

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust

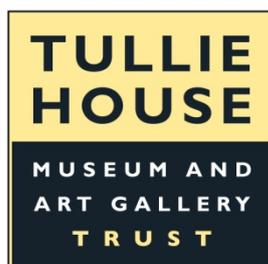
Victorian Objects



For: Key Stage 2

Timing: 2 Hours

These notes are intended as a guide for teachers who have been to the INSET session on Victorian Objects and are running the session independently. They are also for the information of those who are attending a session led by one of our staff.



Essential Information

- Your class should be split into four groups before the session.
- You will need at least **four** adult helpers for this session, not including yourself if you are leading the session or **four** adults including yourself if led by Tullie House staff.
- All adults must be briefed on the session and given a copy of the notes, as they will be guiding the children during the activities. You can organise your adults in two ways:
 - 1) Have an adult assigned to each group. They will rotate round the activities with the group. This means that the adult will have to learn four different activities.
 - 2) Have each adult assigned to a table/activity. This means that the adult will only need to learn one table/activity. This is good if you have adults who are not confident, as during their first group you can offer advice and their confidence will grow during each rotation of the groups.

There are also some background notes for teachers about each activity which do not need to be read by the adults but can be treated as optional extras.

On arrival

Please go to the main reception desk and hand in your confirmation of booking form, any payment due and your signed Health and Safety declaration.

If your class need the toilet we advise you to use the main ones in the reception area.

A member of Tullie House Learning and Access staff will be contacted and you will be shown to the Activities Room, which will be set up for you.

There is space to leave coats outside the Activities Room but if you have bags as well it is better to ask at Reception for a coat bin.

Before the children enter the Activities Room please remind them not to touch anything.

Format of session

The children need to imagine that they are going back in time to the Victorian days, when houses like Tullie House had people really living in them.

They can discuss whether they think that the people living in Tullie House would be rich or poor; have servants, cooks, fridges, washing machines, vacuum cleaners etc.

Because the people of Tullie House would have had servants, we will pretend that the children are in training to be those servants and therefore need to know how to use items that would help them with housework.

On each table there is a selection of objects from different rooms in a Victorian house, all from the Tullie House Museum Collection. Each table focuses on a different duty of a domestic servant of the time (cleaning, washing, lighting and cooking). The teacher or adult at each table will be the trainer, dressing accordingly in the costume provided. As well as getting to know the objects the children will also have the chance to practise some of the skills they would need as a Victorian servant. The children have mob caps or flat caps to wear depending on gender. They will spend about 20 minutes at each table.

The **Cooking**, **Washing** and **Cleaning** tables each have two object handling activities.

1. **Call My Bluff** activities- with the children guessing what the objects are. There are three definitions shown on the back of the picture cards, which should be read out by the adult to the children, so that they can guess which is the correct one. The correct answer is noted with a sticker. The children should investigate the object together rather than just guess from the picture card.

2. **Finding the objects** using written description cards and answering questions about them with follow up discussion. The adults leading each group will need to use the questions on the '**Looking at an object**' sheet and they may find it useful to have the picture notes about the objects handy for themselves or look up the answers with the children once each object has been investigated. These are all on the table and have been included in your pre-pack. **It is essential that they have read these notes and feel comfortable using some of the questions before the trip.**

The **Lighting** table is slightly different with observational drawing activities to help the

children get to know their objects.

The whole idea behind the session is not to just look at what the objects are, but for the children to use historical enquiry. We strongly recommend briefing your adults carefully on all of the above as this help the session greatly.

The extra servant skills that the children get to practice at each group are:

Cooking Laying a table.
Washing Sewing on a button.
Cleaning Polishing the silver cutlery
Lighting Laying a fire

Before the children begin please talk to them about the safest way to handle objects. The objects are very old and so very special!

- Always use two hands
- Never carry an object round the room
- Some of them are very heavy so let an adult leader pick them up.
- They are all breakable, even if they look strong!
- If the children are drawing the objects, they must be careful not to get pencil marks or crayon on them.

