

# History: the 19<sup>th</sup> century



## The Victorian Age 1837-1901

**Victoria** became queen in 1837 at the age of 18 when her uncle, William VI, died.

In 1838, the *Chartists*, a movement popular among workers, asked for social reforms. In the same year, slavery was abolished in the British Empire.

What followed was a series of reforms: vaccination for the poor in 1840, the *Ten Hour Act* in 1847 (women and children could work no more than 10 hours a day), the *Public Health Act* in 1848 to reduce death rates, and the *Common Lodging Houses and Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act* in 1851 to prevent squalor and clean towns devastated by cholera and tuberculosis.

Prince Albert, Victoria's husband, gave impulse to the *Great Exhibition* in 1851, which was attended by six million people.

In 1861, Prince Albert, who had been his wife's guiding force especially on the subject of reforms, died at the age of 42 and Victoria started a period of mourning and withdrawal from public life.

However, reforms continued to extend the right of vote and reduce children's exploitation.

The *British Empire* widely expanded during the Victorian Age: it included Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. After the Indian Mutiny in 1857, India came under direct British rule and queen Victoria became Empress of India in 1876.

Between 1880 and 1890 there was a growing interest for Africa and this led to the Boer Wars (1899-1902) with the Dutch for the control of South Africa.

In 1882, Britain took over Egypt to protect its routes to India through the Suez Canal.

Victoria died in 1901 after she had set the example of a hard-working monarchy and head of state above party politics.



Queen Victoria and Prince Albert



## The Conquest of the West and the Indian Wars 1803-1890



The *Conquest of the West* started in 1803, when the American government bought from France the territory between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains. Texas was annexed in 1845 and, by the Oregon Treaty – the Oregon Trail was the most common route to go West, in 1846 the Union reached the Pacific Coast. In 1848, with the Gold Rush, large groups of people moved to California.

In the 1840s and 1850s many people moved West and, in 1862, by the Homestead Act, free land was given to citizens who agreed to live and work there for a few years.

The *Indian Wars* started when the settlers arrived to occupy the territories where Native Americans lived. The most important and final battles were the battle of Little Big Horn in 1877, when Chief Joseph had to surrender, the defeat of Geronimo in 1886 and the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, when Big Foot's band was destroyed by the US Army.

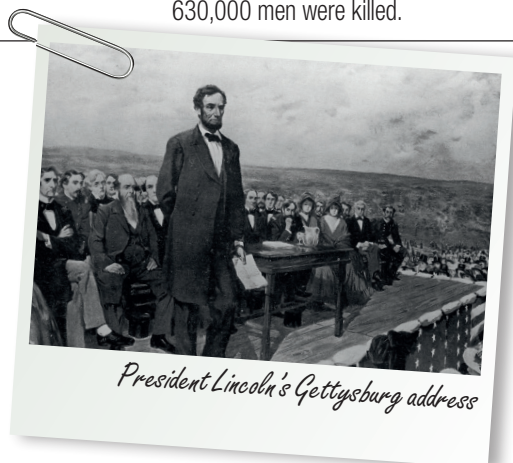
## American Civil War 1861-1865

In 1860 **Abraham Lincoln**, who was against slavery, became the President of the US. Eleven southern states, which supported slavery, left the Union and formed their own Confederacy with Richmond, Virginia, as the capital.

The conflict started in 1861 and lasted for 4 years until the Confederacy was defeated and general Robert E. Lee surrendered to general Ulysses S. Grant of the Union.

In 1863 President Lincoln made slavery illegal in the Confederacy and 4 million slaves were set free in 1865. Many of them joined the Union and in 1866 an army of black soldiers, called Buffalo Soldiers, was born.

Most battles were fought in the South and 630,000 men were killed.



President Lincoln's Gettysburg address



**1** Read the documents and decide if these statements are *true* or *false*.

**Doc 1: Victoria and Albert**

The marriage between the two first cousins – the young Queen and the clever, handsome German prince – was a love match. Over 17 years, nine children were born: four boys and five girls. Paintings and photographs projected an image of a virtuous, devoted young couple surrounded by obedient, fair-haired children. Though sexually infatuated, the young couple were locked into a power struggle. Albert took over more and more of Victoria's work as queen as her pregnancies forced her to step aside. Victoria was conflicted: she admired her "angel" for his talents and ability, but she deeply resented being robbed of her powers as queen. There were terrible rows and Albert was terrified by Victoria's temper tantrums. While she stormed around the palace, he was reduced to putting notes under her door.

*Adapted from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-20782442>*

**Doc 2: Victoria's male companions**

There were few men whom Victoria saw with any regularity during her early years. One man she did see regularly was her mother's closest advisor, the ambitious Sir John Conroy. Victoria's hatred of this man and his manipulations was deep-seated and permanent. Her Uncle Leopold, however, functioned as a steady, although ultimately remote, father-figure for Victoria throughout her girlhood. Victoria delighted in the visits that various male cousins from her mother's side of the family would occasionally make. Her first cousins Ernest and Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha travelled to London with their father (another brother of the Duchess of Kent) to help Victoria celebrate her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. The studious Albert, who would later captivate Victoria and turn her attentions from her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was a rather dull guest for the lively Victoria at this time.

*Adapted from: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/queen\\_victoria\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/queen_victoria_01.shtml)*

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|---|---|
| 1. Victoria and Albert married for love. ....             | 5. Albert used to write love notes for Victoria. ....           |
| 2. Victoria and Albert had five boys and four girls. .... | 6. King Leopold was like a distant father for Victoria. ....    |
| 3. Victoria appreciated Albert's help. ....               | 7. Victoria enjoyed Albert and Ernest's visits. ....            |
| 4. Victoria suffered from nervous breakdowns. ....        | 8. It was love at first sight between Albert and Victoria. .... |



**2** Listen to an extract comparing Union and Confederate soldiers and take note of their features and what they had in common.



**3** Listen to Lincoln's Gettysburg speech and complete the text with the missing parts.

*In November 1863 with his eloquent speech, President Lincoln transformed the cause of the Union into a struggle for liberty and equality.*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men **1**. ..... Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated,

**2**. ..... We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who **3**. ..... that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men, **4**. ....., who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, **5**. ....., but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated

**6**. ..... remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that

**7**. ..... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, **8**. .....