Timeline (AD)

43-410	480-1066	1066-1485	1485-1603	1603-1837	1837-1901	1901 - NOW
Roman Britain	Anglo-Saxon Era	Middle Ages	Tudor Era	Stuart and Georgian Era	Victorians	Modern Era

Key vocabulary

deterrence	The action of discouraging crime through fear of consequences.
DNA profiling	From 1984 it identified someone from a crime scene through body fluids (e.g skin, saliva, sweat).
gallows	A wooden structure with steps leading to a platform where criminals would be hung in front of an audience.
highwayman	Dict Turpin was a famous English highway man who rode a horse and stole from travellers.
justice	For someone to have fair treatment for their behaviour.
prevention	An attempt to reduce crime by deterring criminals to participate in such acts.
retribution	A punishment inflicted on someone as vengeance for a wrong or criminal act.
sin	An immoral act considered to be against law or more commonly a religious belief.
stocks	The placid of boards around the ankles and wrists as a form of torture or humiliation.
witch trials	In the mi 1640's terrifying witch hunts took place in the UK. Between 15001800, 5000 people were executed for witchcraft across europe.

Romans (43-410 AD)

Society was made up of the very rich but also very poor slaves. This resulted in conflict and crime. As slavery was legal, running away from an owner was a crime. Sellers would lie to customers and give them less (fraud) and large crowds gathering often resulted in riots. Roman laws were called 'The Twelve Tables'. Major crimes would be punished by crucifixion or sent to fight in arenas. Vigiles were volunteers who patrolled the streets.

Example of Roman punishment

Anglo-Saxons (480-1066 AD)

Anglo-saxon Britain was not ruled by one person and the Anglo-saxons were not united. They invaded as many different tribes and each took over different parts of Britain. They didn't have prisons, instead they were executed or punished with fines. If they ran away they would b 'outlaws', and anyone could hunt them down - unless they hid in a church. The fine for breaking into someone's home was 5 shillings (25p), paid to the homeowner. For minor crimes like stealing a hand might be cut off.

Examples of weapons used for punishment during the Anglo-Saxon era

Key Questions

Were the punishments across the ages were fair?

What do you think was the worst era for punishment?

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about committing a crime?

Tudors (1485-1603 AD)

Increasing populations, and gaps between rich a poor meant crime was very common. Public executions were a huge event with families. There would be food stalls and people used to queue for hours to get a good spot. These included beheadings hangings and burning. Begging without a licence would mean you would be whipped out of the town. Theft would result in having a limb chopped off, unless it was worth more than a shilling and that would be hanging. The idea was that severe punishments would put others off from committing crimes.

Stuart and Georgian (1603-1837 AD)

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 17th century which made it easier for highwaymen to threaten travellers and force them to give up their money and possessions.

Victorians (1837-1901 AD)

Anyone accused of a crime would be put in a 'lock up' until they could see a magistrate who would decide whether they could be released or if they needed to be sentenced by a judge. Courtrooms were created where victim and the accused could defend themselves and the death penalty became less common with a limited number of hangings. A police force was introduced in 1829. Public executions ended in 1868 and prisons were built to try and prevent people reoffending, although many were sent out to the Empire to serve sentences abroad.
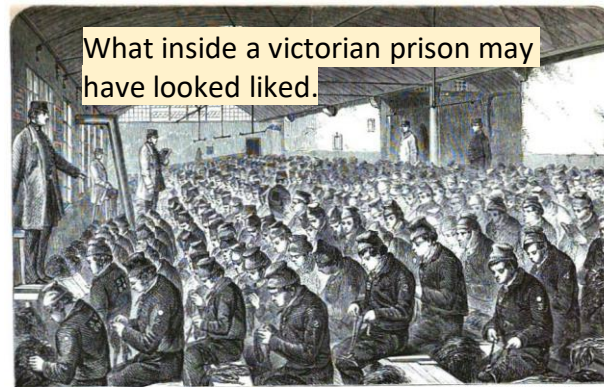
Modern Times (1901-Now)

Modern times is seen as wealthier than in previous eras where more people are employed or can afford to live comfortably, There are still large gaps between the rich and the poor and crime ranges from physical (thefts, assault, drink and drugs etc) to digital crime (e.g. fraud). Although the last public hanging was in 1886, the last actual hanging was in 1964. Prisons now work hard to rehabilitate people so that they do not reoffend and technological advances have meant catching criminals can be used by identifying fingerprints or even DNA.

A Hanging device that was used throughout the ages.

A Highwayman from Stuart and Georgian times.

What inside a victorian prison may have looked liked.

LARGE OAKUM-ROOM (UNDER THE SILENT SYSTEM) AT THE MIDDLESEX HOUSE OF CORRECTION, COLDBATH FIELDS.

DNA testing

Example of a fingerprint