

Victorian Slang
Vocabulary Worksheet
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Panel Given At
Teslacon III Madison, WI Nov-Dec 2012

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Modern slang and their Victorian slang influence

modern

Victorian Slang:

Blower= A disrespectful term for a girl.

Modern Derivative:

BJ- if you don't know, your not old eno

Victorian Slang:

On the Blab: Begging by telling hardluck

Modern Derivative:

Blab: random talk, gossip, uninteresting

Victorian Slang:

Chiv/ Shiv: Knife, razor, sharpened stick

Modern Derivative:

Has not changed

Victorian Slang:

Cool: Look [at this/it]

Modern Derivative:

Cool: Interesting, awesome, intriguing

Victorian Slang:

Cop, Copper: A policeman

Modern Derivative:

Cop

Victorian Slang:

Crib: A building, house or lodging.

Modern Derivative:

Crib: your permanent or temporary place

Victorian Slang:

Don: A distinguished,expert,clever person

Modern Derivative:

Don: Title given to the leader of the Mafia

Victorian Slang:

Do Down: To beat someone badly with

Modern Derivative:

Beat Down

Victorian Slang:

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Fan: To delicately feel someone's clothi
Modern Derivative:
Fan: An Admirer

Victorian Slang:
Flash/Flashy: Show, Showy , show-off
Modern Derivative:
Flash/ Flasher: To run naked as to gain :

Victorian Slang:
Lush: An alcoholic drink. Lushington
Modern Derivative:
A Lush: Someone who drinks [wine] a l

Victorian Slang:
Mug-hunter: A street robber or footpac
Modern Derivative:
Mugger

Victorian Slang:
On the fly: While in motion or quickly
Modern Derivative:
Has not changed

Victorian Slang:
Pig: A policeman, usually a detective
Modern Derivative:
Has not changed

Victorian Slang:
Ream Swag: Highly valuable stolen arti
Modern Derivative:
Swag: A style or presentation of oneself

Victorian Slang:
Slum: (1) False, sham, a faked docume
Modern Derivative:
The Slums: ghetto

Victorian Slang:
Swell: An elegantly, or stylishly dressed
Modern Derivative:
To look swell

Victorian Slang:

Tail: Prostitute

Modern Derivative:

Chasing Tail: to run after, or hit on fem

Victorian Slang:

Drag: A street

Modern Derivative:

Has not changed

Name calling:

Thieves

Counterfeit

Bit Faker: A coiner. A counterfeiter of coins.
 Coiner: A coin counterfeiter
 Screever: A writer of fake testimonials; a forger
 Shofulman: A coiner or passer of bad money.
 Smasher: Someone who passes bad money.

Games

Sharp: A (card) swindler
 Broadsman: A card Sharper
 Magsman: An inferior cheat
 Speeler: Cheat or a gambler
 Macer: A cheat

Burglar/ breakins

Cracksman: A Burglar, a safecracker. One who cracks or breaks locks. A whole genre of thief
 Screwsman: A burglar versed in screwing
 (**Screwing: A sub-genre of Cracking; burglary by means of skeleton keys, waxin**
 Snakesman: A slightly built (boy) criminal used in burglary and housebreaking.
 Dragsman: A thief who steals from carriages.
 Snoozer: A thief that specializes in robbing hotel rooms with sleeping guests.

Pickpocket

Fine wirer: A highly skilled pickpocket
 Tooling: Skilled Pickpocket
 Toolers: Pickpockets
 Mobsman: A swindler or pickpocket, usually well-dressed. Originally one of the "Swell Mol
 Maltooler: A pickpocket who steals while riding an omnibus, esp. from women.

