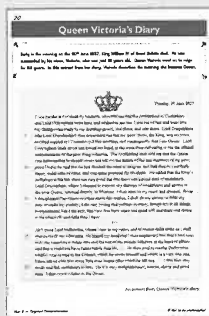


Queen Victoria's Diary



Question Book:
Year 6, pages 20-21

Author / Source:
Queen Victoria

Genre:
Non-fiction — diary

Cross-curricular links:

- History (sources)

Introduction

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was the only child of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, the fourth son of King George III. As her three uncles had no legitimate children, Victoria was heir to the British throne. When the last of her uncles, King William IV, died on 20th June 1837, Victoria became Queen. Throughout her life, Victoria kept a detailed diary, and this extract offers a first-hand account of the day when, aged just 18, she inherited the throne. Before pupils read the diary extract, ensure that they are aware of its historical context. It may be helpful to explain that Victoria knew that King William was seriously ill, and that she would inherit the throne on his death.

Answers

1. E.g. died; passed away
2. E.g. told; informed; notified
3. E.g. Because the Queen wanted him to describe the King's last moments to Victoria.
4. the role of queen
5. E.g. Her "good will" and her desire to do the right thing.
6. E.g. Victoria likes and trusts Lord Melbourne because she thinks that he is "a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man".
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. She felt sad because her uncle had died. She also felt very calm — her description is very matter-of-fact, and it doesn't suggest strong emotions like surprise or excitement.

Extra Activities

- With the whole class, discuss Victoria's response to the news that she had become queen. Ask pupils to identify the feelings that Victoria puts across in her diary, and to explain whether they find any aspects of her response surprising.
- Ask pupils to imagine how they would feel if, like Victoria, they were woken early in the morning and told that they had become king or queen. Pupils should write a diary entry describing their feelings.
- Some of the language in Queen Victoria's diary seems old-fashioned to the modern reader. Get pupils to work through the extract, updating old-fashioned language with appropriate modern-day equivalents.
- The extract ends "I then wrote a letter to the Queen". With the whole class, discuss what Victoria may have included in this letter, and then ask pupils to write Victoria's letter to the Queen.
- This diary extract is an important primary source for Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Ask pupils to suggest other sources, both historical and modern, that they could use to find out more about Victoria's accession and coronation. Explain the concept of primary and secondary sources, and ask pupils to categorise the sources they have suggested as either primary or secondary.

