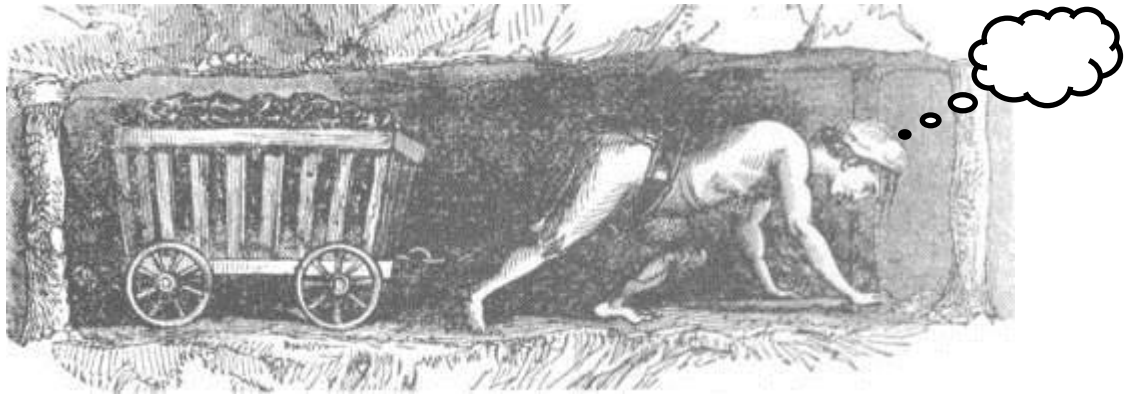


The image below shows a young teenager working underground in the Somerset coalfield in 1842



Pulling a tub of coal

Illustration from the Report of the 1842 Royal Commission into Children's Employment (Mines) © National Coal Mining Museum for England used under a Creative Commons license www.mylearning.org/coal-mining-and-the-victorians/images/2-2070/

Coal was the main source of power for the Victorians. It was dug out from mines deep underground across Britain including the Somerset coalfield. Young children worked in the mines from an early age, some for up to 12 hours a day with few breaks and no fresh air.

You will need to work **independently at first** and **then** in a **small group** for this activity.

Student tasks

1. Spend a few minutes looking very carefully at the drawing and imagine that you are the person in the photograph.
2. What might you have been thinking?
3. Record your thoughts for the 'thought bubble'.

In 1842, nearly all coal-mining activities were still performed by hand. This worker could have lived through the introduction of many new inventions, including the motorcar and the telephone. Such technologies would shape the new century.

4. Now, join up with **three** others. Discuss the image together. Share the content of your 'thought bubbles' in your group. Were the bubbles the same or very different?

In the 21st century, we continue to live in a rapidly changing world. Consider the following questions:

- a. Which inventions of the 21st century to date do you believe have had the **greatest impact** and **why**?
- b. Has this impact always been **positive**?
- c. What other inventions do you think will take place **within your lifetime**?
- d. How do you think these will affect **you** as well as that of **other individuals**?

Your teacher will shortly ask you to share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

This resource is one of a group of resources for KS1,2 and 3 on the subject of the Somerset Coal Canal and coalfield.

More information from the [Somersetshire Coal Canal Society](http://www.somersetshirecoalcanal.org.uk).

