

Why do you think these people are queuing outside this building on Brick Lane in London?





London hipsters
regularly pay £5
for a bowl of
cereal!!
The café is called
'Cereal Killers'

Today the Whitechapel area has been described as a fashionable, trendy, cool place to live and visit.



There are art galleries to browse in, bars to drink in, clothing shops to visit. But it hasn't always been this way.



What words would you use to describe Whitechapel in the 1880s? What questions do you have?



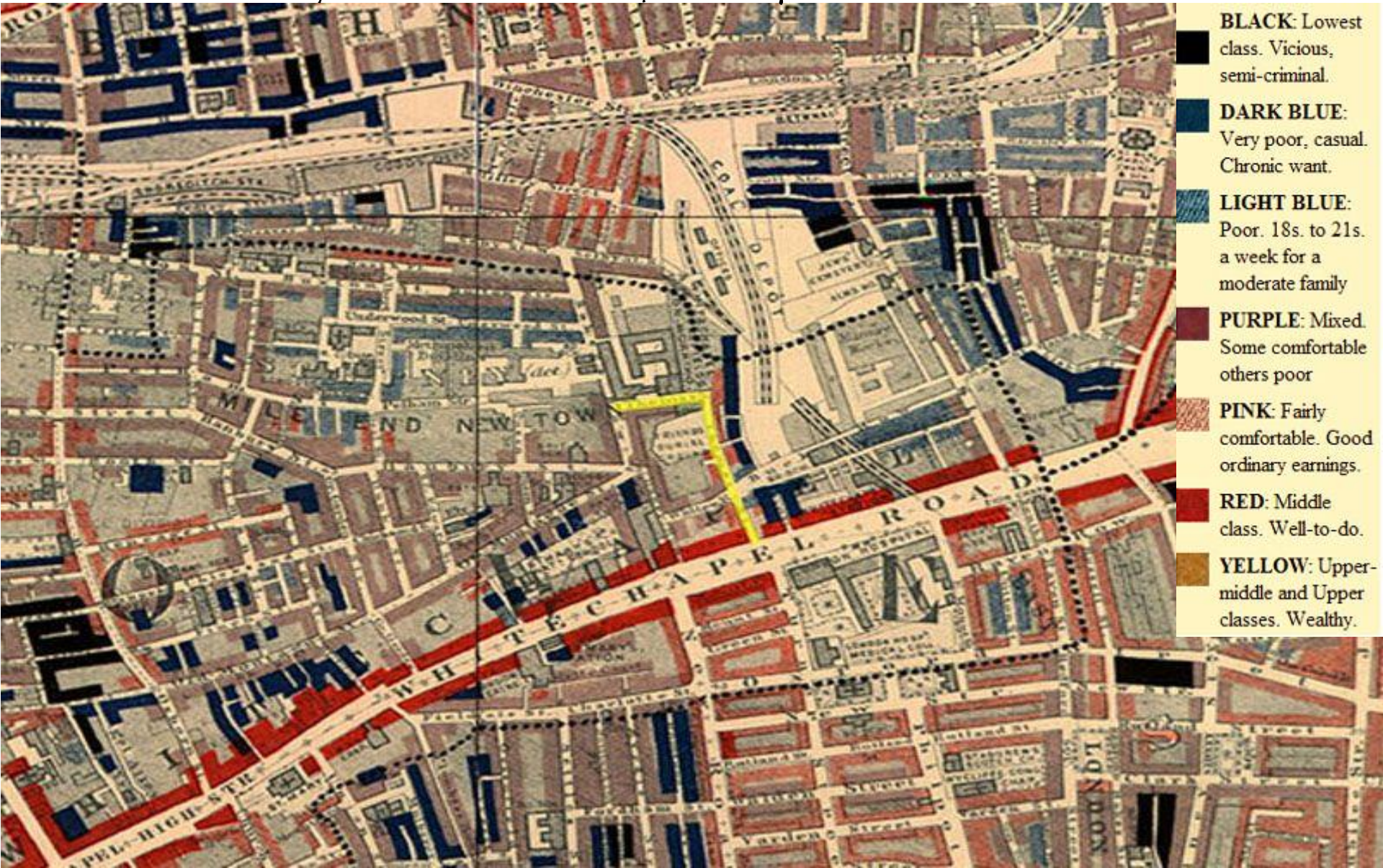
What was Whitechapel like in the Victorian era?