5 finger discount

Tea Leaf: Thief (cr)
 Prig: (1) A thief. (2) To steal
 Beef: (1) (v) Raise hue-and-cry. (2) (n) Thief. (cr) = Hot Beef! = Stop Thief!
 Gonoph: A minor thief, or small time criminal
 Mutcher: A thief who steals from drunks
 Roller: A thief who robs drunks or a prostitute who steals from her clientele.
 Palmer: Shoplifter

Stolen goods

Rampsman or Ramper: A tearaway or hoodlum
 Duffer: A seller of supposedly stolen goods. Also a Cheating Vendor or hawker.
 Duckett: A street hawker or vendor's licence.
 Patterer: Someone who earns by recitation or hawker's sales talk, esp. by hawking newspapers

Masterminds

Cash Carrier: A pimp, ponce or whore's minder.
 Haymarket Hector: Pimp, ponce or whore's minder; especially around the areas of Haymarket
 Family, the: The criminal Underworld, also Family People.
 Scurf: An exploitive employer or gang-leader
 Kidsman: An organizer of child thieves

Brass Knuckles

Nobbler: (1) One who inflicts grievous bodily harm. (2) A sharper's confederate
 Punishers: Superior nobblers. Men employed to give severe beatings
 Bludger: A violent criminal; one who is apt to use a bludgeon.
 Demander: One who gains monies through menace.

2 faced Prater: A bogus itinerate preacher
 Lurker: A criminal of all work, esp. a begger, or someone who uses a beggar's disguise.
 Buck Cabbie: A dishonest cab driver
 Bearer up: Person that robs men who have been decoyed by a woman accomplice.

The Feminine Flair

Accomplice Bonnet: A covert assistant to a Sharp (Sharp: A (card) swindler)
 Buttoner: A sharper's assistant who entices dupes. (Sharp: A (card) swindler)
 Mollisher: A woman, often a villain's mistress

Prostitute Ladybird: A Prostitute
 Toffer: A superior whore.
 Judy: A woman, specifically a prostitute
 Dollymop: A prostitute, often an amateur or a part-time street girl; a midinette.
 Roller: A thief who robs drunks or a prostitute who steals from her clientele.

Down and out Muck Snipe: A person who is "down and out"
 Mumper: Begger or scrounger
 Geger: Begger
 Shivering Jemmy: A half naked begger
 Skipper: One who sleeps in hedges and outhouses
 Kanurd: Drunk (cb)

Officials

police Rozzers: Policemen
 Miltonian: Policeman
 Crusher: A policeman
 Escop (Esclop, Eslop): Policeman (cb)
 Blue Bottle: A policeman

investigators Jack: Detective
 Nose: Informer or Spy
 Blower: Informer. Also a disrespectful term for a girl.
 Blow: Inform.

Victim Pidgeon: A victim
 Plant: A victim
 Mark: The victim

other names for people

Insults Glock: Half-wit
 Shirkster: A layabout
 Flat: A person who is flat is easily deceived.
 Mouth: (1) Blabber. (2) A Fool

females Nemmo: Woman (cb)
 Buor: A woman
 Haybag: Woman
 Twist (Twist and Twirl): Girl (cr)
 Mot: Woman, esp. the proprietress of a lodging or public house
 Lackin, Lakin: Wife

Males Toff: An elegantly, or stylishly dressed gentleman.

other people

Moucher, Moocher: A rural vagrant. A gentleman of the road.

Slang cove: A showman

Cove: A man

Jemmy: (1) Smart. (2) of Superior class. (3) an housebreaker's tool.

Lag: A convict or Ticket-of-leave man; To be sentenced to transportation or penal servitude.

Didikko: Gypsies; half breed gypsies (r). (From Didikai, a Rom contraction of Dik akai, or "

Choker: Clergyman. "Gull a choker"

Mandrake: a Homosexual

Blackleg: A person who will work, contrary to a strike. In the Colonies they are called Scabs.

Beak: Magistrate

Chavy: Child

Fancy, the: The brethren of the boxing ring.

Bruiser: A Boxer (b)

Crow: A lookout. A doctor.

