

You inspire me to ...

Play like a Victorian

Toys and games were expensive to buy in Victorian times (1837 – 1901) so many Victorian children played games with things that they could find at home. Games that children could play on the streets or in yards near to their homes like marbles, kick can (like football) and skittles were very popular and mostly used everyday household objects.

You can play the Victorian street game 'skittles' with things you might have at home.



Image of children in Alleyway, Bradford, c 1905 © BHRU, Christopher Pratt Archive

What do I need?

- A hard ball like a tennis ball.
- 6 things you could use as skittles - empty tins, empty plastic drinks bottles, plastic milk bottles.
- You can play on your own or against other people who live with you.

What am I doing?

- Set up your 'skittles' either in a stack or in rows (3 at the back, 2 on the row in front and 1 at the very front- this set-up works best with bottles).
- Stand at a distance away from the skittles – you may want to use a stick or put something on the floor to make sure everyone stands the same distance away.
- Roll the ball along the ground aiming towards the skittles and see how many you can knock over.
- Put any knocked over skittles back up before the next person's turn.
- The person that can knock over the most skittles is the winner.



Hints and Tips

- The further away you stand the trickier it will be.
- You can play so that each person has 3 rolls in their go before the next person's turn – how many can you knock down with 3 chances?
- You could write numbers on the bottles/cans that you are using so that different bottles are worth different points – add up your scores each round and see who wins.
- Can you do some research on the internet and find out about any other Victorian street games?