

## TODAY YOU WILL...

- > LOOK AT WHAT A VICTORIAN STREET WOULD BE LIKE.
- > UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF STREET JOBS THERE WERE DURING THIS TIME.
- > START TO PRODUCE AN EMPATHETIC PIECE OF CREATIVE WRITING ABOUT A VICTORIAN STREET SCENE.

As curriculum leader for history at a secondary school in Hampshire, I often find students are entering school without the required levels of literacy. In order to address this, I decided to develop a new KS3 unit, History Through Literacy, which is now the first topic our new Y7s study in history – helping them to improve their literacy across the curriculum, right from the start of their secondary school career.

The whole unit is based around the fictional story 'Street Child' by Berlie Doherty. The lessons our students have within this unit range from spellings, constructing lengthy pieces of written work using the burger technique, to interpretation of Victorian school rooms. This lesson, however, is called *Street Cries! Street Life in Victorian London* and bases itself on Chapter 12 in 'Street Child' – although it could easily be taught without making any reference to the book (and in an English lesson as well as in history).

Through looking at the novel and other primary and secondary sources, students examine what street life would have been like in Victorian London, specifically focusing on different street jobs. After collecting relevant evidence, there is a literacy opportunity to write a piece of empathetic writing; their own depiction of a typical street scene in Victorian London.

### STARTER ACTIVITY

On the board will be an extract from an old piece of text (see below). Ask the class to read the text and think about what the lesson might be on today.

*Hark! How the cries in every street  
Make the lanes and allies ring:*

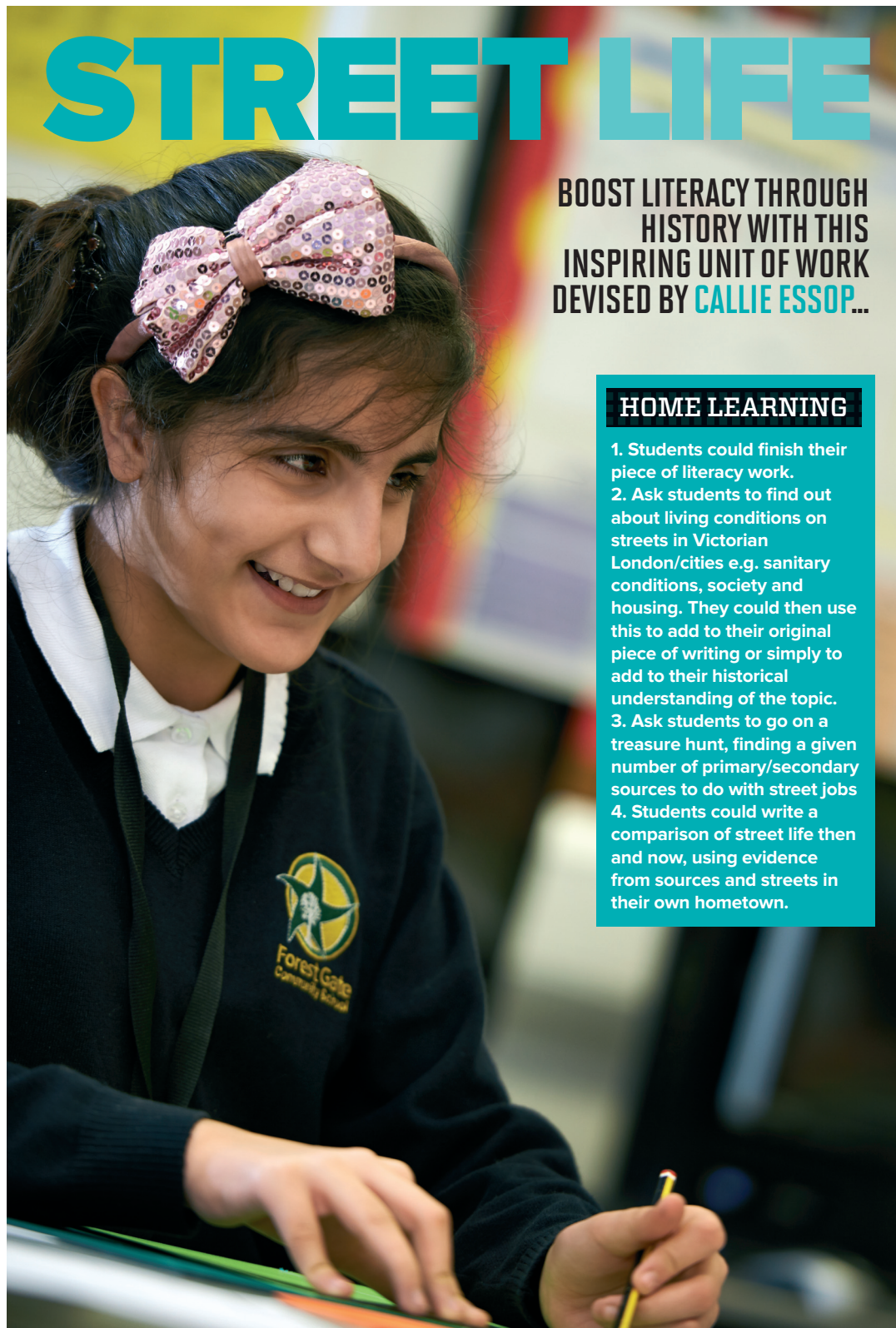
*With their goods and ware, both  
nice and rare,  
All in a pleasant lofty strain;  
Come buy my gudgeons fine  
and new.  
Old cloaths to change for  
earthen ware,  
Come taste and try before you buy.  
Here's dainty poplin pears.  
Diddle diddle diddle dumplings, ho!*

