

SOURCEWORK ASSESSMENT: JACK THE RIPPER AND THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS



SOURCE A: Part of an article from an East End newspaper describing the murders of Martha Tabram (who may have been a victim of Jack) and Polly Nicholls.

The two murders which have so startled London within the last month are unusual for the reason that the victims have been the poorest of the poor, and no motive can be traced. The crimes are the work of a demented being, as the extraordinary violence used is the strange feature of this case.

SOURCE B: Part of the Coroner's report of the death of Polly Nicholls

The body has not been dissected, but the injuries have been made by someone who had a lot of medical skill and knowledge. There are no meaningless cuts...No unskilled person could have known where to find the organs. No slaughterer of animals could have carried out these operations.

SOURCE C: The report of Dr Blackwell on the body of Liz Stride

The dead woman was lying on her left side across the passage. The neck and chest were quite warm, as were also the legs, and the face was slightly warm. The hands were cold. There was no money on the body. The appearance of the face was quite calm. The mouth was slightly opened. In the neck there was a long cut which began on the left side, two and a half inches below the angle of the jaw.

SOURCE D: The evidence of Elizabeth Long at the inquest into the death of Annie Chapman; she was describing the man seen talking to Annie before she was killed
He was dark and was wearing a deerstalker hat. I think he was wearing a dark coat but I cannot be sure. He was a man over forty, as far as I could tell. He seemed to be a little taller than the deceased. He looked to me like a foreigner.

SOURCE E: Part of an article published in a local newspaper after the murders of Polly Nicholls and Annie Chapman

My informant demanded at that time that the police force on the spot should be strengthened and some kind of order created on the streets by night. He warned that murder would happen again if matters were left as they were. He was referred from one police office to another. Then came the first murder. He went to the police again and warned them there would be more mischief unless they could clear the streets of the open and defiant ruffianism, which continued to make night hideous. Then came another murder.

The main streets of Whitechapel are connected by a network of narrow, dark and crooked lanes. Every one containing some headquarters of infamy. The sights and sounds are an apocalypse of evil.

SOURCE F: A police leaflet published after the murders of Liz Stride and Cathy Eddowes

POLICE NOTICE
TO THE OCCUPIER

On the morning of Friday, 31st August, Saturday 8th, and Sunday, 30th of September, 1888, women were murdered in or near Whitechapel, supposed by someone residing (living) in the immediate neighbourhood. Should you know of any person to whom suspicion is attached, you are requested to communicate at once with the nearest Police Station Metropolitan Police Office, 30th September 1888.

