



Crime Over Time – Knowledge Organiser

How has crime changed over time, and why?

Amethyst & Emerald



Key Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
crime	An act that breaks the law.
punishment	A penalty for breaking the law.
law	Rules made by the government to keep people safe and fair.
evidence	Proof that a crime has happened (e.g. fingerprints, witnesses, CCTV).
detective	A person who investigates crimes.
policing	The job of keeping people safe and enforcing the law.
justice	Fair treatment for everyone.
mugshot	A photograph taken after someone has been arrested.

Key Facts

- Crime has always existed, but the **types of crime** and how it is dealt with have changed over time.
- In the past, crimes like theft, **violence** and fraud were common. **Today**, **cybercrime** and online fraud are bigger issues.
- **Punishments have changed** from harsh and physical (e.g. whipping, hanging) to more fair and rehabilitative (e.g. community service, rehabilitation).
- **Technology** has had a big impact on crime and **policing**, from fingerprints and DNA to CCTV and online monitoring.
- **Society, laws and attitudes** also influence what is seen as a crime.

Key People



King Alfred the Great (c. 849–899)

- Introduced laws to reduce crime in Anglo-Saxon England.
- Believed in fair **punishment** and order.



Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850)

- Founded the modern police force in 1829 (the Metropolitan Police).
- Believed in “**policing by consent**” (working with the public).



Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845)

- Campaigner for prison reform.
- Helped improve the treatment of prisoners, especially women.



Sir Leonard Cheshire (1907–1992)

- Helped create the first youth offending teams in the UK (1960s).
- Focused on rehabilitation and support for young offenders.

Crime Over Time – Key Periods

Medieval Britain (1066–1500)

- **Common crimes:** theft, violence, banditry, witchcraft.
- **Punishments:** fines, whipping, branding, execution.



Tudor and Stuart Period (1500–1700)

- **Common crimes:** theft, piracy, treason, poaching.
- **Punishments:** hanging, drawing and quartering, public shaming.



Victorian Era (1837–1901)

- **Common crimes:** theft, fraud, domestic violence, child labour.
- **Punishments:** hard labour, prison, transportation (to Australia).



20th Century (1900–2000)

- **Common crimes:** theft, assault, drug offences, organised crime.
- **Changes:** more police, forensics, CCTV, better prison systems, focus on rehabilitation.



21st Century (2000–present)

- **Common crimes:** cybercrime, online fraud, identity theft, hate crime, terrorism.
- **Changes:** digital forensics, online policing, more focus on prevention and rehabilitation.



What Has Changed?

- ✓ The **types of crime** – from physical and local to digital and global.
- ✓ **Punishments** – from harsh and violent to **fairer and more** rehabilitative.
- ✓ **Policing** – from small, local groups to modern, professional forces.
- ✓ **Technology** – better evidence, faster investigations, online monitoring.
- ✓ **Society's views** – what is seen as a crime has changed (e.g. cyberbullying, hate crime, environmental crime).

Why Has It Changed?

- Advances in **technology** (e.g. CCTV, DNA, the internet).
- Changes in laws and government.
- Shifts in society's values and attitudes.
- Increased communication and globalisation (e.g. organised crime, online crime).
- Better understanding of crime and mental health.

Key Takeaway



Crime may always exist, but the types of crime, how it is dealt with and how we protect people have changed significantly over time.