

VICTORIAN SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINE

for KS2 students (Led by your own staff)

Option 1

Location: Ballyveridagh National School or Ballydown National School in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum.

Please ensure you contact the Learning Centre in advance to book your visit and venue.

Equipment in school house may include: Slates and chalk for younger students; smocks for girls; a range of games for the playground area such as stilts, skipping ropes and hoops. (There may also be access to a cane and a school bell).

Teachers and children may wish to dress in costume before arrival. See 'Ideas for Victorian costume' in the resources section of the website.

If your group arrives early for school, children can play in their own playgrounds, boys in one area and girls in another.

When the teacher (own staff member) comes out and rings the bell, the children must line up – boys and girls separately. As they enter the school house, they must present the teacher with a piece of turf and they will be seated near to the fire or further away, according to the size of the piece they bring. Boys and girls are seated separately in the classroom.

Inform the pupils that any talking, bad manners or misbehaviour was not tolerated. Offenders would have been caned, strapped or made to stand in the corner or in the turf shed (you may explain this but modify for today's children). Other suggested rules are available at the bottom of this document.

Write a poem on blackboard to be recited by class:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vale and hill
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze

William Wordsworth

Art: Take a sample plant or branch into the classroom for the children to draw on slates with chalk. Compare drawings.

Arithmetic: Three and Six times tables, or suitable alternative, to be recited by children while seated at desks.

Writing: Copy script on Vere Foster copy sheets for senior students. Neatness in hand writing is imperative.

Drill: Children must begin with correct posture – hips firm and feet together.

1. Bring hands to touch shoulders – then hands stretch to the ceiling – repeat counting to eight
2. Turn head to the left, then roll head backwards. Turn head to the right and roll head forwards all with slow, careful movements (making a full circle) - repeat
3. Heels raise, then lowered - repeat
4. Knees bent, then straightened arms outstretched in front of body – repeat
5. Hands on waist, twist to the right, then to the front and then to the left - repeat
6. Stand at ease

Spellings: Pupils to be tested aurally with words such as: School, Discipline, Children, Gentle, Obey, Respect, Mild and Education.

Pupils must raise hands quietly if they wish to answer a question.

Class dismissed.

There may follow a relaxed discussion about the experience.

Additional rules

Pupils must stand up to answer questions and wait for permission to speak

Pupils must call teachers "Sir" or "Ma'am"

Pupils must stand when an adult enters the room

Talking and fidgeting will be punished

Pupils must use the right hand at all times for writing

Discussion points

- (Depending on school house used) Ask the children to note the height of the windows? Why were they so high?
- How did they feel about boys and girls playing and sitting separately? (In some cases schoolhouses had their own separate entrances for each gender).
- A lot of teaching involved writing down from the blackboard, repetition and rote learning. Would children today prefer this style of learning?
- What do the students think of the 'cane' as a form of punishment?
- In Victorian times teachers were often considered to be strict and very scary. All sorts of things might be punished: being late, rudeness, answering back, speaking out of turn, poor work etc. How do the students feel they would have coped and behaved in that period?
- How do the students feel about their location in relation to the fire? Do they believe it was a fair system for students to be placed according to the size of turf they brought? What about those children that couldn't bring turf?

Other things to consider

Equipment in the school house eg writing implements, abacus, tacks in the floor of Ballydown National School

Lack of wall charts

Blackboards

Half-timers

Heating

Lessons

Handwriting

Playground games

Phrases relating to school times – ‘blot your copybook’ and ‘toeing the line’ Other Victorian poets and poems

Examples of arithmetic for the blackboard

What is $742+64+8+341+804+60+642+790+806$ equal to?

What is $7260+1404+8496+2413+46+4786+3326$ equal to?

How many do 67 and 79 and 93 and 104 and 65 make?

I gave John 12 apples, James 15, Patrick 20 and I had still 25 remaining; how many apples had I at first?

A man walked 26 miles on Monday, 34 on Tuesday, 46 on Wednesday, 37 on Thursday; on Friday being unable to walk, he procured a horse and rode 41 miles; and completed his journey on Saturday, having travelled that day 67 miles; how many miles did he travel during the week?

Ireland is about 300 miles in length and 170 miles in breadth; how much greater is the length than the breadth?

On an apple tree there were 165 apples. The wind blew off two dozen and a half; how many were left on the tree?

Sir Issac Newton was born in A.D. 1642, and died 1727; how old was he when he died?

A man who had £1000 in the bank withdrew £450.25; how much has he there now?

Poems

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: -
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

William Wordsworth

The Spider and the Fly

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly;
"Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things to show when you are there."
"O no, no," said the little fly, "to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the spider to the fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in."
"O no, no," said the little fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They *never, never wake* again, who sleep upon *your* bed."

Said the cunning spider to the fly, "Dear friend, what shall I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome; will you please to take a slice?"
"O no, no," said the little fly, "kind sir, that cannot be;
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see."

"Sweet creature!" said the spider, "You're witty and you're wise!
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning *now*, I'll call *another* day."

The spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon be back again:
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing
"Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with the pearl and silver wing:
Your robes are green and purple; there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead."

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little fly,
Hearing his wily flattering words, came slowly flitting by.
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head — *poor foolish thing!* At last,
Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour; but she ne'er came out again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed;
Unto an evil counsellor close heart, and ear, and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the Spider and the Fly.

Mary Howitt

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