



# HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

How has crime and punishment changed over time and are there any influences on our justice system today?



Year 6 – Autumn Term



## Unit overview

*Children will be introduced to the justice system from the past through to the present. The children will find out about the legacy of the Roman justice system and crime and punishment through the Anglo-Saxon, Tudor and Victorian periods. They will study a key figure in the famous highwayman Dick Turpin as well as comparing modern day crime prevention and detection methods with those from the past.*

## Links to prior/future learning

*Children can develop their chronological knowledge beyond 1066 through the study of this aspect of social history. They will also deepen their historical awareness and understanding of how our past is constructed through studying the famous highwayman Dick Turpin.*

**Key objectives:** A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils’ chronological knowledge beyond 1066.

**Period overview, a brief history of crime and punishment** There are many reasons why people commit crime. Some of these causes have always existed, such as greed, poverty and economic distress. Other causes of crime have changed since 1500. Laws exist to protect people, to give order to our societies and to prevent harm. A crime happens when a person breaks a law.

However, laws change over time. An action that was a crime in Tudor or Stuart times may well not be a crime today and vice versa. For example, in the 18th century, highway robbery was a criminal offence. Attitudes towards crime have changed over time. Crimes that were considered very serious in the past may not be seen in the same way today. An example of this is public protest. In earlier centuries protesting against the monarchy or Government was a serious offence. However, in modern times, people should be able to protest peacefully and have the freedom to express their views

Crimes can be planned or they may be committed on the spur of the moment. Sometimes individuals may be acting under the influence of drugs, or they may be pressured into crime by other people. People commit crime for many reasons, including: greed – the desire to gain more money or possessions, desperation, unemployment and poverty.

Social changes, such as population increases and urbanisation, have led to many crimes throughout history. A person's political or religious beliefs may also influence them to commit criminal activities. For example, in the past, rebellions and plots against the Government often had political motives, whilst in modern times, the desire for political change is often used to justify terrorism.

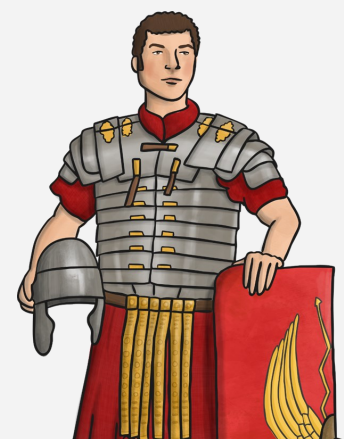
**Was Rome riddled with crime and what did the Romans do to prevent it?**

Roman laws were called the ‘Twelve Tables’. They were written around 450 BC – these were basic rights for all Roman people and decided what they should and should not do.

The laws written in the Twelve Tables dealt with all manner of crimes, from serious crimes, such as murder, and less serious crimes, such as stealing. The laws also dealt with cleanliness – homeowners had to clean the street outside their home. Children learnt the laws off by heart at school.

People accused of committing a crime were taken to court to be judged guilty or not guilty. There were no police to catch a criminal – people had to catch the criminals themselves. In Britain, the job of finding a criminal was down to the legionaries. Punishments were severe. Their main purpose was to deter people from committing crimes. The worst possible punishment was kept for anyone who tried to rebel against the Emperor.

The punishment you received depended on what money and possessions you had. If you were a slave, you had no rights at all. The punishment for most slaves was death – by many different, awful means – or to be forced to become a gladiator



**Chronological Understanding:**

337AD	1401 AD	1787 AD	1817 AD	1824 AD	1829 AD
Crucifixion is abolished in the Roman Empire	In England a law makes burning the punishment for heresy	The first prisoners are transported from Britain to Australia	In Britain a woman is sentenced to the ducking stool for the last time	The scold's bridle is last used in Britain	Branding with hot irons is abolished in Britain

## How did the Anglo Saxon system differ from the Romans?

Many laws we have in Britain today are not that different from the laws of Anglo-Saxon Britain. However, the punishments were considerably different.

