**Literature AO3 Secure Therapy:**

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

*A Summary of 19th Century Life*

British people in the 19th century were often aware that they were living in a revolutionary age. They were excited by their world. Britannia 'ruled the waves' and they were surrounded by change.

The [**Industrial Revolution**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zvmv4wx/revision) brought factories, mines and machinery. Towns grew rapidly and with them came slums as well as elegant city centres. Steam trains and the Royal Mail made communication easier. There were massive advances in [**medicine**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zb6bkqt/revision) and public health. Political and social reforms changed people's lives and at a personal level, there were lots of little developments from umbrellas to bicycles.

The Victorian age was a time of confidence. The Victorians thought that even if their society was not yet perfect, they were just about to achieve perfection. They believed in self-help, and emphasised strict morals.

By 1851, British society had become divided into social classes:

* The aristocracy were powerful and wealthy.
* The middle-class, who ran the businesses, was ambitious and growing in wealth.
* The poor - in the villages, in the towns and working as servants in the homes of the rich – were very poor.

By 1900 the class system remained, but it was beginning to break apart:

* The aristocracy had lost their power over Parliament and some were beginning to experience financial problems.
* Middle-class businessmen were facing competition from Germany and America.
* The working-class was beginning to grow in prosperity and influence.
* What you were born as mattered more than income. A lazy, poor cousin of a duke would be acceptable in high society. A self-made millionaire mill-owner might not.
* A rich baby boy had male tutors and nannies, then went to a public school such as Eton or Harrow. He would likely finish his education at Oxford or Cambridge. He was expected to gain the experience necessary to take a leading role in society.
* Girls were usually educated at home by a governess, learning about literature, languages, music and art and embroidery, but their studies were intended to prepare them to support their husbands when they were married.
* A rich woman would never ever work. Very poor women were domestic servants, laundresses, farm workers. They could be employed as clerks in a shop. There were dressmakers and milliners too, but it was rare for a woman to own her own business. More educated women could be schoolteachers and governesses.
* The eldest son inherited his father's estates and hereditary titles. Many younger sons went into the army where they would pay a sum of money to receive an officer rank. Other younger sons went into the Church.
* Some lords had a large house in the country and a town house in London. They would be waited on by many servants, who worked 'below stairs' and slept in the attic.

**Task**

Using the information above, create a Mind Map to sum up and organise the information.

Now go through each part of your Mind Map and find examples from your pre-1914 text that both support and/or challenge what you have learnt about context.

For example:

Girls were usually educated at home by a governess, learning about literature, languages, music and art and embroidery, but their studies were intended to prepare them to support their husbands when they were married*. – Jane Eyre is hired as a governess by Rochester to tutor Adele, his French ward. However, unusually for the time, Adele was taught Geography, History, grammar, writing, arithmetic, and music. By teaching Adele all subjects, Brontë shows that Jane does not always conform to what is expected from a woman in her position.*

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