As an alternative way of presenting this session you may take on the role of the head servant introducing the elements of the session and the safe handling, with the children and adults in role as well.

A suggested start would be:

"Welcome to Tullie House my name is...and I run this house for Mr and Mrs Dixon (they lived in Tullie House during the Victorian era). Today I am looking to hire servants to work here so you need to do some training, while I watch to see who is doing very well. The group over here will be scullery maids working under the cook and you need to get to know everything about the objects you will be working with..."

To finish

After all four rotations, ask the children to create a mini role play using their objects. Some of the group could be the servants, others could be their employers - act with the objects and explore life as a Victorian servant / employer.

Cleaning Table Instructions

We are going to test your **House Servant** skills. A House Servant has lots of jobs to do, as the comfort of the family depends on them. They need to rise early to take up the hearthrugs and sweep the breakfast room and then go to all the bedrooms and empty the slop buckets and wash bowls. A hard job is to beat the dust out of the rag rugs and carpets. This position involves a lot of elbow grease!

The first thing to do is test your knowledge, by doing the following.

- A) **'Call my bluff'** activities (clear folder)
- B) **'Find me'** cards (pink envelope)

And to test your practical skills:

- C) **Silver polishing** while the maids/footmen are seated

Remember that in the 15-20 minutes you do not have to go through every object.

Move on to the next activity when you feel appropriate – you can always return to some.

Cleaning Table Objects – not to scale

	<p>Black lead brush – black lead polish was used for polishing ranges and fireplaces. The black lead came in a block which was then ground up and mixed to a paste with water. It was then brushed on with a brush like this.</p>
	<p>Buffer – this was used to clean a range or fireplace. The metal side would be used as a scourer and the soft side could be used for polishing off the black lead.</p>
	<p>Chamber pot – most houses had outside toilets and people used chamber pots if they need to go to the toilet in the night.</p>
	<p>Slops bucket – this is used to empty the chamber pots. The contents would then be poured down an outside drain or toilet.</p>
	<p>Fire rake – this was used to rake the ashes out of the fire.</p>
	<p>Jug and bowl – no one had bathrooms upstairs. Most bedrooms had washstands with a jug and bowl. The jug was filled at night and the water used for washing in the morning. In the winter it might be frozen as no one had central heating. Rich people were luckier as servants would bring them hot water in the morning. Although most bedrooms had fireplaces the fires were only usually lit if someone was ill.</p>
	<p>Carpet beater – in Victorian homes the floors were covered with rugs instead of fitted carpets. The rugs were hung over the washing line and beaten to remove dust and dirt.</p>

Washing Table Instructions

We are going to test your **laundry servant** skills. Monday was washing day - a laundry servant washes all the clothes in the household. When the clothes are ready to be washed they go into a dolly tub full of warm water and soap is grated into it, the servant mustn't touch the water or they will hurt their hands. At times they have to turn the dolly stick 100 times!

Next the clothes need rinsing. It is good to use dolly blue as this helps to whiten the clothes. Once rinsed, the clothes will be very wet and need to be put through the mangle to squeeze the water out and then hung to dry on the line with dolly pegs.

Tuesday is ironing day and you need to get to know about all the different kinds of irons.

First to test your knowledge:

A) **'Call My Bluff' activities**

(clear folder) – remember to handle the object!

Now a practical test:

B) **Button sewing**

If there is time:

C) **Find me' cards**

Pink envelope

Remember that in the 15-20 minutes you do not have to go through every object. Move on to the next activity when you feel ready - you can always return to some.

