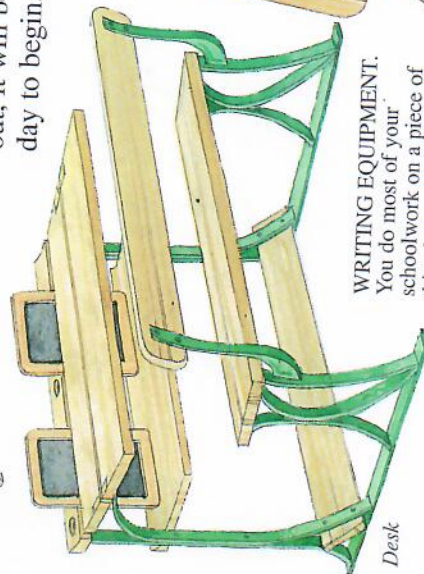
The teacher writes on the blackboard with chalk. It's on wheels and can be moved around.



Blackboard

### SCHOOL DESK.

You have to share your desk with another pupil. It's made from wood and iron.



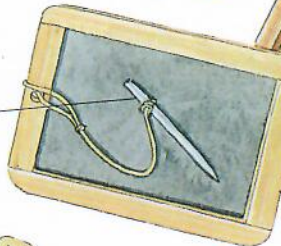
Desk

### WRITING EQUIPMENT.

You do most of your schoolwork on a piece of thin slate, which is a type of stone. You write on it with a slate pencil. Young children learn to write using a sand tray.

Slate pencil

Slate



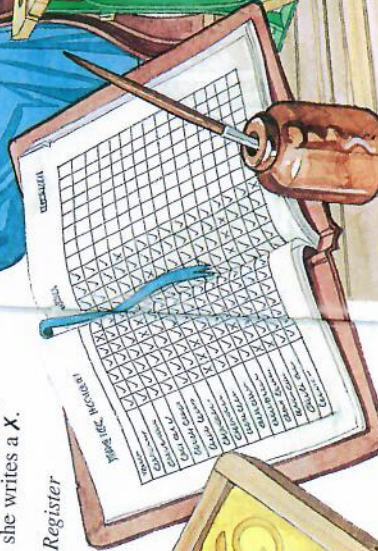
Sand tray



### REGISTER.

Everyone's name is in the register. If you're present, the teacher writes a ✓. If you're absent she writes a X.

Register

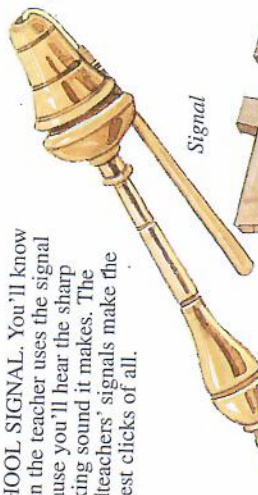


assembly finishes at 9.30, and you file back to your classroom: boys to their room and girls to theirs.

Go straight to your desk and sit down. Be quick and don't make a noise! When everyone is in place your teacher will call out the class register in alphabetical order. When you hear your name, answer in a loud, clear voice: 'Here, Miss!'. If you mumble or if she sees you fidgeting, messing with your inkwell or fiddling with your desk, she'll shake the school signal to attract your attention. When the register has been called out, it will be time for the first lesson of the day to begin.

## Handy hint

SCHOOL SIGNAL. You'll know when the teacher uses the signal because you'll hear the sharp clicking sound it makes. The headteachers' signals make the loudest clicks of all.



Signal



Patting!

Stand up as soon as an adult comes into the classroom. This shows respect for your elders and better. If you don't stand up, you'll be in trouble.

Pay attention, girl!

She's seen you!



There is safety in numbers. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. Empty vessels make noise.

# 'Open your readers!' The reading lesson

Are you ready for this?

**LEARN BY HEART.** You have to learn pages and pages of text off by heart, especially poems. Then you'll be asked to recite them from memory.

