

The Victorian Era

The Victorian Era is a complex and fascinating time in history. If you're interested in writing a romance book that's based in this time frame, you'll need to dig deep and find as much info as you can to make sure that your story is accurate and consistent.

This information package is designed to help you know where to start looking for the information that you'll need to know. Please understand that this is by no means a complete list. It is just a jumping point for information finding.

Victorian history

With the Georgian Era, including the Regency Era, over, it was time for Queen Victoria to take her place on the throne. In 1837 England, when she took over, she also brought with her more stable politics and customs. She set many fashions and expected the upper classes to follow suit.

Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901. During this time, Britain was a powerful nation. A great deal of change happened during this time, things like the industrial revolution. Because of this many books have a touch of social reform in their storylines and themes.

Need to dig into more history:

- (1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era
- (2) <https://www.britannica.com/event/Victorian-era>
- (3) <https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/victorian-era-timeline>
- (4) https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Victorian_era

Difference between the Victorian Era and the Regency Era

The most significant difference is the number of years for each era. The Victorian Era covered the entire reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to her death in 1901. The Regency Era was a part of the Georgian Era and was just before this era!

The Victorian Era is well known for the class-based society, the burgeoning economy and the growing population making Britain a powerful empire. (2)

As you do your research, you'll be able to see how the differences are enough that you'll have to classify your story differently. Things from the way that the Queen influenced society to what technological advancements happened. This makes the Victorian Era so much more fun to write in because you have a vast array of events, issues, and inventions to incorporate into your story. (3)

Because of the vast changes that happened during this time period, your story can be about just anything. Take a bit to read how the changes affected politics and the government, society and the different classes, and how having peace and prosperity contributed to the massive jump in population. Check out the sites above, as well as these ones:

- (5) <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/victorian/>

- (6) <https://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-era-1837-1901.asp>

As with any era in history, we can know that society had expectations and rules that the “ton” had to follow. Everything from hygiene etiquette to courtship and marriage rules to how to deal with their dead had rules attached to it. Some of these etiquette rules were ridiculous and the type that you’d shake your head at if we had to follow them today. But if you plan on writing a story in this era, then take the time to get to know what those rules were and how you can incorporate them into your characters.

Here’s some to think about when creating your characters:

- (7) <https://www.almanac.com/victorian-era-etiquette-and-manners> - short article about hygiene and social etiquette.
- (8) <https://people.howstuffworks.com/10-ridiculous-victorian-etiquette-rules.htm> - a fun article about some of the silly rules that had to be followed.
- (9) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-era-courtship-rules-and-marriage.html> - an easy article that has a list of different behaviors that were acceptable and some not.
- (10) <https://recollections.biz/blog/wedding-traditions-victorian-era/> - explains the origin of the wedding dress!
- (11) <https://allthatsinteresting.com/victorian-dating-rituals> - explains why they had dating rituals.
- (12) <http://www.literary-liaisons.com/article003.html> - a short article about the Victorian wedding.

Mourning customs:

- (13) <https://www.funeralbasics.org/8-intriguing-funeral-customs-victorian-era/>
- (14) <https://www.thevintagenews.com/2016/05/28/39293-2/> - lots of pics of mourning attire and facts regarding how long for what type of relative.
- (15) <https://www.ranker.com/list/victorian-mourning-customs/lisa-waugh> - article about 22 morbid death and mourning rituals! Very interesting!

Interesting articles about the customs of the time:

- (16) <https://www.countryliving.com/life/g3481/weird-victorian-traditions/>

Family life and childcare

Having a full cast of characters in your story makes for an interesting story. You can add siblings and relatives to your characters to help create a more realistic story.

- (17) <https://victorianchildren.org/victorian-children-in-victorian-times/>
- (18) <https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/family-life-working-class-victorians-interview-emma-griffin/> - an interesting article about the overall life of people that lived during this era!
- (19) <https://schoolworkhelper.net/raising-children-in-the-victorian-times/> - article about some of the dark side of raising children during this era.

Just as in the Regency Era, the Victorian Era also had servants for most of the nobility and elite. And it wasn't only the wealthy that had servants.

- (20) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-times-servants.html> - an article that gives a hierarchy of servants that could be found in a Victorian household.
- (21) <https://simplehistory.co.uk/servants-victorian-household/> - article explaining more about the servant's hierarchy.
- (22) <https://www.thegreatcoursesdaily.com/servants-in-victorian-england/> - explains what life might have been like for servants.
- (23) http://avictorian.com/servants/servants_sitemap.html - this one has a whole list of articles that define what each servant does and responsibilities.

Now let's talk about fashion!!

