Transport Activity 3 - **Coaches and Trains**

Source 1. The "Accommodation" coach that took passengers from Worthing to London, c1840

Source 2. A train with steam locomotive at Barnham station, c1864

Source 3. Video of passengers getting on a train at Hove station, 1897

Source 5. An 1853 railway timetable printed in a local newspaper

Remember to check the website glossary or a dictionary for words you don't know
James Town's father used to work at Ashington as a postboy for a stage-coach company, but lost his job when the Worthing-to-London coaches stopped running in 1845. By 1890, James was running a horse-drawn bus service around Worthing.

Before the railways were introduced into this country, the travelling public were conveyed by coaching and posting to the different towns in the county. Worthing was highly favoured by the good coach service between Worthing and London. In the winter season there was one coach up to town and one down to Worthing every day; but the two...coach proprietors of Worthing, Mr. James Mitchell and Mr. William Colee, used to run in the summer season three extra coaches a day, to and from London.

Mr. James Mitchell drove the yellow coach named the Accommodation, and horsed it with four greys to Ashington. The coach office was in South Street, where Mr. James Baker's boot shop was. Mr.William Colee drove the Sovereign coach, the office being on the site of Messers. Chaplin's grocery establishment, also in South Street.

South Street was indeed a busy place, with the coaches running in and out of the town in the season. One coach left South Street for London at ten o'clock, another at eleven, another at twelve, and another at one o'clock; and they ran from London at the same hours for Worthing. Three coaches ran from Brighton to Portsmouth every day and the same from Portsmouth to Brighton. They all changed horses at Worthing.

You could get to any part of the country then as well as you can now, but not so quickly or cheaply. The fare by coach from Worthing to London was fifteen shillings outside and a guinea inside.

In the season of 1839, a coach left Worthing for London at six o'clock in the morning and got back to Worthing at ten at night.

A few words about when the old coaches gave up running to London. Mr. William Colee gave up the Sovereign coach in '43, and went into partnership with Mr. James Mitchell, and the Accommodation coach ran till October '45. In November of that year the first train ran into Worthing.
Transport Activity 3 - Coaches and Trains

Source 6.

Map showing roads and railways in West Sussex in 1843 - railways are in red

© West Sussex County Council Library Service [MAP_WSL_J47]

Source 7.

Map showing roads and railways in West Sussex in 1865 - railways are in red

© West Sussex County Council Library Service [MAP_WSL_K(a)15]

Remember to check the website glossary or a dictionary for words you don’t know
Esther Meynell was a young girl living in Sussex at the beginning of the 20th century. She later wrote a book called "A Woman Talking" and in this extract describes what it was like to see the Royal Mail galloping past her house.

The greatest thrill to be got from speed was the sight of the Royal Mail, with V.R. on its scarlet sides, galloping past on its journey from Brighton to London. It went by our gate, and though at an hour much too late for us to be out of bed, occasionally, on summer nights we were promised the treat of seeing it go by, and wrapped up and fetched out of bed to watch for it over the garden hedge.

I still remember the shiver of delight with which I would hear the beat of the hooves of the four horses, the jingle and rattle of the harness coming along the silent road, and then the glare of the great yellow lamps appearing round the curve, throwing visible beams around them, golden yellow, reflected on the glossy red paint, the glass door all crossed with a lattice-work of bars, behind which a uniformed figure could be seen frantically sorting Her Majesty’s mails. Did he do this all the way to London, we sleepily wondered, as the sound of the galloping horses faded away into the quiet, untroubled night, and we returned to our beds.

The speed of these mail coaches was both a necessity and a pride, and to maintain it the horses were changed four times during the journey – which meant sixteen horses. I believe the first change was at the Plough Inn at Pyecombe. Twelve miles an hour was maintained all the way to London – what a trifling speed that seems to the modern mind, yet the effect of speed attained by these four galloping horses and the rattling, swaying Mail Coach, was far more exciting than anything produced by the internal combustion engine. And the guard had a horn, a fifty-two-inch metal rod through which he blew.....and he was armed with a sword and a blunderbuss.