**Growing up in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales**

How might your life have been different if you had been born 100, 125, 150 or 175 years ago? Would you have lived to see your first birthday, and also your fifth? What chance would you have had of going to school? When might you have started work?

The answers to these questions would have differed depending on whether you were a boy or a girl, where you lived and exactly when you were born.

In this worksheet you can explore what it was like to grow up in four different places in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, using information available from the *PopulationsPast* website ([*www.populationspast.org*](http://www.populationspast.org)*)*

Let us follow 4 pairs of children and see how life would have differed for them if they had been born in 1846-51, 1876-81 and 1906-11.

Perhaps you would like to work in a team of four, each team member following one pair of children.

We can imagine that:

* Eliza and Jack were born in Wardleworth Registration Sub-district (RSD) in Rochdale Registration District (RD) in the county of Lancashire,
* Ann and Richard were born in Blaenavon RSD, Abergavenny RD in Monmouthshire,
* Mary and Henry were born in Evesham RSD, Evesham RD in Worcestershire, and
* Rose and Albert were born in St John Paddington (later Paddington South) RSD, Paddington RD in London.

Choose one pair of children - substitute their names or that of their place of birth wherever you see ‘**Eliza and Jack’** or ‘**Wardleworth**’ in the worksheet. If working in a team, each team member should follow a different pair of children

Open [www.populationspast.org](http://www.populationspast.org). Make sure the ‘Year selection tool’  has the slider set to 1851. Use the ‘Search’ box  to find Rochdale. Notice that the dropdown menu offers you the choice of Rochdale in North West England, and Rochdale in Suffolk. Eliza and Jack lived in Rochdale in the county of Lancashire, so choose Rochdale, North West England. With your mouse scroll button, or your touchpad, or using the plus ‘Zoom’ button , zoom in until you can see the Registration Sub Districts (RSD) . Look carefully to see where the town of Rochdale lies. **Eliza and Jack** were both born in **Wardleworth RSD**. In 1851, **Wardleworth** was **one of the nine RSDs in Rochdale RD**.

How many people were there per acre in this RSD in 1851? In 1881? In 1911?

You can find the answers to these questions by clicking on the ‘population density’ button on the black ‘variable selection’ panel to the right of the map. With the year selection tool slider set to 1851, hover your cursor over **Wardleworth RSD** and the ‘Value display’ box will tell you the population density for **Wardleworth RSD** in 1851. Move the year selection slider to 1881 and hover your mouse over the RSD again. The Value display box will tell you what the population density is in 1881. Move the slider to 1911 and read off the number of persons per acre in the RSD in 1911.

Copy these figures for Rochdale into Table 1 on the next page.

Hover your mouse over the words ‘Population density’ on the Variable selection panel and copy out the definition of Population density which appears in the small definition window into the space between the brackets in the table title.

(If you are working on a different pair of children, fill in the figures for their place of birth in Table 1 and in the tables that follow.)

If **Eliza and Jack** had been born in 1911 would they have found **Wardleworth** more crowded or less crowded than in 1851 or just about the same ?.............................................................. (Notice whether **Wardleworth RSD** covered the same area in 1851, 1881 and 1911. If not what effect do you think this might have had on the population density?)

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**Table 1. Population Density (………………………………………………………………………………………….)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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Still concentrating on **Wardleworth RSD,** put the year selection slider back to 1851 and click the ‘more’ arrow  next to the Fertility variable on the variable selection panel, to open up a dropdown menu. Click on the ‘Total Marital Fertility’ button.

The Total Marital Fertility Rate is an estimate of the average number of children a married woman would have had *if she married at age 20 and stayed married for the rest of her reproductive life*. In practice most women married in their later 20s or older, so the actual number of children born into each family was lower than the TMFR suggests.

How many children would a woman marrying at age 20 and staying married until her 50th birthday have had, on average, in **Wardleworth** in 1851, 1881 and 1911? Fill the values in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Total Marital Fertility Rate**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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Not every child would grow up with two parents. Very few parents divorced in the nineteenth century, but some lived separate lives and some mothers never married. It was much more common than today, however, for children to lose their mother, their father or both through death. Many would go on to have a step parent if their surviving parent remarried. How many households in **Wardleworth RSD** contained just one parent living with at least one child under the age of 15 in 1851, 1881 and 1911?

To find the answers: click the ‘less’ button  next to ‘Fertility’, and chose the ‘more’  button next to Households. Select ‘Lone parent households’ from the dropdown list. Remember to move the Year selection slider to find the figures for each year.

Fill your answers in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Proportion of lone parent households (with at least one child aged under 15)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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Next click the ‘less’ arrow  next to Households to hide the dropdown menu and then click the ‘more’  arrow next to Mortality and Health. Choose the ‘Infant Mortality Rate’ option.

Use the Year Selection tool and your mouse to discover how many children died before their first birthday out of every 1000 born in **Wardleworth RSD** in 1851, 1881 and 1911. Enter your findings in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Infant Mortality Rate (the number of children out of every 1,000 born alive who died before their first birthday)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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While the first year of life was dangerous for babies, young children in the nineteenth century aged between 1 and 5 often died from infectious diseases, lung and stomach complaints and accidents. Use the Early Childhood Mortality Rate option under ‘Mortality and Health’ in the Variable selection panel to discover how many children out of every 1000 aged between 1 and 4 in **Wardleworth RSD** went on to die before they reached their 5th birthday and enter the figures in Table 5 below.

