

Examiners' report

GCSE

HISTORY B

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
History B (Schools History Project)**

J411

For first teaching in 2016

**Crime and Punishment, c.1250 to present
J411/14, J411/15 and J411/16
Summer 2025 series**

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Crime and Punishment, c.1250 to present overview

Crime and Punishment, c.1250 to present is one of three thematic units in Component Group 1 British History GCSE paper. The focus of assessment for the thematic paper is knowledge and understanding, and explaining and analysing events and periods. The paper has three compulsory questions and a choice of one question from two optional questions.

The thematic study requires candidates to understand change and continuity from c.1250 to the present. The study requires them to consider historical development over a long period and to identify and explain why certain developments occurred. The questions test various historical skills from the ability to deploy second order concepts in their answers to writing explained arguments for or against certain views.

Specifically, candidates need to be able to present a historical summary of an area of content they have learned (Question 2), offer an explanation in response to a historical question (e.g., explaining the causes or consequences of something) in Question 3 and recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a statement in an essay-style question from either Question 4 or Question 5.

It was clear from the majority of answers that most candidates had been well-prepared and were able to deploy their knowledge accurately at least in part in the essay-style questions (Questions 4 and 5).

However, on Question 2, while most candidates were able to provide accurate and often detailed summaries, many did not present an analytical response.

It was also apparent that candidates struggled to provide specific historical detail to support their answers, providing general ideas about the period.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- recalled at least two valid answers for Question 1 - analysed the use of technology in law enforcement since c.1900 by organising their answer around a historical concept (most frequently done well were those that addressed the impact of technology in allowing the police to identify criminals) - supported answer using specific examples - fully explained reasons for the establishment of the Metropolitan Police, using examples that went beyond overcrowding/urbanisation - effectively deployed a range of knowledge in the essay question, using precise evidence to support their answers (Question 4 and Question 5).	- did not have a strong sense of chronology and could not produce specific examples - muddled law enforcement with punishment or crime - did not produce a valid answer to any part of Question 1 - described technology in law enforcement since c.1900 without organising around a specific concept - described the Metropolitan Police or conditions in 19th Century London that impacted crime figures without linking to the question - on Question 4 could write at length about medieval issues around the community but struggled to find specific examples after 1900 - in both questions 4 and 5 often relied on common sense answers with very little specific evidence to support their opinions.

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Question 1 (a)

- 1**
(a) Name **one** crime in medieval Britain (1250–1500) which could be punished by execution. [1]

Generally done well, murder and treason were common responses.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Name **one** new punishment introduced in the early modern period (1500–1750). [1]

Common answers to this question included ducking stool, scold's bridle and transportation to America. Candidates who did less well on this question gave answers that were not new, such as public penance which was used in the Medieval period but became common between 1500-1750. Some responses included new crimes, but this question was about punishment and not new crimes.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Identify **one reason why** the crime rate changed during the period 1900 to 2015. [1]

There were many possible responses, many answers included that there have been changes in what constitutes a crime using the changes to abortion laws as one example. There were too many general answers that could apply to any period, for example, just saying changes in technology without being period specific.

Question 2

- 2** Write a clear and organised summary that analyses the use of technology in law enforcement since c.1900.

Support your summary with examples.

[9]

Candidates often addressed second order concepts in this question around impact and discussed how technology has made it easier for law enforcement to identify criminals and prove a crime has been committed. The use of fingerprints/DNA and CCTV were common examples. In order to stop this becoming a list of things, candidates needed to show how the technology had made this impact.

Another second order concept that was possible to achieve was around changes in technology and how things had improved, for example, from bicycles to cars but often candidates did not identify a change from/to even in the case of a change within the period, e.g., fingerprints and blood groups to DNA.

Candidates did know a lot about technology and its impact on law enforcement, but they struggled to organise effectively.

