

Read the following text which is divided into two sections. Then answer the questions on your booklet.

Section 1

The English are famous for their simple but rich cakes and bakes. Their passion for baking started a very long time ago, when only wealthy people were able to buy such treats which cost a **pretty penny**. Today, baking cakes and sweets has become a trend. In fact, several bakers appear on television programmes, like *The Great British Bake Off*, to flaunt their skills at baking mouth-watering cakes. (paragraph 1)



The Victoria sponge cake has been popular since the 1800s. It is fitting that this cake is named after Queen Victoria who was fond of a slice of this sponge cake with her afternoon tea. She was known to have a sweet tooth and received a box of cakes from the palace kitchen every week. Nowadays, the Victoria sponge cake still features on most English afternoon tea menus. (paragraph 2)

The recipe is quite basic with flour, sugar and eggs mixed in equal measure for the perfect bake. In 1840, bakers discovered that adding baking powder to the batter gave the sponge cake a light and fluffy consistency. This sponge cake is not too sweet since bakers do not add much sugar to the mixture. (paragraph 3)

Some people like their Victoria sponge cake plain, with a little icing sugar sprinkled on top. Others add a layer of whipped cream and raspberry jam in the middle. Queen Victoria preferred her slice of sponge cake with a thin layer of jam, but bakers believed that a dollop of cream gave it a richer taste. The cake was then cut into small pieces just before serving to make them look like sandwiches. (paragraph 4)



Section 2



The tradition of afternoon tea in Britain goes back to the 1840s. It all started with Anna Russell, the Duchess of Bedford, a close companion of Queen Victoria. In those days, meals in England consisted of a huge breakfast

and a late evening dinner. The Duchess complained about the long hours without food, so in the early afternoon she started drinking tea with some light snacks in her bedroom. **(paragraph 5)**

Anna did this in solitude at first, but bored of eating alone, she started inviting her friends over for a cup of tea and a walk in the gardens.

Suddenly these delightful afternoon meetings turned into parties inside elegant, brightly lit dining rooms, with fine china, hot tea, small sandwiches, and plenty of cakes. In time, Queen Victoria's presence at these parties made afternoon tea a popular tradition. **(paragraph 6)**

White tablecloths on long tables were adorned with flowers. Hosts added elegant bowls filled with ripe red strawberries and jugs of rich cream. Guests feasted on a wide selection of jams, sponge cakes and hot muffins along with meat pies, salmon sandwiches and roast beef.



(paragraph 7)

Nowadays, Queen Elizabeth still holds tea parties at Buckingham Palace, where she invites people who have lent a hand in the community, so that she can thank them personally. There is nothing like the taste of freshly brewed tea in a fine cup and savouring the last crumb of sponge cake in your mouth. And above all it is the hats, the gloves, the jewellery - which make the Queen's tea parties fashionable and unique. **(paragraph 8)**

Adapted from <http://www.victorian-era.org/victorian-era-tea.html>
<https://www.royal.uk/queens-buckingham-palace-garden-parties>