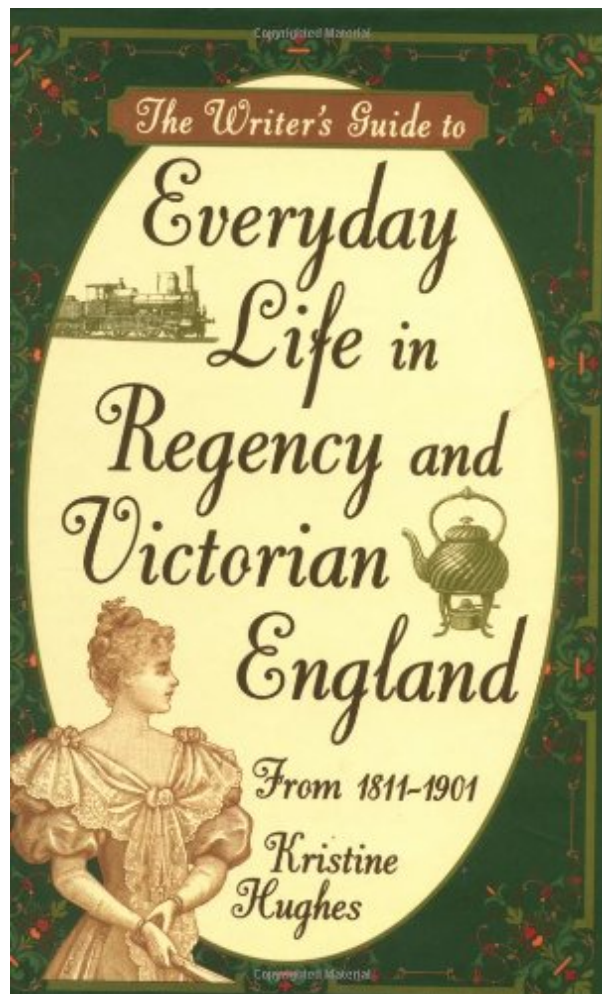
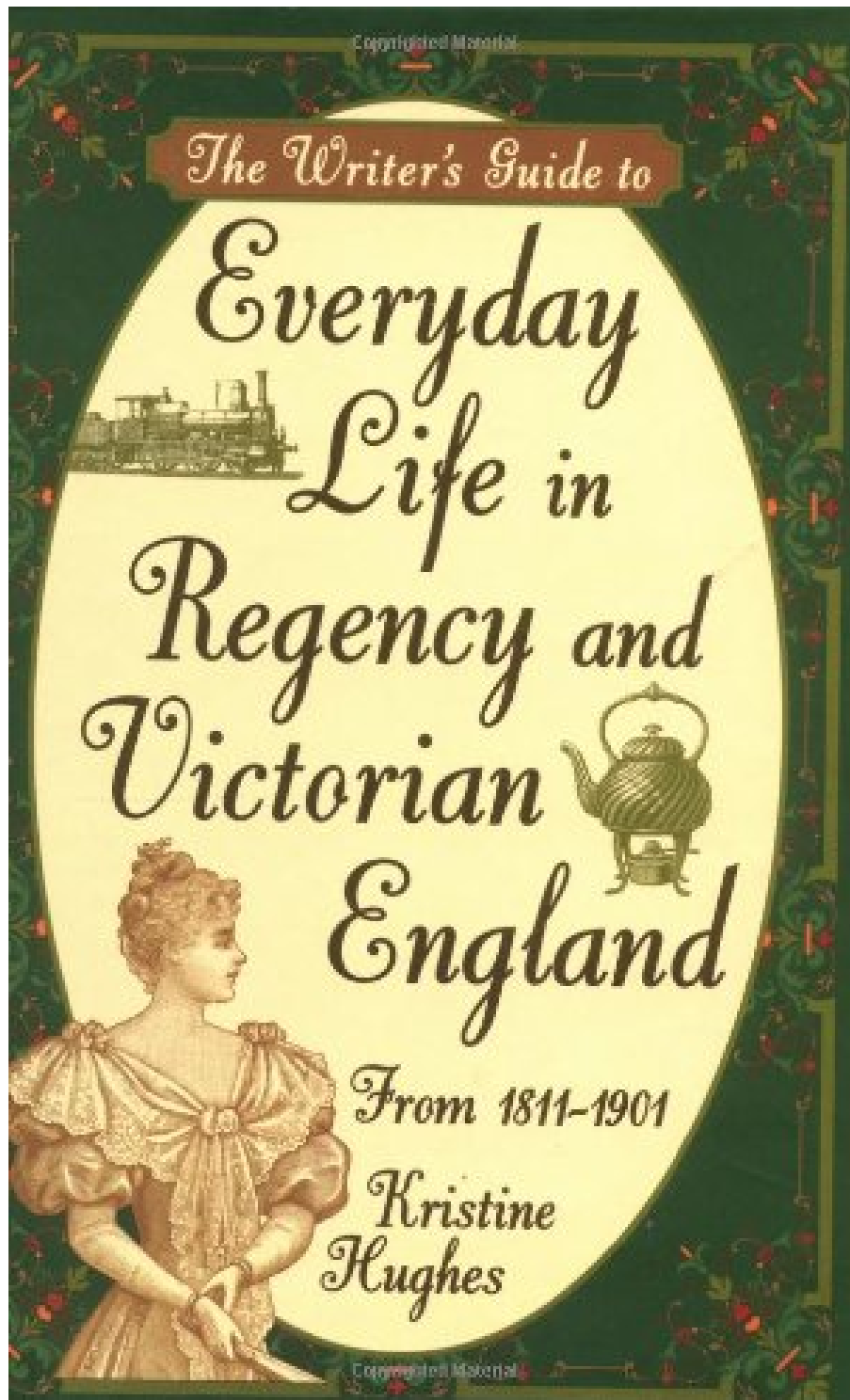