Exemplar 1

2.	In the modern period, technology has been of massive aid to the police force and law enforcement. The discovery of blood groups in 1901 meant that police could now analyse suspects blood found at crime scenes to genetically tie somebody to the crime. This new technology has thus lead to more criminals being caught as a result of their blood. In addition, the use of finger prints from 1902 onwards has helped with law enforcement. The fingerprints can now be recorded and put against the police's data base of past criminals finger prints to help catch criminals. This means that more criminals were being caught as a result of new fingerprint technology. Which leads to an increased efficiency for officers inspecting crimes because they can now use the large data base to search for answers. Moreover, the invention of CCTV has been a crucial development. In 1984, CCTV was created and is now used to literally catch criminals in the act. This technological advancement means there is now more evidence for the Crown Prosecution Service to convict criminals of their crimes. CCTV was particularly successful at stopping football hooliganism in the 1980's because the fans faces would
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		now be on camera and juns did not want to receive banning orders.
		Overall, technology has been incredibly effective in law enforcement post 1400 and is still being used today. Technology allowed police to compile more evidence against criminals through DNA like blood groups and fingerprints but also through video with CCTV's invention. This made prosecution of criminals easier.

It is obvious from the beginning in Exemplar 1 that the candidate is talking about the help technology has given to the police, 'technology has been of massive aid...', they go on to address several innovations, in this case blood groups, fingerprints and CCTV, with the use of terms such as 'meant that' and 'means that'. These clearly show how this technology has impacted law enforcement.

The high level response shows clear second order concepts, with a high level of knowledge and understanding.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should spend time planning their answers to this question and think about how they will set out what they are going to say about the second order concept before writing a list of 'things'.

Sentence starters such as, 'and so', or 'this meant', help candidates to nail down their analysis and do more than list.

Question 3

3 Why was the Metropolitan Police Force set up in 1829?

Explain your answer.

[10]

The question is about reasons for the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829.

Examiners are looking for two explained points that address this question:

As the mark scheme makes clear, an explained point needs:

1. An identification of the reason why the Metropolitan Police was founded
2. Precise evidence to support this reason
3. Use of this to answer the question.

Once the reason for the establishment of the Met is identified it needs to be explained by doing two things so that the question is answered:

1. Explaining why that reason led to a permanent police force being established in London (answer the question).
2. Giving precise detail to support this argument. The precise detail needs to be specific and go beyond larger population causing crimes.

Candidates tended to give clear reasons to answer the question but did not support with specific detail or were not specific about detail of the 19th Century. Common reasons for the Metropolitan Police Force being set up were the increase in crime in London combined with the lack of numbers in the Bow Street Runners as well as Peel wanting a professional force and his ability to see it through parliament.

Exemplar 2

3. The Metropolitan Police Force was a group founded and set up by Sir Robert Peel in the ^{early} 17th century. It aimed to decrease the rising crime rate and provide a more organised and specialised force to protect people from crime.

^{main} Oneⁿ Reason why ~~this group~~ the Metropolitan Police Force was started was due to the steadily rising crime rates. Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, there was an influx of soldiers who returned home unemployed and, with ^{little to} no support from the government, ~~it~~ turned to crime. This rapid increase in crime rates allowed Robert Peel to argue that a ^{stronger} solution than the previously created 'Bow Street Runners' was needed. This ~~allowed~~ was a significant reason why it was set up.

A second reason for its creation was the fear and paranoia of the public and citizens, especially in towns and cities. As urbanisation flourished many people flocked to towns and cities, overcrowding them. This meant that there was a dramatic increase in crime due to ^{the} poor conditions living there. This meant that fear of crime increased, ~~and this this~~ and people began to accept that a more drastic solution, such as an organised police force, was necessary.

		A third and final reason for the ^{its} creation of the Metropolitan Police Force was the increase in press and news. Newspapers at this time were constantly handed out to give people the latest stories and one of the things they mentioned most was horrific crimes. The people at This meant that fear of crime drastically increased as people heard about it constantly and which created the impression crime was all around them. This me was also a large reason why people Robert Peel was able to argue that people would accept a professional p Police Force and why the Metropolitan Police Force was set up, to ease people's worries about crime and prevent it.
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The response in Exemplar 2 sets out a clear argument in the first paragraph.

The first reason is 'steadily rising crime'. The precise detail to support this comes from the information about soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars and turning to crime. This is linked back to the question using the argument that this allowed Robert Peel to argue for a stronger police force than the Bow Street Runners.

The response then addresses the fear and paranoia during this period with detail including the dramatic increase in crime that occurred as well as later on the newspapers and press drama around this happening, which then links back to saying that this was proof that an organised police force was needed.