To *know* something about Whitechapel in the 21st century

To *understand* some of the features of Whitechapel in 1880

To *be able to* explain why Whitechapel was popular,
despite its problems

In the late 19th century, Charles Booth, a successful businessman, carried out sociological research on the city of London, looking at poverty, living conditions and religious faith. He produced a series of maps which tried to show how poor each area was. This is **Whitechapel**. What **inferences** can you draw from the map? What **questions** does it leave?



Task: Use the pictures, map and the words you chose to briefly explain how Whitechapel was different in the 1880s compared with today. You could use the model below to start or write your own.

Today the Whitechapel area has been described as a **fashionable, trendy, cool** place to live and visit. There are art galleries to browse around, bars to drink in, clothing shops to visit. But it hasn't always been this way. In the 1880s Whitechapel was....

Adding Connectives:

In addition, Furthermore, Also, Moreover

Digging Deeper:

What was Whitechapel like in the Victorian era?

To gain a better understanding of the FEATURES of Victorian Whitechapel, we need to focus on **three** key areas of London:

1. Flower and Dean Street
2. Whitechapel Workhouse and Casual Ward
3. The Peabody Estate

As we work through the information,
Make a list of the features of Whitechapel



1. Flower and Dean St

What does this part of the map suggest to us?

- Flower and Dean Street was a well known **rookery** (area filled with lodging houses in which some of London's poorest lived)
- These 'doss houses' were 31 in number and contained 902 lodgers, in 1871.
- Some houses here dated back to 1600 and were only 16 feet at their widest part.
- There were outside toilets, but buckets and pans were used indoors.
- Most families moved on after a few days of staying in the doss house.
- Flower and Dean Street had a reputation as a haunt for thieves, drunkards and prostitutes.



2. Whitechapel workhouse and Casual Ward



The **Workhouse** was for people who were unable to afford a night in a doss house, or for those who were too young, too old or too unwell to work.

The **Casual Ward** was another place that those looking for a bed for a night could go to. It was an infirmary for the sick, but it also had places for 60 people to stay overnight.

Can you glean anything from the two pictures about what it might have been like in the Workhouse or Casual Ward?

2. Whitechapel workhouse and Casual Ward

Source D From *The People of the Abyss*, by Jack London, an American novelist who stayed in doss houses and workhouses to see what it was like. In 1902 he visited the Whitechapel Casual Ward.

Some were set to scrubbing and cleaning, others to picking oakum, and eight of us were convoyed across the street to the Whitechapel Infirmary, where we were set at scavenger work. This was the method by which we paid for our skilly and canvas**, and I, for one, know that I paid in full many times over.*

Though we had most revolting tasks to perform, our allotment was considered the best, and the other men deemed themselves lucky in being chosen to perform it.

'Don't touch it, mate, the nurse sez it's deadly,' warned my working partner, as I held open a sack into which he was emptying a garbage can.

It came from the sick wards, and I told him that I purposed neither to touch it, nor to allow it to touch me. Nevertheless, I had to carry the sack, and other sacks, down five flights of stairs and empty them in a receptacle where the corruption was speedily sprinkled with strong disinfectant.

* Skilly – a kind of weak broth or soup made from water, vegetables and corn flour.