Washing Table Objects – not to scale

	<p>Crimping irons – these irons were used to make very fine pleats in collars and cuffs. The two iron rods were heated in the fire before being put back in the rollers. The fabric was fed through whilst the handle was turned like a mangle. The children can feed a piece of paper through to see the effect.</p>
	<p>Flat iron – these were the most common types of irons in Victorian homes. They were heated on the range or over an open fire and then wiped with a cloth before use. People often had two irons so that one could be reheated whilst the other was in use. People spat on the iron to test whether it was hot enough.</p>
	<p>Lace iron – this has rounded ends which wouldn't catch in fine lace.</p>
	<p>Charcoal iron – this iron opens at the top so that hot coals or charcoal could be placed inside. There is a vent at the back to allow air in which would make the coals burn hotter.</p>
	<p>Tailor's iron – this iron is very heavy. Professional tailors or laundresses used it. Irons come in many weights. Some were much heavier than this one.</p>
	<p>Tongs – these were used to lift washing out of hot water.</p>
	<p>Iron stand – this is a homemade flatiron stand. It is made of a piece of turned wood which has iron hob nails hammered into it.</p>
	<p>Iron stand – these were used for resting hot flat irons on so that they didn't burn the table.</p>
	<p>Peg – this type of peg was made from a single piece of wood split down the middle and bound with metal. They were often sold door to door by travellers.</p>

	<p>Washboard – these were made from wood, zinc or glass. Large ones were used in dolly tubs to scrub at stubborn stains. Smaller ones could be used in sinks. Before washboards, washerwomen would pound the dirt out of clothes with a rock.</p>
	<p>Dolly stick – these were made of wood and used to agitate clothes in a dolly tub. Some housekeepers insisted that they were turned 100 times for each piece of clothing in the tub!</p>
	<p>Possor – this is a hand one but larger ones were also used. They filled with water which was then forced out through the holes as they were pumped up and down in the washing. They were a development that came after dolly sticks.</p>
	<p>Soap – this bar is from the 1940s – CWS stands for Co-operative Wholesale Society. Similar soap was used in Victorian times. It was used by grating it into the dolly tub.</p>

Lighting Table Instructions

Now we will test your **Foot Servant** skills. A Foot Servant is responsible for lighting the household lights and fires. Much work needs to be done keeping the wicks trimmed and the lamps polished.

Tallow candles are messy and smelly. As the candle burns down, the fat melts faster than the wick, so they need to be kept trimmed or snuffed out regularly. An endless job is making the candles from tallow fat. You also have to make sure that the mice don't get the candles - keep them safe inside their metal candle box.

The first thing to do is test your knowledge, by doing the following:

- A) Handle the objects using the '**Looking at an object**' sheet.

Now do the following:

- B) **Draw an object** of your choice carefully looking at all the details.

Now for the practical test:

- C) Have a try at **laying a fire** as a foot servant would have done.

Remember that in the 15-20 minutes you do not have to go through every object.

Move on to the next activity when you feel ready – you can always return to some.

Lighting Table Objects – Not to scale

	<p>Brass candle holder with tinder box – the candle stick lifts up to reveal a tinder box underneath. This would have contained a flint & steel and some tinder. The steel was struck against a flint to make a spark which then ignited the tinder. This could be used to light a taper.</p>
	<p>Candle box – these were used to store tallow candles or rush lights. Because they were made of animal fat (tallow) mice would often nibble them. The boxes were hung high up on the wall in a dry room.</p>
	<p>Candle mould – this is made of tin. You can see the holes where the wicks were inserted before melted wax was poured in.</p>
	<p>Candle snuffer – this is made of tin and had a small handle. It was used to put out candles.</p>
	<p>Paraffin lamp – during Victorian times vast reserves of oil were discovered in North America and paraffin was produced very cheaply. These lamps produced a brighter light than candles and rush lights.</p>

Cooking Table Instructions

We are going to test your scullery servant skills. All scullery servants and the cook have to be up early. The servant's job is to help prepare for breakfast for the whole family. A very important job is to set the dough for making bread. They then help to prepare the rest of the day's meals, so learning to set the table correctly is an important task.

The cooks and servants make their own butter and shape it to make it look presentable. There are lots of pieces of equipment that help the servants in the kitchen to cook things over the fire. No one should spill anything or break any crockery.

The first thing to do is test your knowledge, by doing the following:

- A) **'Call My Bluff'** activities (clear envelope)
- B) **'Find me'** cards (pink envelope)
- C) During this time 2 servants at a time can be trying to **lay the table**, which is self-checking with the photograph.