**Table 5. Early Childhood Mortality Rate (the number of children out of every 1,000 aged 1-4 who died before their fifth birthday)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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Despite the high mortality rates, the high fertility rates meant that there were many more children as a proportion of the population in the nineteenth century than there are today.

We can divide the number of children aged less than 14 by the number of adults in the working age groups (14-64) to obtain the ‘child dependency ratio’; the number of children for every 100 persons of working age. You can find this ratio under ‘Age structure’ in the Variable selection panel. Fill in the figures for 1851, 1881 and 1911 in Table 6 below.

**Table 6. The child dependency ratio (children aged 0-13/adults aged 14-64)x100**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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If children survived, they might go to school, but this was by no means certain in the middle of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century the laws had been changed which made it compulsory for children to go to school until they reached their 13th birthday.

People filling in the census were encouraged to return a child who was in school as a ‘scholar’, but not everyone did so. Some children worked part time and went to school part time, but returned themselves as being in work rather than ‘at school’. Some children who went to what we might view as a nursery or childminder were said to be ‘scholars’ in the census. It is therefore tricky to say just how many children under the age of 13 were in ‘formal education’ using the census returns. However we can gain some idea of educational opportunities by looking at the number of school age children present in an area for every teacher living in that area. We must remember, though, that teachers may not have chosen to live in the areas where they taught the children, but travelled to work each day from a different district.

Fill in the number of children per teacher in **Wardleworth** in 1851, 1881 and 1911 in Table 7 below.

**Table 7. The number of children aged 4-13 in the RSD for every teacher living there**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | 1881 | 1911 |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |
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Finally let us look at how many children aged 10-13 in **Wardleworth RSD** were recorded as ‘being in regular employment’ in 1851, 1881 and 1911, and compare this to the proportion of the local 14-18 year olds who were in the workforce. Girls and boys were not always equally likely to be out at work, so they are separated in the tables below.

**Table 8. The number of children in every 100 aged 10-13 who were in employment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | | 1881 | | 1911 | |
|  | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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In **Wardleworth** were boys age 10-13 more likely to be in employment than girls of the same age?........................

**Table 9. The number of children in every 100 aged 14-18 who were in employment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1851 | | 1881 | | 1911 | |
|  | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Wardleworth, Rochdale |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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In Wardleworth were boys aged 14-18 more likely to be in employment than girls of the same age?........................

Having learnt all these facts about growing up in **Wardleworth RSD** what type of place do you think it was? A town/in the country? Healthy/unhealthy? Industrial/not industrial?

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**Table 10. Type of place**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Type of place |
| Wardleworth RSD |  |
| Blaenavon RSD |  |
| Evesham RSD |  |
| Kensington St John Paddington/ Paddington South RSD |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

What is the definition of this type of place?

Click on the ‘more information’ icon  next to the ‘type of place’ variable to see the definition of this type of place.

Copy the definition here:………………………………………………………………………………………………. ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Once you have filled in all the answers about **Wardleworth RSD** and the other members of your team have answered all the questions for the children they were following in different places, swap your answers so that you can complete the tables for as many of the four places as possible.

Finally use the *PopulationsPast* website to locate where you live today. Choose the RSD in which you would have been registered in the census of 1851 and fill in the details for this RSD in one of blank rows in the tables above. If the members of your team live in different RSDs agree on which one to work on or, if you can’t decide, look at the RSD in which your school is located. (You can always do your ‘home’ RSD later!)

Compare and contrast the experiences of the children growing up in the places you have researched. Use the space below to write a paragraph saying where you think it would have been best to grow up, and at what time. Explain why you think this.

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**Recap:**

By completing this worksheet you have **learned how to use the *PopulationsPast* website.**

You have **compared and contrasted** the **life experiences of children growing up** in different types of locality in England and Wales during the **Victorian and Edwardian** eras.

You have looked at **health**, **employment** and **education** and seen how these might have differed from place to place, over time and between boys and girls.

It is clear that there must have been differences in lifestyles and living standards between families living in well off districts in the capital (such as that of Rose and Albert), and those living in working class districts, whether those were in the countryside (Mary and Henry) or in industrial towns where men did most of the paid work (Ann and Richard) or those where both men and women were employed (Eliza and Jack)

You have learnt about the **Total Marital Fertility Rate**, the **Infant Mortality Rate**, the **Early Childhood Mortality** **Rate** and the **Child Dependency Ratio**.

**Three further challenges**:

From your knowledge of the 1851-1911 period what other differences might you expect to find between the four areas? Can you demonstrate these using other variables on the website?

Hopefully this worksheet has made you think about how the experience of growing-up has changed since the Victorian and Edwardian eras! You might like to seek out some of the measures you explored in the worksheet for your home town today, or in the very recent past and describe the changes which the statistics suggest have taken place over the last 100-150 years. For example the datashine.org.uk website allows you to examine Lone parent households for 2011 (in the Data chooser box, choose 1. Population basics, then 2. Household type, then 3. Lone parent households).

Using the internet,can you find any old photographs of **Wardleworth or Rochdale** in the nineteenth century to show the type of house **Eliza and Jack** might have lived in? What their school might have looked like? The streets they might have walked down? The places their parents might have worked? Can you find similar photos of life today to show the contrast or the similarities between ‘then’ and ‘now’?