Stealing & being bad in so many different ways:

- To steal
 - Knap: To steal, take or receive
 - Mizzle: Quit, Steal, or Vanish
 - Nail: Steal
 - Min: Steal
 - Prig: (1) A thief. (2) To steal
 - Vamp: To Steal or Pawn. "In for a vamp" to be jailed for stealing
 - Snowing: Stealing linen, clothes, etc, that have been hung out to dry.
 - Kinchen-lay (Kynchen-lay): Stealing from children
 - Smatter Hauling: Stealing Handkerchiefs
 - Area Diving: A method of theft that necessitates sneaking down area steps,
 - Beak-hunting: Poultry stealing
 - Blag: To steal or snatch, usually a theft, often by smash-and-grab
 - Bug hunting: Robbing, or cheating drunks. Esp. at night.
 - Buzzing: Stealing, esp. Picking Pockets.
 - Half inch: Steal (From pinch) (cr)
- Counterfeit
 - Fawney-dropping: A ruse whereby the villain pretends to find a ring (which
 - Snide pinching: Passing bad money
- Games/Cheating
 - Broadening: Cheating at cards
 - Crooked cross, to play the: To betray, swindle or cheat.
 - Gonoph: A minor thief, or small time criminal
 - Racket: Illicit occupation or tricks
 - Dumplin: A swindling game played with skittles
 - E.O.: A fairground gambling game
 - Knob: "Over and under" a fairground game used for swindling.
 - Dookin: Palmistry
- Burglar/ breakins
 - Jump: A ground floor window, or a burglary committed through such a v
 - Screwing: A sub-genre of Cracking; burglary by means of skeleton keys, v
- Pickpocket & 5 finger discount
 - Cly faking: To pick a pocket, especially of its handkerchief (for which the
 - Garrote: (v & n) A misplaced piano wire, and how it was misplaced.
 - Dipper: Pickpocket
 - Hoisting: Shoplifting
- Stolen goods
 - Christen: To remove identifying marks from, to make like new again. "C
 - Church: To remove identifying marks from, to make like new again. "Ch
 - Ding: (v & n) Throw away, pass on. Any object that has been so treated.
 - Lavender, in: (1) To be hidden from the police, (2) to be pawned, (3) to
 - Lumber: (1) Unused, or second-hand furniture. (2) To pawn. (3) To go
- Masterminds
 - Lay: A method, system or plan
 - Lurk: (1) A place of resorting to or concealment in. (2) A scheme or metho
 - Lavender, in: (1) To be hidden from the police, (2) to be pawned, (3) to
 - Ream Flash Pull: A significant heist
 - Out of twig: Unrecognized or in disguise
- Brass Knuckles
 - Dewskitch: A beating
 - Nobble: The inflicting of grievous bodily harm

Scroby: Flogging in gaol
 Scaldrum dodge: Begging by means of feigned, or self-inflicted wounds
 Shake lurk: Begging under the pretence of being a shipwrecked seaman.
 Shallow, work the: Begging while half naked.
 Glim: (1) Light or fire. (2) Begging by depicting oneself as having been l
 Griddling: Begging, peddling, or scrounging
 begging
 communication
 Chaunting: Singing; also informing
 Chaunting lay: Street singing (hopefully for money)
 Julking: Singing (as of caged songbirds)
 Puckering: Speaking in a manner that is incomprehensible to spectators
 Rothschild, to come to the: To brag and pretend to be rich.
 Know life, to: To be knowledgable in criminal ways
 Randy, on the: On the Spree or otherwise looking for companionship
 Nommus!: Get away! Quick! (cb)
 Pall: Detect

Results from stealing/ repercussions:

