

# Georgian Homes

## A Servants Life *activity sheet*

Servants in the Georgian period worked very hard and long hours. Their food and accommodation were provided as they lived in the house where they worked. However they did not live like the master and mistress of the house. Most servants slept in attic rooms, with little furniture, Others slept on cold stone floors in the basement, where the kitchen and storerooms were, and some even slept in the stables!

In the basement kitchen there would have been no electricity or time saving gadgets like we have today and it was very smoky and dark. Candles or oil lamps would have been the only lighting.

Housemaids had to get up before everyone else to clean the fireplaces and light the fires. They had to heat water in the kitchen and carry it upstairs for the family of the house to wash in. And they had to empty the chamber pots!

Footmen had to do household chores too and they had to wait on the owners of the house when they went out in their coach. They were also the master's personal servant, or 'valet'. William Taylor was a footman in a London house and had a good master, but he still did not like being a servant. He compared being a servant to being like a bird in a cage, rather than a bird like a sparrow which was free to fly around. He wrote in his diary:

*"The life of a gentleman's servant is something like that of a bird shut up in a cage... I would rather be like a sparrow or a lark, have less housing and feeding and rather more liberty. A servant is shut up like a bird in a cage, deprived of the benefit of the air to the very great injury of the constitution."*



### **Activity**

Imagine that you are a servant in a Georgian house and on top of all your daily hardships your master has had your window bricked up to save money on the window tax. Write a letter to a friend telling them how you feel.