Remember that in the 15-20 minutes you do not have to go through every object. Move on to the next activity when you feel ready – you can always return to some.

Cooking Table Objects – not to scale

	<p>Bottle jack – this was used to turn joints of meat or chickens around in front of the fire. It was hung above the range and the meat hung from the hook at the bottom in front of the fire. The clockwork mechanism was then wound up with a key and the meat would rotate to cook evenly. The fat dripping off the meat could be collected to make candles.</p>
	<p>Butter pats or Scotch hands – these were used to shape home made butter and to press out the liquid (buttermilk).</p>
	<p>Butter press – many homes made their own butter. This was used inside a round wooden mould. The butter would be placed in the mould and the butter press pushed down on top to shape the butter and to press out the buttermilk.</p>
	<p>Butter warmer – the ring at the top was removed and the warmer filled with hot water. It was then placed over butter to soften it in cold weather. It could also be used to keep butter cool in warm weather.</p>
	<p>Codd bottles – named after inventor Hiram Codd. They usually held a fizzy drink like soda water or lemonade. A glass marble in the neck was forced up by the pressure of the gas to seal the bottle. A wooded top was used to push the marble down enabling the drink to be poured out.</p>
	<p>Frying pan – these heavy frying pans could be hung over an open fire or place on a range.</p>
	<p>Pot stand – this was placed in front of the range or fire. Pots and pans were placed on it to keep warm.</p>
	<p>Toaster – this is a four slice toaster. Each pair of spikes held a slice of bread. It was then placed in front of the fire to toast the bread.</p>
	<p>Wafering iron – small wafer biscuits were very popular in Victorian times and earlier. These irons were heated in the fire, the mixture was then poured in and the iron closed until the wafer was cooked.</p>

Looking at an object in a Museum

The main things to think about	Some further things to ask	Things found out
<p>Physical features What does it look and feel like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What colour is it? • What is it made of? • What does it feel like? • Is it a natural or manufactured substance? • What does it smell like? • Is the object complete? • Has it been altered, adapted, mended? • Does it look worn? 	
<p>Construction How was it made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it hand made or machine made • Was it made in a mould or pieces. • How has it been fixed together? 	
<p>Function What was it made for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the object been used? • Has the use changed? 	
<p>Design Is it well designed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does it do the job it was made for? • Were the best materials used? • Is it decorated? • Do you like the way it looks? • Would other people like it? 	
<p>Value What is it worth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the people who made it? • To the people who used it? • To the people who keep it? • To you? • To a bank? • To a museum 	

Life as a Victorian Servant: Background Notes

Housemaids

The duties of the housemaid were numerous and many of the comforts of the family depended on their performance.

In all families servants would find it an advantage to rise early. The first duty of the housemaid was to open the shutters and take up the hearthrugs of those rooms she was going to do *before* breakfast. She then swept the breakfast room and laid a cloth over the carpet in front of the stove and on this placed her housemaid's box. The housemaid's box needed to be kept well stocked. It contained things like black lead, brushes, leathers, emery paper and cloth – all the things necessary for cleaning a grate. The cinder pail sat on the other side and she would then sweep the ashes and deposit them in the pail. She would then black the grate.

The housemaid then laid the fire. When several fires were lit she continued with her dusting and polishing in the breakfast room. Before sweeping the carpet it was good practice to sprinkle it with tea leaves to make it smell nice. In summer the work was slightly easier as the fire would not be lit as often, although the yearly spring clean created lots more work instead!

After breakfast the housemaid swept the drawing room and carried out the same cleaning duties as in the breakfast room, including laying down the cloth in front of the fire.

After this the housemaid usually did the bedrooms but also emptied the slops and the water jugs for washing. Next followed bed making. Once a week the bedroom was more thoroughly cleaned. Anything that had been used with water was cleaned with a little soda and soap. Furniture would be polished as appropriate.