** Canvas – this means the use of a hammock as a bed for the night.

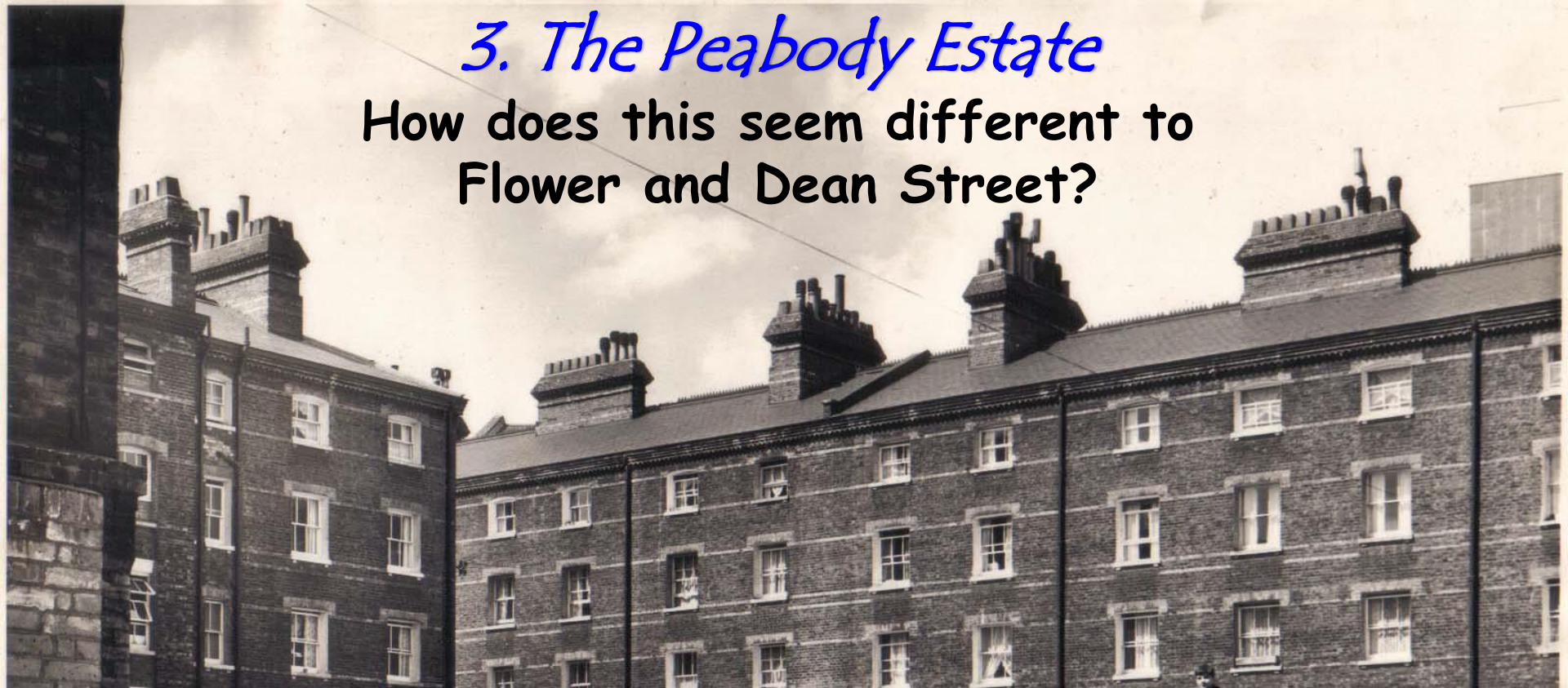
Life at the Workhouse and Casual Ward was tough. At the workhouse, there were strict rules about what people ate, how they worked, the time they went to bed and when they got up. Those with families were separated and were not even allowed to speak to one another.

What can we learn from Jack London's source about life in the Casual Ward?

Does this information help explain the case of Sarah Fisher?

