

# Europeana Learning Scenario

## Title

19<sup>th</sup> century London street life

## Author

Daniela Bunea

## Abstract

Research and imagination have joined forces in my classroom when my students of English as a Foreign Language (B2 level on the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) and I worked on a learning unit focused on street life in Victorian London. My main aim was boosting literacy through history. We started by researching what street life was like in 19th century London using knowledge from Ubisoft's game *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*, items found on Europeana and elsewhere, background/setting information from books such as Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, and finished with producing pieces of descriptive writing: students' own depiction of a typical street scene in Victorian London.

## Keywords

history, awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, empathy

## Table of summary

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<b>Subjects</b>	English as a Foreign Language, History
<b>Topic</b>	Victorian London
<b>Age of students</b>	18
<b>Preparation time</b>	4 hours
<b>Teaching time</b>	3 classes of 50 minutes
<b>Online teaching material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Street Life in 19th Century Victorian London - A Photo Documentary of Hard Lives": <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNqnlFoTHYo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNqnlFoTHYo</a>;</li> <li>- "Assassin's Creed Syndicate": <a href="https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/assassins-creed/syndicate">https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/assassins-creed/syndicate</a>, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTBbwgsyxvg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTBbwgsyxvg</a>;</li> <li>- "Who Will Buy?": <a href="https://kas-shopfittings.co.uk/blogs/news/who-will-buy">https://kas-shopfittings.co.uk/blogs/news/who-will-buy</a>, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcH1bj53aE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcH1bj53aE</a>;</li> <li>- "Victorian Children": <a href="http://www.theinitialjourney.com/life-issues/victorian-children/">http://www.theinitialjourney.com/life-issues/victorian-children/</a>;</li> <li>- "What were the streets like during the Victorian era?": <a href="https://www.funkidslive.com/learn/really/what-were-the-streets-like-during-the-victorian-era-find-out-about-pick-pockets-gong-scourers-and-more/">https://www.funkidslive.com/learn/really/what-were-the-streets-like-during-the-victorian-era-find-out-about-pick-pockets-gong-scourers-and-more/</a>;</li> <li>- "What was life like for children in Victorian London?": <a href="https://expydoc.com/doc/968209/what-was-life-like-for-children-in-victorian-london">https://expydoc.com/doc/968209/what-was-life-like-for-children-in-victorian-london</a></li> </ul>



	<p>- “Escaping the workhouse: the Victorian war on child poverty”:  <a href="https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/escaping-the-workhouse-the-victorian-war-on-child-poverty/">https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/escaping-the-workhouse-the-victorian-war-on-child-poverty/</a>;</p> <p>- The Crossing Sweeper:  <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crossing_Sweeper#/media/File:TheCrossingSweeper.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crossing_Sweeper#/media/File:TheCrossingSweeper.jpg</a>            William Frith 1858, Public Domain</p> <p>- Little Flower Sellers:  <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augustus_Edwin_Mulready._Little_Flower_Sellers.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augustus_Edwin_Mulready._Little_Flower_Sellers.jpg</a>            Augustus Edwin Mulready, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons;</p> <p>- Farmer’s Market: <a href="https://villavauban.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PvS-March---HR-1239x1600.jpg">https://villavauban.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PvS-March---HR-1239x1600.jpg</a> Petrus van Schendel</p> <p>- Europeana: <a href="https://www.europeana.eu/en">https://www.europeana.eu/en</a>.</p>
Offline teaching material	Paper, pen.
Europeana resources used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Learning</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Italian Street Musicians</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Dwellings of the poor</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">The Changing Year</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Children Arrested for Begging</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Man smoking an opium pipe</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Boardman</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Canal Workers</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Flower Women</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Shoe-Black</a>;</li> <li>- <a href="#">Shellfish Seller</a>.</li> </ul>

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### Integration into the curriculum

The topic DAILY ACTIVITIES is part of the national curriculum for Foreign Languages.

### Aim of the lesson

By the end of the lesson, students will have:

- looked at what a Victorian street was like;
- understood the different types of street jobs there were during Victorian time;
- produced a piece of descriptive writing about a Victorian street scene.

**Outcome of the lesson**

The piece of descriptive writing about a Victorian street scene.

**Trends**

- project-based learning – students solve task-based tasks and work in pairs/triads/groups;
- mobile teaching and learning – access to knowledge is granted through smartphones and/or tablets – teaching/learning happens anytime, anywhere;
- peer learning – students learn from peers and give each other feedback;
- visual search and learning – images and multimedia are at least as powerful as verbal stimuli;
- BYOD – students and teacher bring and use their own mobile devices to/in the classroom.

