



Why Schools Still Teach Victorian Novels Today

KS4 ENGLISH LITERATURE

KS3 ENGLISH

Ages 13-18



3 min read

What Are Victorian Novels?

Victorian novels were written during the **Victorian Era**, roughly **1837 to 1901**, when **Queen Victoria** ruled Britain. Famous authors include **Charles Dickens**, **Charlotte and Emily Brontë**, and **George Eliot**. These books are long, detailed stories that paint vivid pictures of life in **19th-century Britain**.

They Teach Us About Real History

Victorian novels show us exactly how people lived, worked, and thought during a time of massive change. **Dickens** described the poverty and awful conditions of workers during the **Industrial Revolution**. When you read *Oliver Twist* or *Great Expectations*, you're not just reading a story—you're stepping into the past. These books help us understand problems like child labour, unfair social classes, and how cities changed when factories arrived.

Think of it like watching a historical documentary, except you're living inside the story and feeling what characters feel.

They Explore Human Nature and Emotions

The characters in Victorian novels face problems that still matter today: love, ambition, betrayal, family conflict, and trying to find your place in the world. **Jane Eyre** asks questions about independence and women's rights. **Wuthering Heights** explores intense emotions and revenge. These themes are **timeless**—meaning they never go out of date because humans will always struggle with similar challenges.

They're Masterpieces of Writing

Victorian authors invented techniques that modern writers still use. They created unforgettable characters, built suspense across hundreds of pages, and used detailed descriptions to create atmosphere. Studying how they constructed their sentences, built tension, and described emotions teaches students powerful writing skills.

Think of Victorian novels as the classic albums of literature—they're still studied because the craftsmanship is so good.

They Challenge Our Thinking

Schools teach these books because they make students question things. Why did society treat poor people so badly? Should women have had fewer rights? What would we do in these characters' situations? These conversations help young people develop critical thinking and empathy.

Victorian novels aren't taught because they're old—they're taught because they're **relevant**, beautifully written, and full of ideas worth thinking about.