Assessment for learning



It is really important that in the thematic study candidates are clear about the specific features of each historical period. Issues such as urbanisation leading to crime are factors from 1500 to the present day and so candidates should have a clear example from each period, in this case the Napoleonic Wars, to have precise detail for each time period.

Question 4*

- 4* 'The role of the community in enforcing the law and punishing criminals was more important in the medieval period (1250–1500) than it has been after 1900.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

This question was by far the most common with candidates able to write in detail about medieval community involvement in law enforcement. They were not so secure about the role of the community after 1900 and often struggled to be precise or accurate.

The mark scheme states that candidates should:

1. Identify a way in which the community was involved in law enforcement
2. Offer specific detail about its nature and effectiveness/importance
3. Use this to address the question and evaluate its importance.

In order to achieve the full range of the mark scheme, candidates needed to address both historical periods and not necessarily look at relative importance within each period, e.g., for balance they needed to say it was important in the Middle Ages because of, say the hue and cry but it is also important after 1900 because of the jury system.

There were many valid points raised for the importance of the role of the community in the Medieval period. These included tithings, the posse, hue and cry, no police, the role of Sheriffs and watchmen, juries, manor courts run by local lords, and public humiliation. Candidates argued that the use of JPs and Sheriffs who were responsible to the monarch and the Royal and church courts lessened the role of the community as these were outside the community.

Valid points since 1900 for the importance of the community included Neighbourhood Watch, community policing in schools, Jury service, and magistrates from the community while the counter-argument usually came from the fact that we now have a professional police force.

Candidates were well trained in writing arguments for and against the point, but few were confident in their writing to clinch the argument and achieve full marks. Many candidates could write at length about the different methods but then did not link back to the question to explain the point.

Exemplar 3

4		i strongly agree that the role of community in law enforcement and punishment was more significant in the medieval period than post 1900. This is due to the medieval periods lack of policing and public methods of punishment, compared to modern policing and technology which means professional trained professionals deal with crime. one reason that supports the idea that community was more important in enforcing the law in the medieval period is due to their catching criminals method called the Hue and Cry. This meant that that the witnesses village of a crime had to speak out and 'cry' about the crime, and then the village, with the help of a sherrie would have to chase down the criminal. if this failed,
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then it would go to the *Passes Contidous*, who were a group of men over 15, who would continue the chase until the criminal was caught. The Hue and Cry was their main form of catching criminals, which proves how important community was in law enforcement.

The role of community was also important in the punishment of criminals as a lot of medieval punishments were humiliation based; ~~the~~ the stocks ^{and} the pillory. These punishments were designed to deter others as they see the embarrassment of ~~watching~~ standing in the street having food thrown at you, but it also deterred the criminal, as they don't want to face the shame from their ~~community~~ ^{village}. Without the ~~the~~ important role of community, their punishments wouldn't mean anything as passers by wouldn't care and neither would the criminal, so in having that role ~~again~~, it gave the ability to punish criminals through their embarrassment.

In medieval law enforcement, they also had ~~the~~ tithings, which were groups of ten men, and if one of them committed

a crime, it was the other men's job to turn him in, no police force involved, just the community. They would all be fined if they failed to turn the criminal in, which is what made this method work. ~~was~~ Even the little ~~formal~~ formal law enforcement they had were still community based, as constables and watchmen were volunteers, and the whole community would be on a rota on who was going to do it, ~~these~~ again highlighting how significant community was in ~~the~~ medieval law enforcement.

However, some could argue that community is ~~still~~ significant in modern law enforcement and punishment. This is through ideas like the neighbourhood watch scheme, which is like a modern hush and cry. ~~They~~ Volunteers often do things like monitor speeding through villages. But also, juries in court. They are groups of 12 people from the community, involved in the law enforcement in the court, their verdict can affect the punishment the accused receive. These ideas highlight communities ongoing

		importance in law enforcement and punishment.
		In conclusion, I agree with the statement, because although community all plays a part in modern law enforcement and punishment, it plays a more significant part in the medieval period.

Exemplar 3 shows a high level performance:

The response clearly identifies the points, provides specific detail and then addresses the question.

They use hue and cry, public punishment and tithings/watchmen to back up their Medieval knowledge

They then link Neighbourhood Watch and juries and examples of the community supporting law enforcement and punishment to the question.