- getting caught
 - Nibbed: Arrested
 - Derbies: (Pronounced Darbies). Handcuffed
 - Coopered Ken: A bad place for a stick up.
- Processed
 - Terrier Crop: Short, bristly haircut (denoting a recent stay in a prison)
 - Broad Arrow: The arrow-like markings on a prison convict's uniform
 - Devil's claws: The broad arrows on a convict's prison uniform.
- conviction
 - Work Capitol: Commit a crime punishable by death.
 - Vamp: To Steal or Pawn. "In for a vamp" to be jailed for stealing
 - St. Peter's Needle: Severe discipline
 - Boat, get the (Boated): To be sentenced to transportation (obs.). To
- Hanged
 - Crapped: hung, hanged.
 - Topped: Hung
 - Topping: A hanging
 - Lavender, in: (1) To be hidden from the police, (2) to be pawned, (

Items in the Victorian slang world:

clothing

Male

Dunnage: Clothes
Cant of togs: A gift of clothing.
Titfer/Titfertat: Hat (cr)
Whistle and Flute: Suit (cr)
Bend: Waistcoat, vest
Mitting: Shirt
Shevis: A shift, a type of garment.
Kecks: Trousers
Gallies: Boots
Translators: Secondhand apparel, especially Boots.

Female

Dobbin: Ribbon
Flag: An apron
Crabshells: Shoes

money

A Penny

Yennap: A Penny. (cb)
Kennuck: Penny

Pence

Sprat: Six pence
Downer: Sixpence.

Shillings

Ray: 1/6 (one and six-pence)
Deaner: A shilling. (Etymologically descended from the Dinarius, or ancient Roman coin)
Gen: Shilling
Tevis: Shilling
Duce Hog (Duce Hog): 2 shillings
Bull: Five shillings

Pound

Fushme: Five shillings
Couter: Pound (money)
Thicker: A Sovereign or a Pound
Finny: Five pound note

Other money terms

Long-Tailed: A banknote worth more than 5 pounds is said to be "long tailed"
Chink: Money
Joey: A fourpence piece
Nethers: Lodging charges, rent
Soft: Paper money (i.e., "to do some soft" means to pass bad paper money)

Tools of the trade/Their weapons

Barkers (Barking Irons): Guns. Pistols, esp. Revolvers.
Irons: Guns esp. Pistols or revolvers.

Counterfeits

Dimmick: A base coin, counterfeit
Snide: Counterfeit; counterfeit coins or jewels.
Flash notes: Paper that looks, at a glance, like bank-notes
Grey, Gray: A coin with two identical faces

game tools

Dispatches: Loaded dice
Tatts: Dice, False Dice

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| | Broads: Playing cards. Ex. "Spreading the broads" = playing a game of cards |
| | Fakement: a Device or pretence (especially a notice or certificate to facilitate) |
| Break in Tools | Srew: Skeleton Key Twirls: Keys, esp skeleton keys. Jemmy: a housebreaker's tool. |
| | Outsider: An instrument, resembling needle nosed pliers, used for turning |
| Consumables | Dub: (1) Bad (cb); (2) Key, lockpick Scran: Food Tightener: A meal. "To do a Tightener," to take a Meal. Cant: A present; a free meal or quantity of some article. Also the creole and Toke: Bread Saddle: Loaf Gatter: Beer Reeb: Beer (cb) Lush: An alcoholic drink. Mecks: Wine or spirits Hard up: Tobacco |
| stolen goods | Snells: A hawker's wares Dumps: Buttons and other Hawkers small wares. Lumber: Unused, or second-hand furniture |
| items of interest | Pit: Inside front coat pocket Fogle: A silk handkerchief Kingsman: A coloured or black handkerchief. Luggers: Ear rings Jerry: A Watch Yack: A watch Reader: Pocketbook or wallet Lill: Pocketbook Peter: A box, trunk or safe. Pogue: A purse or prize |
| Anatomy | Jug loops: Locks of hair brought over the temples and curled (a hairstyle of the 18th century) Newgate Knockers: Heavily greased side whiskers curling back to, or over the ears Bacca-pipes: Whiskers curled in small, close ringlets. Chat: a Louse (a singular of Lice). Lamps: Eyes Nancy: Buttocks Laycock, Miss (or Lady): Female sexual organs Nebuchadnezzar: Male sexual organs; "to put Nebuchadnezzar out to grass" Glim: Venereal Disease. |
| other | London Particular: Thick London "Pea Soup" fog Prad: Horse Growler: A four wheeled cab Toper: Road Mauley: Handwriting, signature Rasher-wagon: Frying pan |

