

4 QUEEN VICTORIA

You may know about the Victorians, but how much do you know about Queen Victoria herself? As a baby, she had been only fifth in line to the throne. However, she reigned over the United Kingdom for more than 60 years.

Victoria's early life

Victoria was born at Kensington Palace, in London, on 24 May 1819. She was the daughter of Prince Edward and Victoria Mary Louisa, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

As a young royal, Victoria had strict rules imposed on her by her protective mother. She was made to sleep in her mother's room and was not allowed to play with other children. Her 132 dolls did little to help her loneliness, and her closest childhood companion was her dog, Dash.

Victoria enjoyed spending time painting and drawing as she became older, and also kept a diary. She wrote lengthy entries in diaries throughout her life, and many still exist today. They give historians great insight into her character.

Becoming queen

When she was born, it seemed unlikely that Victoria would become queen. Victoria lost her father and two of her uncles before she was 12, though, meaning she was next in line to the throne.

Victoria's third uncle, King William IV, died in 1837, when she was just 18. Her lavish coronation took place just over a week later at Westminster Abbey, in London. She became the first monarch to live at Buckingham Palace.

Starting a family

Victoria proposed to her German cousin Prince Albert in 1839, and they were married the next year. The cousins had been close since Albert's first visit when Victoria was 17, and their marriage was, by all accounts, extremely happy. The couple had nine children.

Due to the Queen's responsibilities, Albert was said to have been very involved in the children's upbringing. Victoria was extremely attached to her children, though, and set the example of considering them the heart of a family – which was an unusual position, at the time.

Victorian England

During Victoria's reign, Britain experienced huge expansion in trade, mechanical production, railways, bridges, underground sewers and power distribution networks. As a consequence, cities such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham grew significantly. Major advances in science were made, such as Darwin's theory of evolution. Telephones, cameras and electric lights were invented. Victoria's focus on family and Albert's German traditions also established Christmas as we know it today.

The British Empire also expanded, to include places such as Canada, Australia and India. The Empire's colonies often treated the local population extremely badly, but Queen Victoria was rarely involved personally in the business of other nations.

The marriages of Victoria's children, and Victoria's ability to speak many languages, meant that she developed connections to many other royal families in Europe. She became related by marriage to so many of them that she was sometimes known as 'the Grandmother of Europe'.

The final Christmas

Victoria's health and spirits declined after Albert's death in 1861, which happened when she was only 42. However, she kept up her public duties until her death.

As was her tradition, she spent the Christmas of 1900 at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Her health, however, quickly deteriorated, and she was unable to return to London. On 22 January 1901, at the age of 81, Queen Victoria died – with her son, the future King Edward VII, by her side.

Queen Victoria's legacy lives on throughout the world, and not only through the progress her era saw. Her name is also remembered in the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of streets, squares and pubs named after her. Do you know one?



 FILL IN THE GAP

Read the sentences and choose the correct word or words to fill the gap.

As a baby, she had been only fifth in line to the _____.

However, she _____ over the United Kingdom for more than 60 years.

Victoria was born at _____, in London, on 24 May 1819.

She was the daughter of Prince Edward and Victoria Mary Louisa, also known as the Duke and Duchess of _____.

As a young royal, Victoria had strict rules imposed on her by her _____ mother.

She was made to sleep in her mother's room and was not allowed to _____ with other children.

Her _____ dolls did little to help her loneliness, and her closest childhood companion was her dog, Dash.

Victoria enjoyed spending time painting and drawing as she became older, and also kept a _____.

They give historians great insight into her _____.

Victoria's third uncle, _____, died in 1837, when she was just 18.

Her lavish coronation took place just over a week later at _____, in London.

She became the first monarch to live at _____.

Victoria's health and spirits _____ after Albert's death in 1861, which happened when she was only 42.

The couple had _____ children.

Telephones, cameras and electric lights were _____.



MATCHING

Draw a line with a ruler to match the information.

Queen Victoria's birthplace	.
reigned for	.
Victoria born	.
Queen Victoria died	.

mother	.
dog	.
father	.
mother and father known as	.

mother	.
dolls	.
enjoyed	.
kept a	.

known as	.
as a baby	.
Buckingham Palace	.
spent Christmas at	.

Queen Victoria's son	.
Queen Victoria's age when Prince Albert died	.
Prince Albert died	.
number of children	.

May 1819	.
January 1901	.
Kensington Palace	.
over 60 years	.

Dash	.
Prince Edward	.
Duke and Duchess of Kent	.
Victoria Mary Louisa	.

painting	.
diary	.
strict rules	.
132	.

fifth in line for throne	.
Osborne House	.
the Grandmother of Europe	.
first monarch	.

1861	.
nine	.
42	.
King Edward VII	.