

You
Wouldn't
Want to...

BE A

VICTORIAN
SCHOOL
CHILD

Modern
day school
doesn't
seem so
bad!



Written by John Malam • Illustrated by David Antram

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.



Victorian pennies

I won't go!

Get into that school, now!



Girls' classrooms

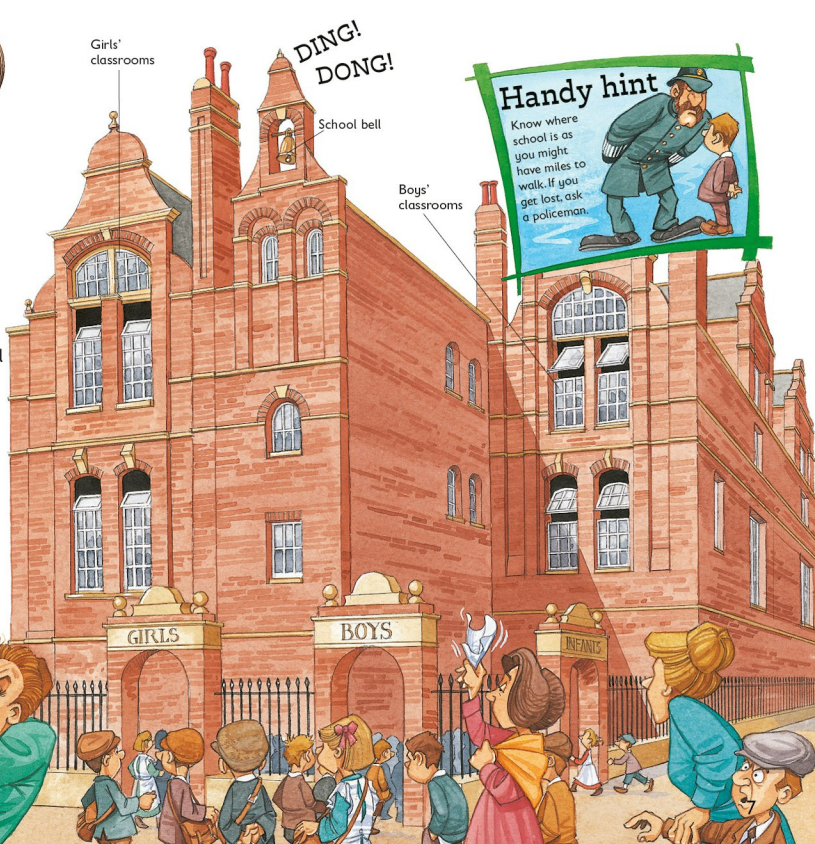
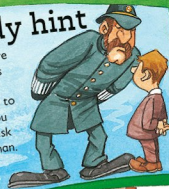
DING!
DONG!

School bell

Boys' classrooms

Handy hint

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

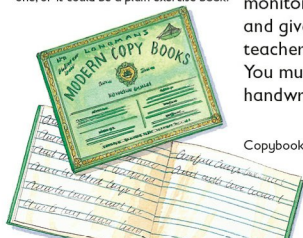


'No blots!' The writing lesson

What you will need:

Copybook

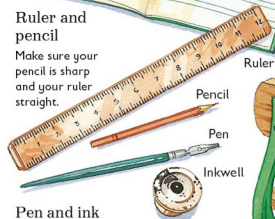
This is what you write in. It might be especially printed for schools, like this one, or it could be a plain exercise book.



Copybooks

Ruler and pencil

Make sure your pencil is sharp and your ruler straight.



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.

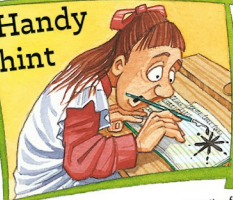


Miss Battleaxe



Ink monitor

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.



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 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!

It's all part of the lesson:

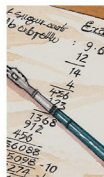
Abacus

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.



Bad luck, boys!

The school rules say that boys should be given harder arithmetic than girls.

