

Knowledge Organiser

Section A: Whitechapel, c.1870-1900

Paper 1 Crime & Punishment, 1hr 15min

Date of exam: _____

Keywords	
Rookery	A slum area, in town, where poverty and crime were high.
Sanitation	Conditions to do with public health, such as running water and sewage systems.
Navies	Labourers/builders on the railways, roads and canals.
Poor relief	The system of giving benefits to the poor.
Sweated trades	Working long hours in poor conditions for low pay.
Fenians	Irish nationalists who wanted freedom from rule by the UK.
Hoax letters	Letters meant to deliberately deceived or trick the police.

Whitechapel was in the East End of London. It had high levels of poverty and poor housing.

Whitechapel was overcrowded with maze-like streets. Most **people lived in rookeries** where sanitation was poor. There could be 30 people living in one apartment. **¼ of the population lived in lodging houses** where they could rent a bed for the night. Conditions in lodging houses were awful. Some attempts were made to improve housing. The **Peabody Estate was opened in 1881**, there were 11 blocks of flats charging reasonable rents.

Unemployment was high. Many people worked in ‘**sweated**’ trades such as tailoring and match making. Others worked as **navvies** or **dockers**. There were few jobs for women and many turned to **prostitution**.

Workhouses provide poor relief. They were seen as the last resort. They offered a bed and food in return for hard labour. Conditions were deliberately poor to put people off. Families were split up and could be punished for talking to each other.

Whitechapel was very multicultural with immigrants from across Europe. There was **tension between immigrants and locals** over jobs and housing.

Many poor **Jewish immigrants** came to Whitechapel to escape persecution in Russia. The Jews often settled in the same area and isolated themselves. They accepted lower pay and poor conditions leading to an increase in the sweatshop system. **Irish immigrants** often worked at the docks. They had a reputation for being drunk and violent and were associated with terrorism e.g. Fenians.

Whitechapel was policed by H Division. H Division beat constables would patrol a set route looking for trouble. They would stop and question people and report back to their sergeant.

Policing Whitechapel was a problem:

- Dark, maze-like streets made chasing criminals a problem.
- Attacks on Jews was common. Some police were anti-Semitic and the language barrier made it hard for other constables to catch their attackers.
- A large number of pubs sold cheap alcohol. Drunkenness led to violence.
- Locals did not trust the police. Few co-operated with them.

The Whitechapel Vigilance Committee was set up in 1888. Set up by businessmen concerned about the police’s failure to catch Jack the Ripper. They offered rewards, patrolled the streets and sent false leads to the police.

Jack the Ripper strangled and mutilated five women in Whitechapel.

The Metropolitan Police developed new methods of investigation which were useful in the Ripper investigation:

- Made **annotated sketches** of the crime scenes from photographs take. Used to compare murders.
- 80,000 **leaflets** were distributed appealing for information.
- **Interviewing witnesses** and suspects.
- Soup kitchens were set up to encourage poor people to give information.

The police faced problems investigating the Ripper case:

- **Rivalry between the Met and the City of London police forces.** Each force wanted to solve the crime and did not share information with each other.
- **The media** DID encourage people to come forward BUT also attracted **hoax letters** which the police had to investigate. The media also criticised the police investigation.