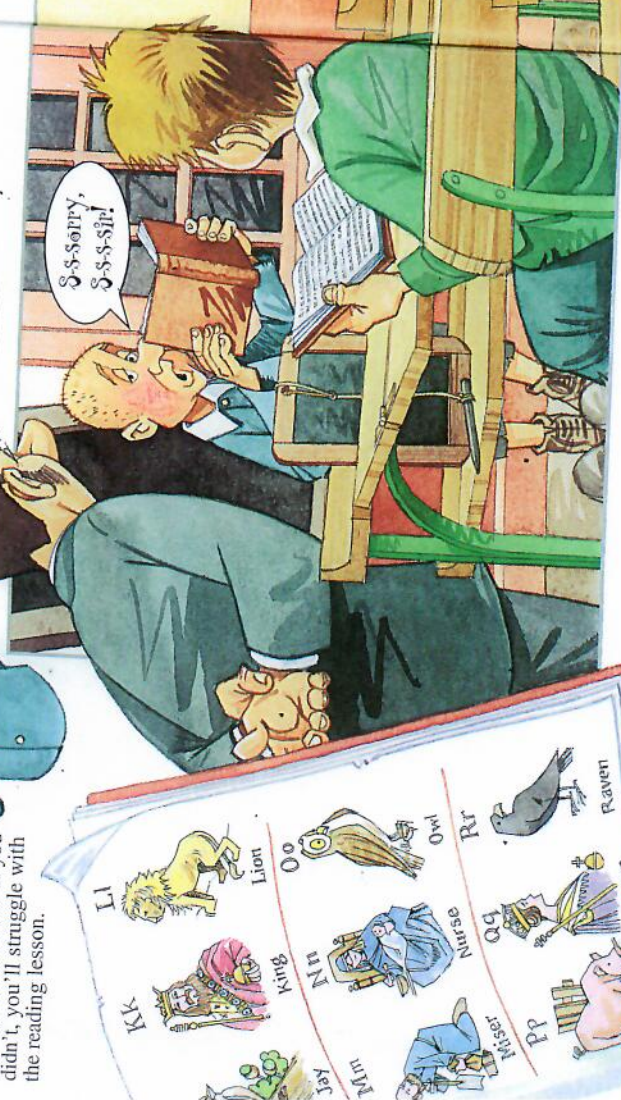


**KNOW THE ALPHABET.** You should have learned the alphabet at infants' school, from A to Z. If you didn't, you'll struggle with the reading lesson.



After the register has been called, the first lesson begins: reading. It's one of the lessons known as the 'three Rs', reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. They're the most important parts of your education.

Speak up, boy!



a feather flock together

At the beginning of the lesson, a monitor will hand a book, called a reader, to everyone in the class. It's written especially for children, with lots of short, simple sentences. You might be called to the front of the classroom. Take your reader with you. The teacher will ask you to read out loud to the class and the other children will follow the story in their books. Read clearly and carefully – if you make any mistakes the teacher will tell you to try again until you get it right.

## Handy hint



If you've got bad eyesight, make sure you sit at the front of the classroom. This way you'll be able to see the blackboard and read the wall charts.



# 'No blots!' The writing lesson

## What you will need:

**COPYBOOK.** This is what you write in. It might be especially printed for schools, like this one, or it could be a plain exercise book.