**Key competences**

- Literacy competence
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

**Activities:**

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
KICK-OFF	<p>Students watch parts of the cinematic trailer for Ubisoft’s game <i>Assassin’s Creed Syndicate</i>: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTBbwgsyxvg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTBbwgsyxvg</a>. Sitting in front of a console or computer to play games can teach a lot. Many video games are set in historic time periods, and young people can learn many facts and details without realising it. By playing history-related games, teenagers may even discover a new period of history that they like, which can trigger a search for more information from a library or other media source. The Ubisoft’s <i>Assassin’s Creed Syndicate</i> (2015) is a historical action-adventure game that takes place in London in 1868, at the gates of the modern age. The visual 19th century London is a city of extreme contrasts and contradictions: its people are divided between the very rich and the desperately poor; the splendours and colours of Palace Buckingham’s gardens and the majesty of the architecture reveal opulence and pomp, while the workhouses and smoke-spewing factories expose deprivation and poverty. This visually stunning setting makes room for great playing opportunities; players boldly immerse in it, and relentlessly follow the charismatic and rebellious heroes throughout the famous streets of the old</p>	15’

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
	<p>English capital. <i>Syndicate</i>'s London is beautiful, breathtaking in its scope and design and (for the most part) runs at a smooth 30 frames per second. It feels like stepping 150 years into the past. One can have fun simply by riding around on one of London's trains and gazing out over the game's living, breathing city. Or – and genuine players do it – navigate across moving vehicles to track down enemies or escape after a daring raid, hijack carriages to engage in a no-holds-barred street race, and blaze damage aboard steamboats along the River Thames. It is a colourful, saturated world, harsh and literally dark so as to be coherent for the game's adventures. A bleak and gloomy, mysterious and polluted, smoggy and stenchful London is brought to life in almost all of the scenes.</p>	
PRESENTATION 1	<p>But what would a 19<sup>th</sup> century London street scene look like in the morning, or at noon? Students watch Lionel Bart's song <i>Who Will Buy?</i> from the musical "Oliver" (1968) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcH1bj53aE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcH1bj53aE</a>. The hit musical was based on the 1837 novel by Charles Dickens. <i>Oliver Twist</i> was about London's 19th century criminal underworld and impoverished orphans living in the workhouse, so its transition into a 20th century musical was nothing short of a miracle. One of the greatest and most memorable scenes of the movie is <i>Who Will Buy?</i>, which shows London transforming from early morning tranquillity to the hustle-and-bustle of the era, when street traders appear selling their wares and generally speling. The scene begins with Oliver waking up feeling happy at his guardian Mr Brownlow's home, looking out on to the cobbled street below and proclaiming it is a "wonderful morning." He first notices a woman selling flowers, offering "sweet red roses" priced two for a penny. She begins to sing, advertising her flowers. Gradually, other street sellers appear joining in the song, including tradespeople selling milk, fresh strawberries and freshly-baked bread. All the street traders join in the song – knife sharpeners, policemen, maids, window cleaners, bakers, flower sellers and others are joined by teachers and school children on their way to the park. The intricately-choreographed song and dance routine involves hundreds of people, as Oliver watches in delight from his balcony. Music and songs can well be used for learning about things in history. Teacher asks comprehension questions and students take turns in answering them: What is the song about? What are the people selling? What methods are they using to attract attention?</p>	10'
PRESENTATION 2	<p>Students are asked which they would label as closer to the reality of the 19<sup>th</sup> century London: the grey universe of <i>Syndicate</i> or the colourful, romantic version of life in <i>Who will buy?</i> Students then watch the hard reality of Victorian street life for everyday people in 19th Century London told in photographs and with the genuine words of the people in them - this is an accurate documentary of everyday Victorians recorded in 1877: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNqnIFoTHYo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNqnIFoTHYo</a>. The collection was created by John Thomson and Adolphe Smith. John Thompson was a talented and influential photographer who was joined by Adolphe Smith, a journalist, in the project of photographing the street life of London. Their photos are an early</p>	25'