*With walnuts nice and brown  
Let none despise the merry,  
merry cries  
Of famous London town.*

(Source: A History of the Cries of London: Ancient and Modern by Charles Hindle)

The first answers will be along the

lines of 'poems' or 'old text' so it may require you to push a little further and instruct them to focus on the content of the text and not it being a text in general. Once they begin answering with things like, 'markets' or 'sellers', you can begin to explain what the lesson is on (and breathe a deep sigh of relief!)



# STREET LIFE

BOOST LITERACY THROUGH HISTORY WITH THIS INSPIRING UNIT OF WORK DEVISED BY **CALLIE ESSOP...**

### HOME LEARNING

1. Students could finish their piece of literacy work.
2. Ask students to find out about living conditions on streets in Victorian London/cities e.g. sanitary conditions, society and housing. They could then use this to add to their original piece of writing or simply to add to their historical understanding of the topic.
3. Ask students to go on a treasure hunt, finding a given number of primary/secondary sources to do with street jobs
4. Students could write a comparison of street life then and now, using evidence from sources and streets in their own hometown.



## MAIN ACTIVITIES

All work can be completed on a 'senses sheet' – an A3 worksheet split into four sections: sights, sounds, actions and smells.

**Contextual knowledge:** The students will have been asked to read chapter 12 of 'Street Child'; the lesson should begin, then, with a brief group discussion to establish that everyone is familiar with the narrative.

**Literacy link:** Ask the class if they can think of any other books that could teach us something about children living Victorian street life. At this point there should be one or two correct answers, almost certainly including *Oliver Twist* – you can then say that you will

come back to *Oliver Twist* later on in the lesson.

**Primary sources:** This activity uses a selection of photographs from 1877, which depict a variety of London street vendors (these are easily found online). Before you begin looking at them, ask the class what kind of source these photographs are – hopefully they will say 'primary' very enthusiastically! Give each table a pack of these photographs with no titles or descriptions and ask them to a) decipher what job each one shows b) write relevant observations onto their sheet e.g. the smell of shoe polish or the noise of the street cries. I would allow about ten minutes on this part of the activity, depending on the ability level of the group. When time is up, join together as a

class again and ask for feedback.

**Secondary source:** The students are now going to use a secondary source to gather more information about street jobs. This time, ask them how we can use music and songs to learn about things in history. Make reference to the brief discussion about *Oliver Twist* that you had earlier, and explain you are going to play the song 'Who Will Buy' from the musical version. You may like to give a copy of the lyrics to each student so they can follow it as the song plays. When the song has finished, ask students to add more notes to their senses sheet. Now ask for verbal feedback; what is the song about? What are they selling? What methods are they using to attract attention? What have you added to your senses sheet?

**Literacy Activity:** students will now use all the evidence from the previous activities, and write a piece of empathetic writing, describing their interpretation of a Victorian street scene. This is a great opportunity to assess how much they have learnt, as well as their developing literacy skills. Students can be given success criteria e.g. empathy, imaginative, using evidence from senses sheet and spelling and grammar. If you choose to make this an assessed piece of work, as I did, you might also like to show them the levelled marking criteria. For low ability sets you could provide sentence starters or a writing structure to help them lay out their piece of work.

## SUMMARY

**Peer Assessment:** Once your learners have completed this piece of work (which could take more than one lesson), you might like to carry out some peer assessment whereby they all swap work, and using the criteria from earlier, mark each other's writing.

Remind students of the two key themes of the lesson: What were London streets like during the Victorian times and what street jobs would there have been? All students should now be able to describe a London street, making reference to the different street jobs we saw earlier and taking evidence from the senses sheet.

**London Life Bingo:** I find this is a great way to bring a lesson to a close, as well as assessing whether students have achieved the Learning Goals set at the start. For this topic, students will be given a selection of 12 words from the lesson e.g. fishmonger, dealer, shoe shine etc. Ask the students to draw a 3x3 grid in their books (or provide one for them to save time) and choose 6 of the 12 words to write into their grid. You then remove the list of words from the board and begin by saying a description of one of the words. If they think you have described one of their six words, they can cross it off their grid. The winner is the first person to cross all six of their words and shout 'LONDON LIFE'.

## INFORMATION CORNER

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Callie Essop is Curriculum Leader of History at Harrow Way Community School in Hampshire. She is excited about the new KS3 History Through Literacy unit and hopes it has the desired effect on her students now and in the future.

### STRETCH THEM FURTHER

To take this lesson further, you could provide students with even more sources. You might like to use extracts from other books about street cries and documentaries on life in Victorian England or primary sources like artists' impressions or sections of a health and safety reporter from the time. Students could spend several lessons gathering evidence before using it for literacy activity. You might like to introduce an ICT lesson involving personal mobile devices and give students the opportunity actually to find the sources themselves.

