The Victorian Era

1830-1901
London

- Population expands from 2 million to 6 million.
- Becomes hub of trade and commerce.
- Increase in industrialization.
- Cultural center of the world's most powerful nation.
- Became a dirty, industrial labyrinth.
Queen Victoria

- Ruled from 1837-1901
- Embodied Victorian principles – earnestness, moral responsibility, domestic propriety.
- Her era was one of transition.
- Era characterized by energy and high moral purpose.
Religion vs. Science

- Upheaval of traditional ideas by the push of new science such as the Theory of Evolution introduced by Darwin.
- People responded by clinging to old values and developing new fears.
- Frankenstein is an example of the fears that would take hold during this era.
- Industrialism and science pushed many people away from rationalism towards romanticism.
Romanticism

- An artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, the latter also being celebrated.
Technology

- Trains became an ever more important part of business and society.
- Electricity, the telegraph and the telephone reshaped society and how people communicated.
- Expansion of the medical sciences, with a focus on mental disorders.
Unrest and Crime in Victorian London

- There was a feeling of unrest during the time period.
- Major crimes like The Whitechapel Murders/Jack the Ripper captured the public’s imagination and fear.
- The belief that a 'regular' person could be a savage murderer inspired deep fears in the public.
Morality and Propriety

- The Victorian era is famous for the Victorian standards of personal morality. Historians generally agree that the middle classes held high personal moral standards (and usually followed them), but have debated whether the working classes followed suit.

- People struggled with the dichotomy between the outward respectibility required of society and their more base instincts and desires.
Morality and Propriety

- Because of the growing middle class and the emerging wealthy business class blending with the aristocracy, the notion of what a constituted a gentleman or a lady was rapidly shifting.

- Combined with the sophisticated morality and propriety of the time, these fluctuating groups made it difficult to keep up with what was acceptable and en vogue, leading to stress and unrest.