*Great Expectations* Web Quest

Through these explorations, you will embark on a journey into the past to explore Victorian England: 1837-1901. During this period, Charles Dickens published his novel *Great Expectations*in serial form in “All Year Round,” a Victorian periodical. This web quest will help you understand the historical context of Victorian England in which Dickens was writing as well as important issues and themes that Dickens wrestles with in *Great Expectations.*

**Process**

You will need several sheets of lined paper to complete the web quest. On this page you will find the goal and guiding questions for each part of the web quest. Links have been provided to help you answer the questions. The questions provided are simply a guide to help you get started; your goal is to read closely and take notes carefully so as to be an “expert” in each area of the quest.

**PART ONE: You are an historian**

The goal is to explore The Victorian Era and the Romantic Period in England and provide a general background, highlighting major events.

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the Victorian Era? What years does it cover? Who was it named for? What were the predominant principles?
2. What were the major developments and important events?
3. What is the Romantic period of literature? Who were the major Romantic writers and thinkers? How were the Romantics different from the rest of the Victorians?

* <http://www.shelbycs.org/ms/media%20center/victorian%20england/>
* <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>
* <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist8.html>
* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/victorian_britain/>
* <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>
* <http://stopchildlabor.org/>
* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/crime_01.shtml>
* <http://vcp.e2bn.org/justice/page11361-types-of-punishment-imprisonment.html>
* <http://www.shelbycs.org/ms/media%20center/victorian%20england/>
* <http://history.powys.org.uk/school1/presteigne/debt1.shtml>

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**PART TWO: You are a Biographer**

The goal is to explore Charles Dickens’ life and ideas. This includes early family life, turning points, influences on his writing, career, and works.

Guiding Questions:

1. What experiences were the most influential on his life?
2. What genre of literature did he write?
3. How was his work published and illustrated?
4. What are some basic biographical facts about his life that the class should know? (Date and place of birth, date of death, family, etc.)

Resources:

* <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/index.html>
* <http://charlesdickenspage.com/>
* <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/dickens.htm>
* <http://www.perryweb.com/Dickens/>

**PART THREE: You are an Anthropologist**

The task is to examine the differences between the social classes of the Victorian Period. Discuss how power, authority, wealth, work, living conditions, lifestyles, religion, and culture differed among the gentry, middle class, and working class.

Guiding Questions:

1. Define social class. Explain the social breakdown of the classes during the Victorian era.
2. What did the Victorian education system look like? Distinguish between education for the wealthy and education for the poorer classes. What influence did social class have on the individual’s education and upbringing?
3. Look at the manners and etiquette of the Victorians era. How did Victorian men and women behave in upper class society? Define a true gentlemen according to Victorian society guidelines.

Resources:

* <http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm>
* <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/Class.html>
* <http://logicmgmt.com/1876/etiquette/etiquette.htm>
* [Social classes in United States](http://copland.udel.edu/~cmarks/What%20is%20social%20class.htm)

**PART FOUR: You are a union representative**

Your job is to examine what child life was like in Victorian England.

Guiding Questions:

1. What was the state of child labor in the Victorian era? What role did social class have in child labor?
2. Where were children of this time employed? What type of child was forced into the workforce, and what kinds of dangers did he/she face as result of the workplace?
3. What rights did children have in the workplace? How were child laborers treated?
4. In the Victorian era, what types of public health or child care agencies existed?

Resources:

* <http://www.shelbycs.org/ms/media%20center/victorian%20england/>
* <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>
* <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist8.html>
* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/victorian_britain/>
* <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>
* <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRchild.main.htm>
* <http://stopchildlabor.org/>