Copybooks

**RULER AND PENCIL.** Make sure your pencil is sharp and your ruler straight.

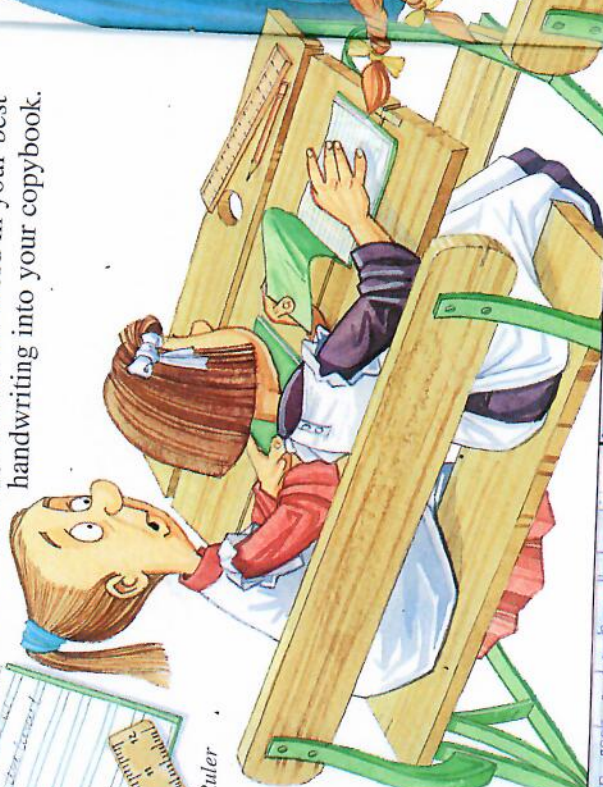


Inkwell

**PEN AND INK.** You write with a pen that has a hard, steel nib which you dip into your inkwell. Ink is messy stuff – try not to get it on your hands or clothes.



Each lesson lasts about half an hour. When the reading lesson ends, you are told to get ready for the writing lesson. You'll need a ruler and pencil, a pen and, most important of all, your writing book or copybook. The teacher tells you to open your copybook at a clean page and rule some neat, straight lines on it. A monitor fills a tray of inkwells with bluey-black ink and gives one to each child in the class. Observe the teacher as she writes a sentence on the blackboard. You must copy it word for word in your best handwriting into your copybook.



Miss Battleaxe

Think before you speak

Handy hint



Don't put too much ink on the nib of your pen. If you do you'll blot your copybook with ink spots.

Ink monitor

Now you've blotted my copybook!

Oops!

**SIT UP STRAIGHT!** If the teacher thinks you're a lazy child who is not trying hard enough, she might make you sit with a back straightener pressed into your back. It'll make you sit up and concentrate.



# 'Times tables!'

## The arithmetic lesson

Teachers will tell you that arithmetic is the most important of the 'three Rs' but you may not agree with them. They want you to be able to add and subtract, divide and multiply. Most of all they want you to do sums in your head, which is why it's called mental.

**It's all part of the lesson:**

**ABACUS.** You do your sums using a ball frame or abacus. You can thank the ancient Greeks and Romans for this counting contraption – and you know what happened to them!



**MENTAL ARITHMETIC.** Your fingers will come in handy for this!

**MATHS BOOK.** This is the exercise book you write in.

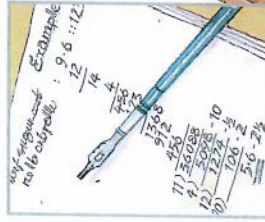
**KNOW YOUR NUMBERS.** You are expected to use numbers up to one million!



**BAD LUCK, BOYS!** The school rules say that boys should be given harder arithmetic than girls.



arithmetic. You'll also learn about fractions, percentages, decimals and something called interest, which is very important if you want to make lots of money when you start work. And if you think this lot sounds difficult, just wait until the teacher starts filling your head with algebra and geometry!



### Handy hint



Make sure you learn the 12 times table. It is very useful, because Britain's currency is based on the number 12. There are 12 pennies in one shilling.

Rather him than me!

eeerrrr...well...

Think, boy!

### DUNCE'S CAP.

D is for Dunce. If your brain can't cope with 'What is 9 times 12?' (can you find the answer on this page?) you'll be made to wear the dunce's cap until the lesson is over.

- 1  $\times 12 = 12$
- 2  $\times 12 = 24$
- 3  $\times 12 = 36$
- 4  $\times 12 = 48$
- 5  $\times 12 = 60$
- 6  $\times 12 = 72$

work and to play makes a dull day. School days are the best days of your life. A expert, becoming makes a job. History is instructive. No pen is sharper than the sword. The more things you know, the more you know. Write with attention. There is safety in numbers. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. Every mistake makes a lesson.