The Victorian Period
(1837-1901)

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Introduction

• In the midst of the Victorian Era was a social change. Many people challenged the religious and social ideals that had been the norm. With this social change also came advances in technology and science that changed the way people viewed the world forever.
Philosophical Context

- The Victorian Code of Conduct included sexual restraint, low tolerance of crime and no tolerance of homosexuality.
- Slavery was abolished in 1834, but anti-slavery morality took years to come into effect.
- Factory conditions were worse than conditions for slaves.

Freed slaves were transported to Sierra Leone, or “Freetown”
Religion

- The Anglican Church
- Puritanism
- Methodism and Presbyterianism
- The Crisis of Faith
Literature of the Victorian Era

- Writers in the Victorian Era pushed for religious, political, and social change.

- Many writers challenged the model for perfect social behavior.
Types of Literature

- The pre-Raphaelites
- Aestheticism and Decadence
- Novels developed more intricate plots and character development.
Famous Authors and Literature

- Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
- Oscar Wilde
- Emily Bronte
- Christina Rossetti

Christina Rossetti- One of the most famous Pre- Raphaelite poets of the Victorian Era
“On this day of the year, long before you were born, this heap of decay,” stabbing with her crutched stick at the pile of cobwebs on the table but not touching it, “was brought here. It and I have worn away together. The mice have gnawed at it, and sharper teeth than teeth of mice have gnawed at me.”

She held the head of her stick against her heart as she stood looking at the table; she in her once white dress, all yellow and withered; the once white cloth all yellow and withered; everything around, in a state to crumble under a touch.

“When the ruin is complete,” said she, with a ghastly look, “and when they lay me dead, in my bride’s dress on the bride’s table—which shall be done, and which will be the finished curse upon him—so much the better if it is done on this day!”

- Excerpt from Charles Dickens’ Great Expectations

When midnight mists are creeping, And all the land is sleeping, Around me tread the mighty dead, And slowly pass away. Lo, warriors, saints, and sages, From out the vanished ages, With solemn pace and reverend face Appear and pass away. The blaze of noonday splendour, The twilight soft and tender, May charm the eye: yet they shall die, Shall die and pass away. But here, in Dreamland's centre, No spoiler's hand may enter, These visions fair, this radiance rare, Shall never pass away. I see the shadows falling, The forms of old recalling: Around me tread the mighty dead, And slowly pass away.

- Dreamland by Lewis Carroll
Historical

- The Victorian Period started when Victoria succeeded her uncle William IV and became queen at age 18 in 1837.
- The Victorian era was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, so there were a lot of new inventions and discoveries.
Major Events

- Victoria marries her first cousin Prince Albert and they will have nine children
- Irish Potato Famine begins
- Most of Great Britain’s rapidly growing population lives in cities
- Crimean War begins (Russia against Great Britain, France, Sardinia, and Turkey)
- Prince Albert dies from typhoid fever at age 42
- Cafe Royal was founded in London
- The Suez Canal was built, which greatly reduced ship’s travel distance between Europe and Asia
- First telephone communication made by Alexander Graham Bell
- Thomas Edison invents the electric lightbulb and phonograph
- Karl Benz invents the first automobile
- Jack the Ripper murders of East End women in London

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with their nine children

Cafe Royal, London
The End of the Victorian Period

- Queen Victoria died in 1901 at age 82, thus ending the Victorian era
Advances in Technology

- Samuel Morse greatly impacted communication by inventing Morse Code and the telegraph system.
- Oil refining first started to be used, which created gasoline, diesel, oil, etc.
- The sewage system cleaned up the streets of London and revolutionized waste management.
- Alexander Graham Bell further improves communication by inventing the telephone.
- The gas engine is invented by Etienne Lenoir.
- Elias Howe invents the sewing machine, which allowed clothing to be mass produced and made the lives of housewives much easier.
- Wireless telegraph was invented by Marconi, greatly impacting communication.
- Thomas Edison invents the phonograph, microphone, and electric lightbulb.
Advances in Science

- John Snow discovered that Cholera spreads through water and not the air, this greatly improved sewage systems and housing conditions
- Tuberculosis was discovered by Robert Koch
- The cause of malaria was found by Ronald Ross
- William Roentgen invents the x-ray machine
- Louis Pasteur created the process of pasteurization
Conclusion

The Victorian Period was filled with many different thoughts and ideas. The literature of the time rose ideas that have never been heard of. Since the era was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, it changed the way people thought from all of the new discoveries and inventions. Some of the literature and discoveries had the Victorian people question their beliefs, which created religious struggle. The difference types of literature and countless numbers of technological and scientific advances made the Victorian era a truly unique period in time.
Bibliography