Oh, the clothes we wear!!

Because of the changes in society during the reign of Queen Victoria, the way people dressed changed too. Clothing could be made quickly and cheaply. This caused a movement of class distinctions between those that could afford quality clothing and who could not. Society was defined by what they wore, the more expensive, the wealthier you were! (24)

Many of these fashions were influenced by what Queen Victoria wore. And this included undergarments like stockings, petticoats, and chemises. And that didn't include the dresses. When creating your character, you're gonna need to decide how your character gets dressed and who helps them. These sites can help you create authentic and realistic clothes for your characters.

- (24) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_fashion
- (25) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-era-womens-fashion.html>
- (26) <https://victorianchildren.org/victorian-dress-and-victorian-style-clothing/>
- (27) <https://womens-fashion.lovetoknow.com/victorian-fashion-history>
- (28) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-era-mens-fashion.html>
- (29) <https://vintagedancer.com/victorian/victorian-mens-fashion-history/>

If you're still having troubles visualizing what fashion looked like during the Victorian period, look for these movies and tv shows. This is not a complete list, just a spattering to get you started!!

- Enola Holmes (2020)
- The Prestige (2006)
- Murdock Mysteries (2008-)
- Dolittle (2020) (this is the one with Robert Downey Jr. in it!)
- Sherlock Holmes (2009) (Robert Downey Jr. again) and Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows (2011)
- Victoria (2016-) (this is the tv series one)
- Alice in Wonderland (2010) (with Johnny Depp)

Names

Now it's time to think about naming your characters. A name is so important, not only to your story but to your characters. You need to make sure that your name fits with what you're trying to say and how you're trying to say it.

Here're websites that can help you with that search:

- (30) <https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/150-elegant-and-popular-victorian-baby-names-for-girls-and-boys/>
- (31) <https://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-names.asp>
- (32) <https://nameberry.com/list/775/victorian-boy-names>
- (33) <https://ancestorville.com/blogs/articles/victorian-female-nicknames>
- (34) <https://www.fantasynamemgenerators.com/victorian-names.php> - this can help you to generate a name or two!!

Do your own research into names:

- (35) <https://play.howstuffworks.com/quiz/whats-the-hidden-meaning-of-your-name> - take a quiz of your own name to see what it means.
- (36) <http://www.meaning-of-names.com/> - search the meaning behind the names you've already found, to see if the name you've found fits the characters you're creating.
- (37) <https://www.behindthename.com/> - the etymology and history of first names
- (38) <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/> - discover what names were most used and in what year. Organized in numbers, how many "Jacks" there were each year. Goes back only to the 1880s.
- (39) <https://www.wattpad.com/120507137-the-big-book-of-names> - a list of names for almost any type of story out there!!

Right along with the names of your characters, you'll need to know and understand the peerage titles that were commonly used in this era.

The peerage is a legal system of British nobility ranks, titles, and honours where the holder of the title has the right to sit in the House of Lords. Members of the British royal families, usually the male members, have been ennobled since centuries. (30) Isn't it

Check out these websites that can help you to understand the hierarchy of titles and who had them.

- (40) <http://victorian-era.org/royal-british-nobility.html>
- (41) <http://www.katetattersall.com/ranks-names-and-titles/> - this a comprehensive list of many different titles and their ranks.
- (42) <https://victorian-era.org/an-earl-and-his-role.html>
- (43) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dukes_in_the_peerages_of_Britain_and_Ireland - this is a huge list that's for more than just the Victorian period.
- (44) <http://www.avictorian.com/nobility.html>

Language and speech

The way that people spoke in the Victorian Era had a “proper” sound to it. And if you’re at all familiar with Charles Dickens and his *Oliver Twist* or *Great Expectations*, you’ll have an idea of what Victorian English might’ve sounded like. (45)

(45) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-english.html>

(46) <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/53529/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-you-should-be-using>

(47) <http://victorian-era.org/victorian-era-slang.html>

(48) <https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/a-dictionary-of-victorian-slang-1909> - this is an old book that you can see. It looks like a dictionary from this time about the slang that people might have used.

(49) <https://language-dossier.webs.com/queenvictoriasenglish.htm>

(50) <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Victorian-Words-And-Phrases/>

While this is certainly not everything you’ll need to think about and create when you’re creating your wonderful romance story, it’ll get you started!

Needing specific research?? Contact me at romanceauthorva@gmail.com and we’ll chat!!

Please sign up to my newsletter at: <https://shentalhenrie.com/idea-bible-sign-up/> and you’ll get a FREE printable workbook. *The Romance Story Ideas Bible* is a great place to keep track of random story ideas!