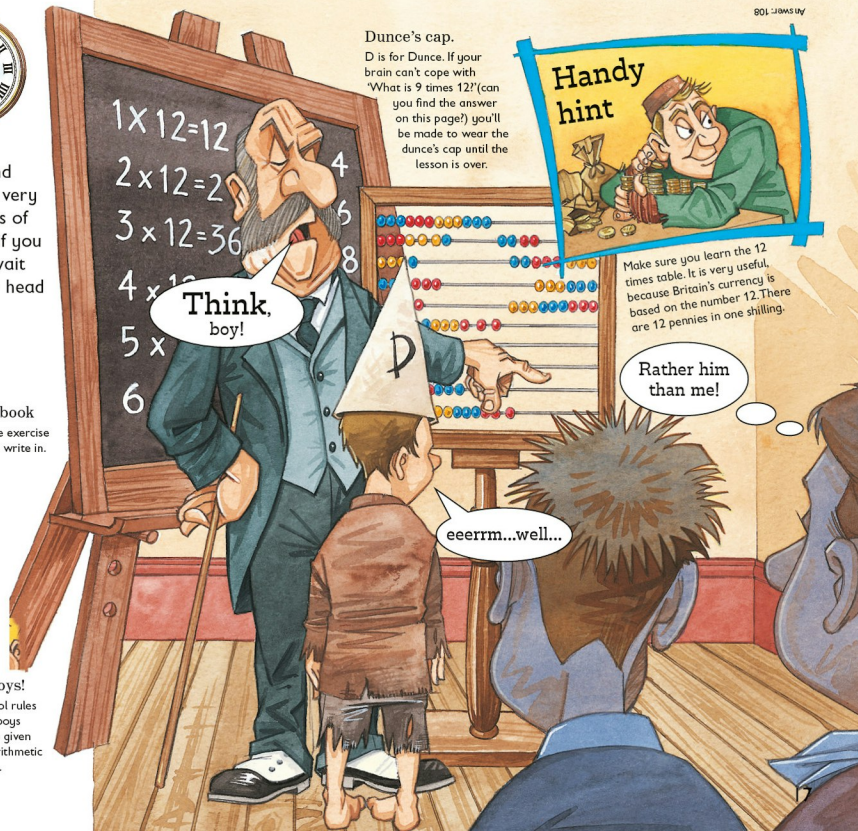
Know your numbers.

You are expected to use numbers up to one million!



Dunce's cap.

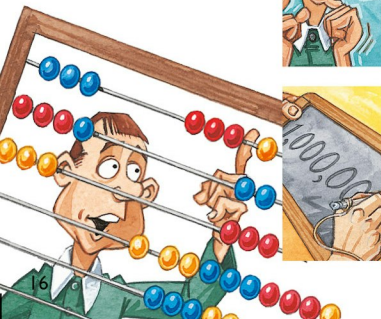
D is for Dunce. If your brain can't cope with "What is 9 times 12?" (can you find the answer on this page?) you'll be made to wear the dunce's cap until the lesson is over.



Think, boy!

eeerrm...well...

Rather him than me!



'What is it?' The object lesson

The world is a big place, but you've probably never been further than the edge of your town. That's why you have an object lesson, when your teacher tells you about the world you live in. The school has a specimen cabinet, which is a wooden box filled with lots of objects, from rocks and minerals to dead insects and dried plants. In the object lesson you learn what things are made from, how they work and what they feel and smell like. It's a science lesson.

Other lessons:

History

Colourful wall charts help you learn what life was like in the past.



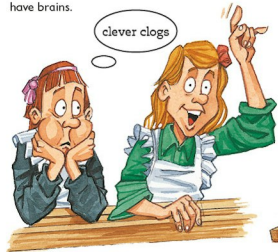
Geography

Globes and atlases are used to teach you about the countries of the world and Britain's great empire.



General knowledge

In this lesson you are taught some totally useless facts, such as: a duck's quack doesn't echo and starfish don't have brains.



I think I'm going to faint!

clever clogs

Please can I hold it?

Observe this beautiful spider.

Yuk - it's disgusting!



Wall chart



Handy hint

Which animal has no brain?

You have textbooks called catechisms which have no pictures in them, just lots of questions and answers. Memorise them all. You'll be asked about them in your tests.

Specimen cabinet

