

Year 6 Comprehension 4

THE RAILWAY AGE

This group of children have been working on the coming of the railways. Each one gives a short presentation to the class.

The start of the railway age is accepted as 1825 when the Stockton-Darlington line was opened, first for coal wagons and then passengers.



When the railways arrived people travelled faster and further. The journey from London to Edinburgh took 30 hours less than by coach.



Improved transport meant raw materials such as coal and iron could be delivered faster and more cheaply. Farm machinery, for example, cost less, which led to cheaper food.



The delivery of newspapers from London and mail up and down the country was more efficient. More interest was taken in what was happening nationally and in the laws being passed by government.



Because the prices of food and other goods came down, demand for them increased. This meant more people were employed on the land and in factories.



Rail tracks and stations, and railway engineering towns, such as Crewe, York and Doncaster, changed the landscape. People used this cheaper mode of travel to enjoy leisure time. As a result, seaside towns welcomed day trippers.



The success of Stephenson's steam engine, 'Rocket' in 1829 (it could go 30mph), led to 'Railway Mania' and many new railway lines were built.



By 1900, Britain had 22,000 miles of rail track constructed by men known as 'navvies'.



In 1841, Isambard Kingdom Brunel completed the line from London to Bristol. Since it was called the Great Western Railway – GWR – people referred to it as 'God's Wonderful Railway'.



1. What was the route of the first railway line that opened?

2. Describe **two** ways in which the landscape was changed.

3. What invention inspired 'Railway Mania'?

4. How did rail travel compare with travel by coach?

5. What was the nickname given to the men who laid the railway track?

6. Who was the engineer who created God's Wonderful Railway?

7. Complete the following table by describing how the railways changed different aspects of life in Victorian Britain:

aspect	influence of the railways
food	<hr/> <hr/>
employment	<hr/> <hr/>
government	<hr/> <hr/>