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IN REGENCY AND VICTORIAN ENGLAND  
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# THE WRITER'S GUIDE TO EVERYDAY LIFE IN REGENCY AND VICTORIAN ENGLAND FROM 1811-1901 BY KRISTINE HUGHES PDF

In this timesaving reference book, respected author and historian Kristine Hughes brings 19th century England to life as she leads you through the details that characterize this fascinating era. From slice-of-life facts, anecdotes and firsthand accounts, to sweeping timelines and major historical events, this guide presents the delightful and often surprising daily realities of Regency and Victorian England. With it, you'll craft a vibrant story as you learn what people ate, from pigeon pie and turtle dinners to syllabub and milk punch, where a prisoner would go if he were remanded to the "hulks; " the four coats a gentleman must have in his wardrobe, and other fashion requirements of the era; the rules honored by decent society, from the proper way to promenade to the polite hours to "call; " how couples married and divorced, through churching, wife-selling and other practices; what people did for work, from cottagers and climbing boys to milkmaids and manservants; the meaning of common slang words like mawleys and moleskins; what Cook's Tours were like and where they could take the adventurous; and trends in entertainment, such as dandies, panoramas and more.

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77 of 81 people found the following review helpful.

For Victorian era writers only

By A Customer

The title should have been "A Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in Victorian England". While there is a wealth of information on Victorian era customs and daily life, there is very little on the Regency period. Even when the book makes general statements these statements are often applicable only to the Victorian era. As a Regency writer myself, I would caution other writers not to rely on this book for Regency period information.

There were great differences between the Regency and Victorian eras, obvious differences such as changes in fashion, or the rapid industrialization, and more subtle differences such as transformations in public and private behavior.

Recommended for Victorian authors, but for Regency authors you would be better served to seek out a copy of "The Regency Companion" by Lauder milk & Hamlin.

38 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

A very uneven book

By Elizabeth A. Root

This book could be very useful, but often more as a guide to other sources, rather than as a authority in its own right. The appendices, listing numerous references sources as well as a very useful list of relevant museums should be valuable to anyone starting out to do research. Particularly relevant sources are also collected at the end each chapter.