There were no prisons to send criminals to, so punishments were designed to be a huge deterrent to those thinking of breaking the law and they were often pretty brutal! When a village wanted to find a criminal, the people would call upon everyone else in the community to find them. This was called a hue and cry.



Here are some typical Anglo-Saxon punishments...



Most punishments were carried out in public to make an example of the guilty person and to deter others from committing the same crime.

Wergild was a payment system used in Anglo-Saxon times to settle disputes between the criminal and the victim or the victim's family.

Wergild would be paid if someone was killed and the amount depended on how important the victim was.

## Anglo-Saxon Trials

There were three main ordeals in Anglo-Saxon Britain.



## Historical vocabulary:

### Subject specific vocab

**Deterrence**—The action of discouraging crime.

**DNA profiling**—Identifies someone from a crime scene through body fluids.

**Gallows**—A wooden structure with steps leading to a platform where criminals would be hung.

**Highwayman**—Dick Turpin was a famous highwayman who rode a horse and stole from travellers.

**Justice**— For someone to have fair treatment for their behaviour.

**Prevention**—An attempt to reduce crime.

**Retribution**—A punishment inflicted on someone for a wrong or criminal act.

**Stocks**— The placing of boards around the ankles and wrists as form of torture or humiliation.

1837 AD	1868 AD	1870 AD	1898 AD	1969 AD
The pillory is abolished in Britain	The last public execution in Britain takes place. Transportation of prisoners from Britain to Australia ends.	In Britain hanging, drawing and quartering is abolished	1898 The crank is abolished in British prisons. The treadmill is also abolished in British prisons	In Britain hanging is permanently abolished

## Why was torcher such a big part of Tudor times?

In Tudor times, there were still no police. Crime – mainly stealing – was widespread, as many poor people could not afford to pay for increasingly expensive food. However, punishments were harsh, in the belief that it would stop others from committing the same crime. Public executions were extremely popular and people would wait for hours to watch them, often taking their children with them! Vagrancy (being homeless) was a crime and punished by being whipped, or even hanged. Many people were afraid that all vagrants were criminals and murderers. Stealing was considered a serious Tudor crime, and people could be punished for just stealing a bird's egg. Stealing even a small amount of money could mean the death penalty.



## Who was Dick Turpin—a hero or villain?

Highwaymen would rob people while they were travelling on the road. This had already been happening for hundreds of years but highwaymen became a greater threat during the Stuart and Georgian periods. This was because trade was increasing and there were more wealthy people who were travelling on the roads. There were also many areas of forest and countryside where highwaymen could lie in wait. The pistol had been invented in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which made it easier for highwaymen to threaten travellers and force them to give up their money and possessions.

Britain still did not have a police force, so it was difficult to catch highwaymen. There were large rewards for their capture. Most highwaymen were eventually caught and hung. The most famous highwayman was Dick Turpin. He was born in 1705 in Essex. When he was on the run from being caught in London, he moved to York and lived under the name of John Palmer. He was captured and hung in 1739.



## How did crime and punishment change during the Victorian period?

The Victorians worried about crime. However, they were growing increasingly angry about people being hanged as punishment – often for committing smaller crimes. This created a problem: how should criminals be punished? As a result, other ideas were tried out. One of these was building prisons and using jail to prevent people from committing further crimes. During the Victorian period, prison became the main form of punishment for lots of different crimes. Life in a Victorian prison was extremely tough. Even people who were put into prison for less than three months had to do hard labour. This meant carrying out very physically demanding tasks in complete silence.

The police force was first introduced in London in 1829. Sir Robert Peel introduced them as part of a campaign to improve public law. These policemen were called 'Bobbies' or 'Peelers'. By 1839, other areas of the country were developing their own police force.



## 21st century How has the past impacted on our justice system today?

Nowadays, we have many more ways to find criminals and send them to prison. We also use many methods to stop people from carrying out a crime. How many things have we kept though when catching and punishing criminals?



Prevention – to stop something from happening.



Detection – to find out how something has happened.