

Curriculum subject: History

Key Stage: 2

Theme: Leisure

### Rationale

The Victorians gave birth to the concept of taking a holiday by the sea. The Industrial Revolution fundamentally changed life and made it easier to take a trip to the seaside. As a result, the concept of visiting a seaside town and taking in the sea air, complete with majestic hotels and promenade, was born. This activity uses primary source material to examine the relationship between the birth of rail travel and the well-loved seaside holiday as well as other forms of leisure. This activity can form part of a wider study of the Victorian period as a turning point, with particular reference to rail travel, and is aimed at children in upper Key Stage 2. This activity works well following an activity looking at life for the rich and poor.

### Content

#### Historical sources:

- [Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851 \(1854\)](#)  
[Illustration of Cremorne Gardens, Chelsea](#)
- [Charles Dickens's Bleak House in its original parts](#)
- [Illustration of Drury Lane Theatre \(1808-10\)](#)
- [Poster advertising the strongest man on earth, at the Royal Aquarium \(c 1889\)](#)
- [Poster advertising the 'royal American midgets', Piccadilly Hall, London \(c 1880\)](#)
- [Poster advertising the circus at Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London \(c 1880\)](#)
- [Advertisement for The Royal Hotel, Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex \(c 1886\)](#)
- [Photograph of the beach at Hastings, Sussex \(c 1864\)](#)

#### Recommended reading (short articles):

[Popular culture](#) by Liza Picard

[Travel, transport and communications](#) by Liza Picard

### Key questions

- What did the Victorians do to enjoy themselves? What are the similarities and differences between then and now?
- How important was the railway to leisure?