3. The Peabody Estate

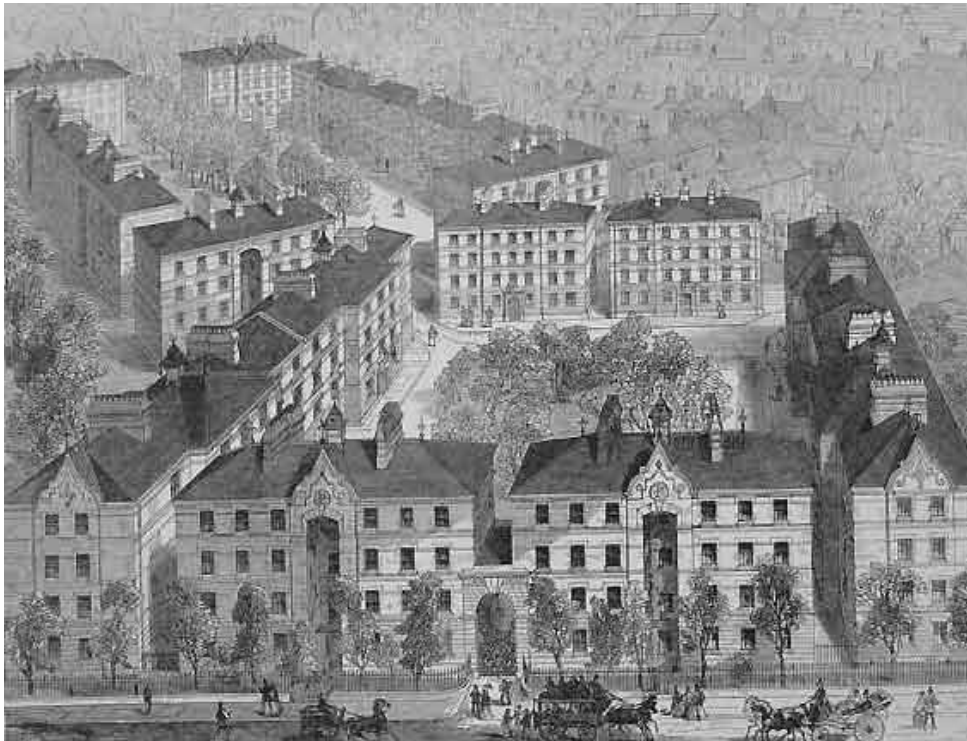
How does this seem different to Flower and Dean Street?



3. The Peabody Estate

Before the Peabody Estate was built in 1881, the area had been another **rookery**. In 1865, the annual death rate in this small area was more than 50 in 1000. This was double the rate of the rest of London. In 1876, the Metropolitan Board of Works had bought the area for slum clearance. But, in 1879, they sold it to the Peabody Trust, set up by a wealthy American banker.

By 1881, 287 flats had been built.



Each block of flats was separate from the other and surrounded by a yard.

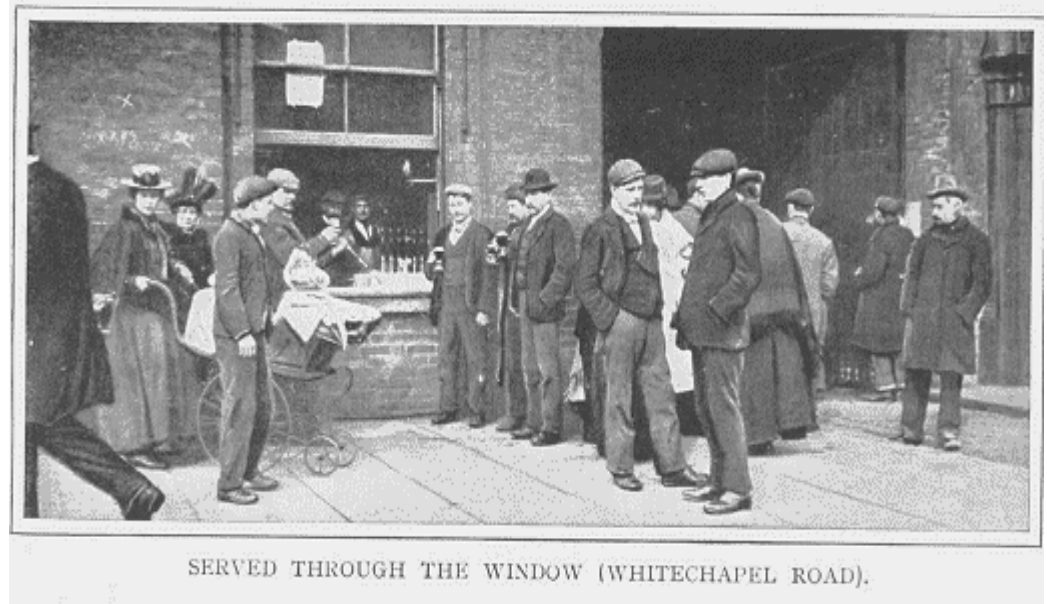
They were built from brick, with un-plastered walls, so that lice could not live in the plaster. They had shared bathrooms and kitchens.