Plates, glasses and silver ware would also be cleaned regularly. A special powder called hartshorn was used for cleaning the silver. This is ammonium bicarbonate – a bit like baking soda!

Laundry

In a big house like Tullie House, the laundry maid had a very important job as she would be in charge of the washing for the whole house and everybody in it.

The laundry maid would start her duties on a Monday morning. The most soiled clothes were placed straight into the copper boiler and heated. Hot water was poured into a dolly tub, which was usually made of wood or zinc, and then soap was grated into the water. Many homes made their own soap from tallow or animal fat boiled with soda and sweet smelling herbs.

A wooden dolly peg was used to agitate the clothes. Later a posser was more common, which typically had a wooden handle and dome shaped copper base with holes in, which sucked the water through the clothes. Some housekeepers insisted that the dolly peg was turned 100 times for each item of clothing. Badly stained clothing was scrubbed on a washboard. These were made of wood, zinc or glass.

When the clothes were clean they were rinsed in a separate tub containing cold water. They usually went through two rinses, with the dolly blue added to the final rinse. Dolly Blue was a fine blue powder in a small muslin bag; a small amount made the clothes look sparkling white, too much would turn them blue. (Dolly Blue was made from synthetic ultramarine dye and baking soda). Next the clothes were put through a mangle – buttons would break if they were put through the rollers so clothes with buttons couldn't be mangled or the buttons were taken off and sewn back on again.

Washing was usually dried outside on a washing line. If the weather was wet it would be hung over rails suspended from the kitchen ceiling or a clothes rack placed near the kitchen range.

Lighting

This is a brief history of lighting – all of the objects on the table are Victorian items linked to lighting but this gives an idea of how they came about.

As soon as man discovered fire he had found how to make artificial light. The very early people split lengths of resinous fir to make an effective torch. The long splinter was held or wedged into a forked stick or cleft in a rock. Oak wood dug up from peat bogs burnt well too. Archaeologists excavating Stone Age sites have found stones with a blackened dip in them suggesting that they were used as oil lamps. Shells also made a natural lamp. Animal fat or fish oil was burnt using a wick of rush or chewed twig.

Candlesticks were used in Roman times. Rush lights and pottery lamps as well as the simple iron and tin cresset lamps were also used.

Tallow candles were made from animal fat. They gave a better light than rush lights, although they were messy and smelly. As the candle burnt down the fat would melt faster than the wick and so the wick needed to be cut off every few minutes or snuffed with candlesnuffers.

Mice were very fond of tallow candles so they were always hung up or kept in a tin or wooden candle box. Dip candles were made by repeatedly dipping the wick in melted tallow and cooled. They were slow to make so candle moulds were invented to make more at once.

During the 18th century the tinderbox was introduced. This contained a steel strike, some flint and tinder (cotton rag, straw or bark). The steel was struck against a flint to produce a spark, which fell on to the tinder making it smolder. As soon as the spark fell on the dry tinder it was used to light a sulphur match, which ignited.

Cooking

The cook was the head of the kitchen. In the many households where only a cook and housemaid were kept, it was the general custom that the cook should be in charge of the dining room. The hall, the lamps and the doorstep were all her responsibility.

The cook must be up early. Her first duty was to set her dough for the breakfast rolls. She would then go to the breakfast room where she would prepare for breakfast, thoroughly rinsing the kettle and putting it on the fire to boil. The cleaning of the kitchen, pantry and passages had to be over before breakfast. By the time the cook had done all this, the breakfast bell would ring and breakfast be brought into the parlour. She would then have lots of smaller tasks to do until the time came for dinner preparations to be made for the whole family. She would also open the door to visitors at this hour, as they would likely be people like tradesmen who she would need to see.

It is in the preparation of dinner that the cook would begin to feel the weight of her responsibilities, as she had to take on all the dressing and serving of the main dishes. While those were cooking she would be busy with things like pastry gravy stocks etc. The vegetables and the sauces must be ready with the dishes they were to accompany and when the dinner hour arrived it was the duty of the cook to dish up the dish without any accidents.