

Victorians

Little Inventors workshop guide



Aims & Objectives

The aim of this Little Inventors workshop is to inspire children to use their imagination to help them to think up and draw original, ingenious, funny, fantastical or perfectly practical invention ideas, with no limits.

This workshop offers a fun way to learn about the Victorian inventive spirit. They will explore the design and purpose of real inventions from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, and get to become Victorian Little Inventors themselves.

Children will be able to draw and submit their own inventions to littleinventors.org, where they will be reviewed by the Little Inventors team. Who knows, their idea might even be chosen as staff picks, turned into an animation, or even made into a real object by one of our **Magnificent Makers!**

This guide suggests how you might want to use the Little Inventors resources to run a structured workshop. However you could also pick and choose from the activities to customise the pack, depending on the age and abilities of children and the time you have available!

Differentiation and extension activities are also provided to enable all children to make the most of the workshop.

Familiarise yourself with the resources available before the workshop:

Little Inventors Presentation

Use this presentation on a whiteboard or computer to help you deliver the workshop.

Little Inventors challenge video (optional)

Make sure you can access the video online at littleinventors.org and play it either on a whiteboard, individual computers or tablets (if you don't have internet access during the session, you can download the video from our *Workshops* page).

V&A online collection

Make sure you have internet access to link back to the the Victoria and Albert Museum online collections at collections.vam.ac.uk.

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Printable materials

Per student

1x A4 Little Inventors drawing sheet (have some spare ones too!)

1x Victorian Invention Detective activity sheet

1x Victorian Time Traveller activity sheet

Tools or materials needed during the workshop

Make sure you have plenty of black pens and colouring felt-tips available during the workshop!

Running the workshop

The following activities are offered with indicative timings on how you could run a workshop. You could use a choice of some of the activities depending on time and abilities.

Get started! (5-10 mins)

Explain that in this workshop, children will find out about the spirit of invention of the Victorians, and get a chance to become Victorian Little Inventors themselves by thinking up their own invention idea!

Use the **Victorian Little Inventors** presentation to help set the scene.

If you have time, you may also want to watch the Little Inventors challenge video by our Chief Inventor Dominic Wilcox to provide more context to the world of inventing.

Have a class discussion on inventions and inventions from the Victorian era, for example ask your children:

- What is an invention?
- Why do we need inventions?
- What can we learn from inventions from the past?
- What do you know about the industrial revolution?
- Can you name some inventions from Victorian times?
- What do you think of some of the Victorian invention images shown?

Following up

Depending on time available and abilities, children can either move on to do the **Victorian invention detectives** activity or the **Victorian Time traveller** activity before drawing in **What's your invention?**

Victorian invention detectives (15-20 mins)

Museums can play an important part in keeping history alive and are a fantastic place to learn about the way people lived in the past.

The activity sheet has eight pages with images of real victorian inventions currently housed at the V&A.

Give out different invention pages to individual children or small groups.

Ask them to use their imagination to guess what the invention is. Ask them to write on the sheet what features and materials can they see, how do they think the object was used and by whom. Ask them to give the invention a name.

Once they are finished, get the whole class to review the results.

Click on each image. This will link to each object on the V&A online collection.

You can find all of the objects by searching by their name on collections.vam.ac.uk:

From top left to right top: cheese toaster, bottle opener key, rattle whistle, invalid cup

From bottom left to right: skirt grips, cream jugs, candle snuffers and tray, sardine fork

Compare the imagined ideas with the real information.

- How close were the children to the results?
- What interesting ideas did they come up with?
- How do these objects relate to objects that might serve the same purpose today?

Differentiation

Instead of writing their description, children could draw a character using the invention and include keywords.

Extension activity

You could ask children to research 'unusual Victorian inventions' online and create a presentation on Victorian inventions.

What's your invention? (20-40 mins)

Once children have had a chance to develop their ideas a little through discussion in **Get started!**, the **Victorian Invention Detectives** and/or the **Victorian Time Traveller** activities, give them a Little Inventors drawing sheet to draw and explain their invention. They can draw the invention they thought of in the previous activity or come up with a new one!

There are no limits.

Make sure that children put their name and age on the worksheet.

- First, ask them to draw using a black pen as an outline, and add colours to their invention to bring it to life.
- Ask them to label parts on their drawing to explain how it works.
- Then ask children to name and explain their invention - what does it do? Who is it for? What is it made of? How big is it?

Tell them they should write as if they are briefing someone to make their invention (which could happen!).

Children can draw more than one invention if they have time.

Differentiation:

Children make a video or audio recording to explain their idea and what inspired them to think of it, what problem does it solve or how does it make life better.

Extension activity:

Children come up with their own invention ideas, draw them and explain how they think it can work and how it can be made. As an art and design project, children can have a go at making a prototype of their invention ideas using simple materials or recyclables.

Following up:

Use Round-up to finish the session and upload the invention ideas to [Littleinventors.org](https://www.littleinventors.org).

Round-up! (5 mins)

Gather all the student invention drawings in a gallery around the classroom/ workspace.

Get children to vote for their favourite ideas - what do they like and why? Encourage positive feedback throughout.

- What do they think of their invention?
- What would they do differently?
- Can they imagine other people using their inventions?
- What would they say?
- What other ideas or challenges can they think of?
- What would the Victorians think of their invention?

Following Up:

Make sure you upload the childrens' invention ideas on littleinventors.org for a chance to get picked as team favourites, turned into animations or even get made into real objects!