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
	<p>example of social and documentary photography. The descriptions really bring life to the images and paint a picture of Victorian era, in a time before moving pictures could do the same. From chimney-sweeps to flower sellers and musicians, their words allow us a mirror into the lives of people struggling to survive on the – more often than not – unforgiving streets. What is quite remarkable is that the authors were careful not to varnish their words for an audience – what they saw and heard accurately reflects their interactions with everyday people and, with ambience and sounds, genuinely immerses the reader in authentic Victorian street life.</p>	
PRESENTATION 3	<p>Students are then presented with three more pictures depicting jobs on the streets of London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century:</p> <p>*The Crossing Sweeper:  <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crossing_Sweeper#/media/File:TheCrossingSweeper.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crossing_Sweeper#/media/File:TheCrossingSweeper.jpg</a>;</p> <p>*Little Flower Sellers:  <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augustus_Edwin_Mulready._Little_Flower_Sellers.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augustus_Edwin_Mulready._Little_Flower_Sellers.jpg</a>;</p> <p>*Farmer’s Market: <a href="https://villavauban.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PvS-March---HR-1239x1600.jpg">https://villavauban.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PvS-March---HR-1239x1600.jpg</a> and listen to teacher’s descriptions of these images that use the senses to allow the viewer to imagine the moment more vividly. Crossing the street, for instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be dirty and dangerous. London’s streets were dirty because horses were used as a method of transport and they left a lot of horse manure behind. Crossing sweepers cleared the way for rich people to cross the road without dirtying their clothes.</p>	12’
NEGOTIATION & COLLABORATION	<p>Students are asked to search the Europeana site <a href="https://www.europeana.eu/en">https://www.europeana.eu/en</a> to find out more about what street life was like in Victorian London and locate similar pictures depicting street jobs in general, and street jobs done by children in particular: there were musicians, beggars, boardmen, canal workers, all sorts of sellers, black-shoes, chimney sweepers, pickpockets and many more. Teacher suggests a few images (see <a href="#">Europeana resources used</a> above).</p>	13’
INVESTIGATION, PRACTICE & COOPERATION	<p>In pairs, triads or groups, students describe the pictures using the senses worksheet (see <a href="#">Annex</a> below), with its 5 sections: sights, sounds, smells, time of day and actions. Concentrating on how what one is describing appeals to the different senses and manipulating the speed at which the action develops are always very effective and straightforward ways of painting a picture. Students decipher what job each picture shows, then jot down relevant observation in the grid provided by the teacher (e.g. the smell of shoe polish, or the noise of the street cries) and present choice findings to class.</p>	25’
PRODUCTION	<p>Each student selects one picture in their group to focus on and writes a piece of descriptive writing, which could be part of a time travel story, of an article describing a destination, of an adventure story, of a letter to a friend written by somebody visiting London and so on. Supportive questions: What does the street look like? What sounds do I hear? What can I smell? What would I touch? What would I taste? Students answer the questions taking evidence from the senses</p>	18’

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
	sheet and creatively and empathetically imagining other details. They make their descriptions as clear as possible by organising their paragraph according to space and by focusing on specific details.	
SUM-UP	Students examine, evaluate and may revise finished products – self- and peer-assessment, followed by teacher assessment.	25'
WRAP-UP	Students reflect on their learning and give feedback.	7'

### Assessment

Creations by successful students show that the authors have acquired competencies about searching and describing still images available of Europeana connected to 19<sup>th</sup> century street life in London.

\*\*\*\*\* AFTER IMPLEMENTATION \*\*\*\*\*

### Student feedback

Student feedback is given during the last learning activity, when students reflect on their learning. Sample reflective prompts:

- 1.) *Preferences:* The most interesting thing about ... was ... I prefer to work by myself on activities that ... I like working with others when ...
- 2.) *Learning style and strategies:* If I can, I try to avoid activities that ... I find it easiest to understand when ... When I don't understand something, I ...
- 3.) *Strengths:* I'm getting much better at ... One good question I asked (or thought of) during the lesson was ... One of the things I do best is ...
- 4.) *Areas in need of improvement:* I'm still not sure how to ... I need to get help with ... The part I found the most difficult was ...

### Teacher's remarks

I am proud of my students' work, and I would especially like to share the realisation of the fact that they all managed to properly evaluate the information found on the Internet, as I have been focusing our attention on this area for quite some time now and the results have started to finally come in.

### About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](http://Europeana) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 32 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet’s task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.

## Annex

The senses worksheet: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:e4815a19-9df9-3f4c-b714-324c8cbad3c1>. Preview:

Names of students: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**19TH CENTURY LONDON STREET LIFE  
-SENSES SHEET-**

	TITLE/NAME OF PICTURE	SIGHTS	SOUNDS	SMELLS	TIME OF DAY	ACTION(S)
	[street job 1]					
	[street job 2]					
	[street job 3]					
	[street job 4]					