Why then, did the Peabody Estate contribute to overcrowding?



'This street is in the East End...an evil plexus of slums that hides human creeping things; where filthy men and women live on penn'orths of gin, where collars and clean shirts are decencies unknown, where every citizen wears a black eye and none ever combs his hair'

What more can we learn from these two sources about the features of life in Whitechapel?



Drink was one way of coping with the difficulties of life in Whitechapel. Addiction to alcohol was common, particularly in the rookeries.

*Why might **alcoholism** lead to more **crime**?*

WHY DIDN'T PEOPLE JUST LEAVE WHITECHAPEL?

We might wonder why people didn't move out and find better places to live. The main reason seems to have been that people lived where they could earn money. Between Whitechapel Road and the Thames there were tanneries where leather was cured, **sweatshops** and tailors where clothes and shoes were made, slaughterhouses and butchers' shops and bakeries. All these places needed employees. People had to live within walking distance of their work. This was especially true for the poorest labourers and dock workers. Their jobs were very insecure – they could be taken on for a day's work and laid off the next. These workers had to get to the dock or tannery gates early in the morning to get work before the competition arrived. The low pay – between 6 and 12 shillings a week in good employment – meant that it was hard to save and hard to leave. For those who could not work – either because of sickness like Sarah Fisher's husband, or because of alcohol addiction like most of Jack the Ripper's victims – there were other opportunities to earn money from prostitution, robbery or theft.

Immigration

Many Irish, Eastern European Jews and Russian Jews came to Whitechapel in this period.

Why would Whitechapel attract immigrants?

Would immigration be a positive thing for Whitechapel?

Features of Whitechapel	Associated problems
Overcrowded Accommodation & Housing	
Unreliable work and unemployment	
Prostitution	
Alcoholism	<p>... pay for habit. ... (all of Jack the Ripper's ...)</p>
Orphans	
Workhouses	
Immigration	

Complete as much of the table as you can

Features of Whitechapel	Associated problems
Overcrowded Accommodation	
Unreliable work and unemployment	
Prostitution	
Alcoholism	Disorder, especially near to pubs. Theft, to pay for habit. Drunks more vulnerable to crime (all of Jack the Ripper's victims were alcoholics)
Orphans	
Workhouses	
Immigration	



Crime

Unsurprisingly, the social conditions in Whitechapel meant that there was a great fear of crime in the area.

The killing spree of Jack the Ripper and the Police' failure to catch him, did nothing to help allay this fear....

Exam Practice

Describe two features of:

- Lodging houses in Whitechapel
- Conditions in Workhouses
- The effect of drink on crime in Whitechapel

'Habitual criminals are not to be confounded (confused) with the working or any other class; they are a set of persons who make crime the object and business of their lives; to commit crime is their trade; they deliberately scoff at honest ways of earning a living'

Source B: From *Crime and its Causes*, a book by W.D. Morrison, a clergyman, published in 1891

How could you follow up Source B to find out more about the causes of crime in Whitechapel?

Use the following headings:

- Detail in Source B I would follow up
- Question I would ask
- What type of source I could use
- How this might help my question