Question 5*

5* 'The reason punishments changed in the period 1750–1900 was because of new concerns about people's welfare.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

There were fewer responses to this question but most candidates who answered it dealt with it well.

Candidates were able to write in detail about new methods in hanging, the role of Howard and Fry and different reasons for the end of transportation.

The mark scheme states that candidates should:

1. Identify a way in which the community was involved in law enforcement
2. Offer specific detail about its nature and effectiveness/importance
3. Use this to address the question and evaluate its importance.

Valid points for agreeing included the New Drop and Long Drop, the end of transportation after 1868, Judges/juries not willing to implement the Bloody Code for welfare reasons, the concerns of Fry and Howard about conditions in prisons, and the Silent system that was used in some prisons because the separate system was seen to be too harsh.

Valid points for disagreeing included the rowdy behaviour of crowds during public executions and government concerns surrounding this, reasons for increased use of transportation, for example, the need to settle new colonies; the wish to remove 'criminal classes' from Britain; the lack of adequate prison space; and government feeling that criminals were not being punished, the moral panic caused by the 'garrotting crisis' of the 1860s, and the 1865 Prison Act which included hard labour.

Candidates were well trained in writing arguments for and against the point, but few were confident in their writing to clinch the argument and achieve full marks. Many candidates could write at length about the different reasons but then did not link back to the question to explain the point.

Many candidates could not clearly define welfare and so got themselves confused.

Exemplar 4

5	Between the periods 1750 and 1900 punishments changed for a magnitude of reasons such as people's welfare or to expand the empire and remove criminals. In my opinion, I think that new ideas of welfare did cause some change to punishments but it wasn't the only reason so I partly agree. Firstly I agree that welfare did cause changes to punishment. People like Elizabeth Fry saw the horrors of living in prisons and campaigned for their improvements. Prisons were places where a variety of criminals lived including murderers and children. They'd all had to sleep on the cold floor which was overcrowded. Elizabeth was a Quaker which meant she believed everyone was equal so she campaigned for separate prisons for men and women and children shouldn't be held responsible for their actions. Eventually the government did change the laws separating women and putting children in separate rehabilitation schools. This shows that Fry's concern about welfare led to improvements to prisons. Another way I agree with the statement is the removal of the the Bloody Code. Blow The Bloody Code made a bunch of crimes capital offences leading making the criminals have to be executed. By 1815 there were over 225 capital offences. However juries were reluctant to give capital offences to petty crimes as they felt it was unfair. This led to criminals not being made guilty and getting away with petty
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Crimes. By the mid 14th century Robert ~~great~~ Peelle removed the Bloody Code which meant less crimes were capital offences making juries less reluctant in giving out punishments. This shows that the juries care for welfare caused the removal of the Bloody Code so changing a lot of punishments.

However, not all punishments were changed from concerns of people's welfare. A new punishment called transportation meant criminals would be ~~never~~ removed from the country and transported to new colonies like Australia. This had ~~the~~ 2 benefits as it would remove criminals making the government able to spend less money on prisons and built up the ~~the~~ British empire as more people were moving to them. This would have built up the local area which would have led to more taxes toward the government. This shows that punishments changed as people were greedy for ~~power~~ more power. However this punishment wouldn't last long as it was beginning to get too expensive and after the discovery of gold, criminals wanted to go there no longer making it a punishment.

Another way I disagree with the statement is that there was a lot of changes to prisons to make it harder and more jitting of a punishment. People felt like prisons weren't harsh enough which led to changes to prison systems. The silent system was employed which made prisoners forbidden to speaking to each other. However this led many to go crazy and commit suicide. So instead useless labour

		husks were giving them walking on a treadmill or or spitting code. This made prisoners have something to do occupying their boredom. This shows that the punishments can change from people feeling like it needs to be more severe and harsh.
		Overall I think that I partly agree with the statement as people like Fry did care about welfare but welfare wasn't the only reason why punishments change for example for power.

Exemplar 4 shows a high level performance. The candidate clearly identifies the points, provides specific detail and then addresses the question.

They use Elizabeth Fry and the removal of the Bloody Code to link to welfare and then counter the argument around transportation costing less and building up Australia and then that conditions did not actually get better in many instances using treadmills as a specific example of enforcement being unkind.

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