If this is intended to be a reference source for writers, then they need detailed information laid out in an efficient format. Hughes does this sometimes, and other times seems to wander off into writing an anecdotal social history. I wonder whether it was a good idea to pack 90 years that saw enormous social changes into one book. I think that Hughes has often wasted space including extensive quotes that would have been better paraphrased and condensed, as well as including information of marginal use, such as numerous recipes and a list of the number of servants advertising for jobs in the Times on January 10, 1870.

One might also wonder why 1801-1810 is not covered, especially since there is a writer's guide covering the 18th century. The period isn't completely ignored, but it must be frustrating for anyone wanting information about the turn of the 18th-19th century. Granted, the Regency, strictly speaking, was 1811-1820, but that wasn't the start of the Victorian era either. Many people consider the Regency period to go back to 1800 or even 1780.

The chapters themselves are uneven in quality. The first section, on lighting, is precisely the sort of thing a writer would need: the different types of lighting are carefully described in detail with dates given so that the reader knows precisely what was in use when. Rather than simply saying that gaslights began to be installed in London in 1807, Hughes carefully explains that only certain small areas were lit at first. There are also very useful lists like the terminuses for the stage coaches, papers in circulation, naval insignia, prohibitions to marriage, etc.

On the other hand, Hughes tells us that flush toilets were invented by 1777 and then leaps to the 1860s to talk about Victorian bathrooms. What about the near century in between? Were people installing flush toilets, or were they simply experimental? On a number of occasions, Hughes throws in an interesting quote on some subject, such as the excerpts from *The Habits of Good Society*, published in 1864 without any indication of whether the information is valid for the entire era or only for the immediate period.

In the chapter on clothing, Hughes wisely tells us that she is not going to attempt to give a history of fashion in one chapter and provides an extensive bibliography. She then takes up the chapter with long quotes from various sources, but this hit or miss information isn't very helpful, and could have been summarized in a few sentences. I think that Hughes would have done better to warn the reader about tricky subjects that may not be covered in a basic history of fashion and need to be researched. Court dress, for example, was codified, and a writer should not necessarily send a character to court in a fashionable outfit, however fine. I'm not an expert, but I believe that the rules for court dress also changed during this period: an author would need to look this up so that the outfits are appropriate to the specific time. I believe that this is also the period when the special-purpose wedding dress came into fashion. Early in the century, brides were married in their best day dress, cut according to ordinary fashion, not a special design. If she could afford a trousseau, it might be new for the wedding, but it would not be any special color. Veils and the one-use fantasy dress came later.

Hughes does give us some information relating specifically to the middle class and the poor, which is good, but she often describes customs, particularly mourning customs, which can only have applied to the wealthiest, without much indication of the shift in customs as one moves down the social scale. She does include a useful list of mourning fabrics, though oddly enough, it does not include paramatta, which is mentioned several times in the text.

I'd love to see a second, greatly revised edition. Meanwhile, I think that writers interested in the Regency Era would be better served by Malcolm Day's *Voices from the World of Jane Austen*, Jennifer Kloester's *Georgette Heyer's Regency World*, and Sharon H. Lauder milk's & Teresa Hamlin's *The Regency Companion* (Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, Vol. 841).

37 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

Good but mostly sporadic

By A Customer

It is impossible to sum up social life and culture for the 19th century, and authors simply should not try. Hughes' book is a good example. It certainly has many pieces of useful information for both writers and scholars--I never knew that the Adelphi Theater was only open from October to April, for example--and Hughes' tracing of certain topics such as indoor lighting or the railways are concise and intriguing.

Unfortunately, she doesn't explain her terms nearly enough, and the quotations from contemporary sources seem overused--as though all of those period recipes were simply padding out space. There's an entire paragraph devoted to the etiquette of "cutting" which is completely incomprehensible if you are not first aware of the actual meaning of social cuts. Also, Hughes does not really work within context well; she doesn't seem to understand that etiquette books were not so much used by those in the upper circles, but by those aspiring to move upwards, or that the very reason for a plethora of etiquette books implies that they are needed--in other words, people are *\*not\** following proper etiquette in their daily lives.

The writer of Victorian-based historical novels would do well to have this book on her reference shelf, but the casual reader will do better to read Sally Mitchell's *Daily Life in Victorian England*. This book would have been much more useful if it had narrowed its topic and explored them in greater depth.

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