Shant: A pot or tumbler
Kife: Bed
Weeping Willow: Pillow (cr)
Ruffles: Handcuffs

Places in the Victorian slang world:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| places to stay | Drum: A building, house or lodging; the location of a gaol. Ken: House or other place, esp. a lodging or public house. Netherskens: Low lodging houses, flophouses Lurk: (1) A place of resorting to or concealment in. (2) A scheme or method Pack: A night's lodging for the very poor Paddingken: A tramp's lodging house Servant's lurk: A lodging or public house used by shady or dismissed servants. |
| places to visit | Gattering: A public house Flash house: A public house patronized by criminals. Slap-Bang Job: A night cellar (pub) frequented by thieves, and where no credit is given. Lushery: A place where a lush may be had. A low public house or drinking den. Gaff: Show, exhibition, fair "Penny Gaff" - Low, or vulgar theatre. |
| places to find work | Dollyshop: A low, unlicensed loan shop or pawn shop. Lump Hotel: Work House Spike: Workhouse Deadlurk: Empty premises. Toffken: A house containing well-to-do occupants. |
| places to avoid | Nubbiken: A sessions courthouse Salt Box: The Condemned Cell |
| other places | Mary Blaine: Railway Train (cr); to meet a train or to travel via railway. Rookery: Slum or ghetto Monkery: the Country |

Descriptions

negative descriptions

Dabeno: Bad (cb)
 Dub: (1) Bad (cb); (2) Key, lockpick
 Flam: A lie
 Gammon: Deceive
 Gammy: False, undependable, hostile
 Caper: A criminal act, dodge or device.
 Shoful: (1) Bad or counterfeit. (2) An hansom cab
 Downy: Cunning, false.
 Gulpy: Gullible, easily duped
 Nickey: Simple in the head
 Hykey: Pride.
 Jolly: Disturbance or Fracas

Positive Descriptions

Candle to the devil, To hold a: To be evil
 Blooming, Bloody (Blasted, etc.): are forms of profanity not heard in polite company (Today they
 Bone, Bene: (Pronounced Bone and Benneh?) Good or profitable.
 Square rigged: Soberly and respectfully dressed.
 Ream: Superior, real, genuine, good.
 Cokum (n & adj): Opportunity, advantage, shrewd, cunning.
 Jemmy: (1) Smart. (2) of Superior class. (3) an housebreaker's tool.
 Ream: Superior, real, genuine, good.
 Granny: Understand or recognize

Neutral descriptions

Hammered for life: Married
 Dillo: Old (cb)
 Daffy: A small measure, esp. of spiritous liquers.
Dab: bed (cb). "To dab it up with _____" = to engage in carnal acts with ____.

Nemmo: Woman (cb)

Jolly: Disturbance or Fracas

Daffy: A small measure, esp. of spiritous liquers.

Ruffles: Handcuffs

Screwing: A sub-genre of Cracking; burglary by means of s

Glim: Venereal Disease.

Whistle and Flute: Suit (cr)

Topping: A hanging

Vamp: To Steal or Pawn. "In for a vamp" to be jailed for st

Judy: A woman, specifically a prostitute

Ken: House or other place, esp. a lodging or public house.

Nickey: Simple in the head

Jack: Detective

Randy, on the: On the Spree or otherwise looking for com

Jerry: A Watch

Peter: A box, trunk or safe.

Nancy: Buttocks