This major BBC One series charts the changing face of the British high street over the course of a century. The six eras visited in the series represent some of the biggest changes on the high street and will be a good reference point as you explore your own.

**Victorian era**
The Victorian era saw the creation of the high street as we know it today. As more people moved into the cities, fewer were able to grow their own produce and began to rely on shops for food and other goods. Meat and vegetables were displayed for all to see outside the shops, so the early high street looked more like what we would now call a market. The buildings had small windows to help keep the contents cool and some would have had workrooms for making the products on sale. Victorian photos are extremely rare, but sketches and cartoons may be found.

**Edwardian era**
In the Edwardian era shopping became a pastime in itself. Cheap imports meant even the poorest people were able to afford meat on occasion and canned goods were becoming more popular. Selfridges opened in 1909, bringing luxury to the people as never before. The start of the First World War in 1914 shattered the comforts of the early 1900s and food prices soared. Edwardian photos are black and white or a brown, sepia colour. You can differentiate them from the 1930s images, as shops still tended to show their wares outside.

[bbc.co.uk/history](http://bbc.co.uk/history)
The 1930s
During the 1930s shopowners began to use the power of advertising and window displays to draw in customers. Goods inside were displayed in glass cabinets and brands we’d recognise today appeared. Shops like Woolworths, Burtons and Boots began to dominate the market. Food was becoming relatively cheap, with fruit and vegetables year-round staples and tinned foods growing in popularity. Refrigerators began to make an appearance in some domestic kitchens, allowing people to store food for longer and shop less frequently. This trend would become more pronounced in later decades. Photos from the 1930s are black and white with advertising posters and branding appearing on walls and windows.

World War Two
In the Second World War, particularly once rationing began, shoppers would queue for hours outside shops if they heard food was available. Shop windows displayed posters about saving food, fuel and goods and, inside, many shelves were empty. People had to register with most shops to be able to buy goods, so shopkeepers became very important in the community. As imports fell, favourite products became rare and buying new clothes became almost unheard of. Paper was scarce, so purchases were often taken home unwrapped. Photographs from this era are still black and white, though there may be some very early colour.
The 1960s

In the 1960s self service became the norm in most shops and mass-produced bread meant many bakeries closed. Shops became brighter and more colourful both inside and out, with neon, plastic and Formica appearing. This was particularly noticeable in milk and burger bars, some of which had jukeboxes. Fluorescent lights were introduced in many stores, as well as the shopping trolley. Better food packaging, refrigeration and a rise in car ownership led to the swift growth of supermarkets which changed shopping patterns from daily to weekly. Photos from the 1960s are often shinier (both black and white and colour) with white borders.

The 1970s

The 1970s saw the establishment of the ‘weekly shop’ in large supermarkets, as more women worked and shopping was done at the weekend. Shopping deliveries ceased, with newspapers and milk remaining the exceptions. ‘Sell by’ dates began to appear on packaging and frozen food became much more prevalent. Corner shops could stay open for longer hours than supermarkets, and often became the hub of a community. Record and betting shops, Chinese takeaways and boutiques became high street stalwarts. Photos from the 1970s will still often be black and white (and may be a bit ‘foggy’), so look out for clothing hints, like flared trousers.