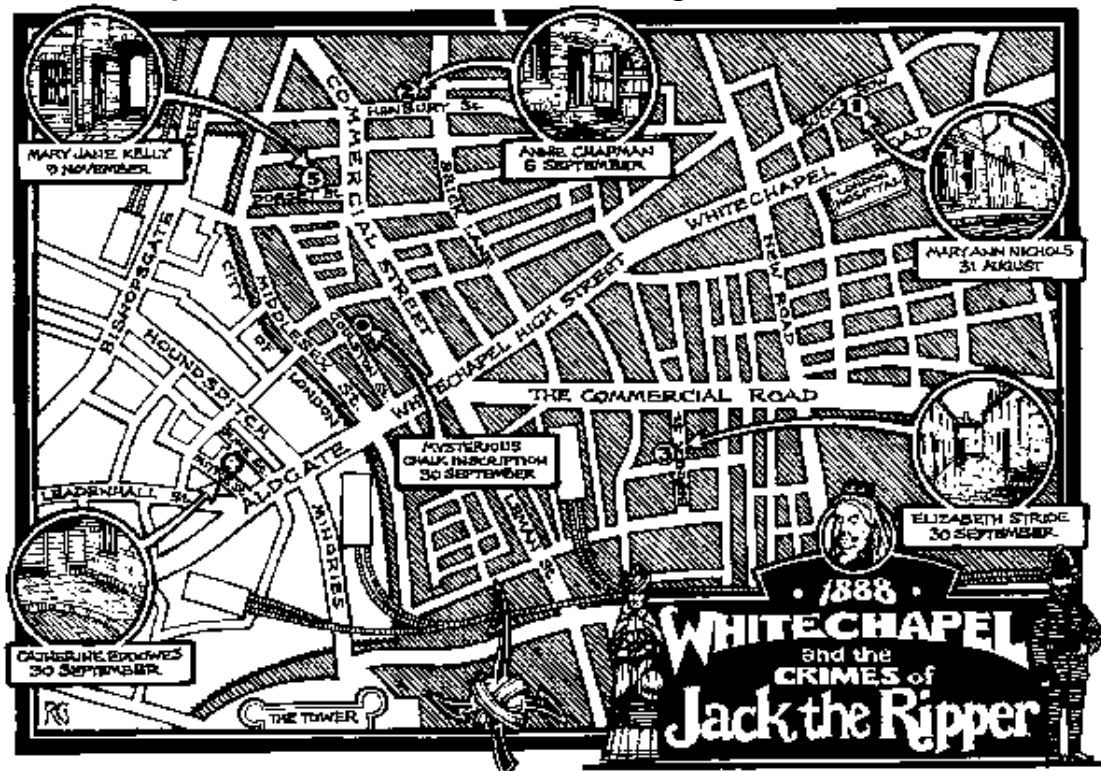
SOURCE G: Part of a letter from the Home Secretary to the Mile End Vigilance Committee on 17 September 1888

The practice of offering reward for the discovery of criminals was stopped some years ago because such offers tended to produce more harm than good. The Secretary of State is satisfied that there is nothing in the circumstances of the present case to reverse this rule.

SOURCE H: Part of an article published in *The Times* after the murder of Mary Kelly

The murders, so cunningly continued, are carried out with complete ruthlessness which altogether baffles investigators. Not a trace is left of the murderer, and there is no purpose in the crime to give any clue. All the police can hope is that some accidental event will lead to a trace which may be followed to a successful conclusion.

SOURCE I: A map of the East End in 1888 showing the sites of the murders



SOURCE J: A photograph of the back yard of 29 Hambury Street. Annie Chapman's body was lying against the fence with her head on the step.



QUESTIONS

- 1. Use the sources and your own knowledge.** [5]
What was London like in the late nineteenth century?
- 2. Use the sources and your own knowledge.** [3]
Why did the Whitechapel murders attract so much attention?
- 3. Study Source A** [3]
What can you learn from Source A about the murder of Polly Nicholls?
- 4. Study Sources A, B and C.** [4]
Does the evidence of Source C support the evidence in Sources A and B about the Ripper murders? Explain your answer.
- 5. Study Sources D and E.** [5]
How useful are these sources in helping you to understand why the Ripper was not caught?
- 6. Use all of the sources and your own knowledge.** [10]
“The police were to blame for not catching Jack the Ripper”
To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Total marks available = 30

MARKSCHEME

- 1. Describe London in the late nineteenth century** **[5]**
- L1 Simple statements unsupported by specific knowledge (“It was nasty and dirty”) 1-2
- L2 Developed statements supported by specific contextual knowledge, e.g. details about living and working conditions in the east and west ends, workhouses, poverty, crime etc. 3-4
- L3 As above, but inferences made from those facts to reach a deeper understanding (“because there was no social security many poor women had to resort to prostitution to survive”). 4-5
- 2. Use the sources and your own knowledge.** **[3]**
- Why did the Whitechapel murders attract so much attention?
- L1 Simple statements supported by some knowledge, e.g. lists the murders, basic details of the wounds etc. [1]
- L2 Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge, e.g. details of the murders, and of the victims [2]
- L3 Developed explanation supported by selected knowledge, e.g. makes links between factors, considers the nature of the crimes, press coverage, nature of the victims etc. [3]
- 3. Study Source A** **[3]**
- What can you learn from Source A about the murder of Polly Nicholls?
- L1 Simple statements supported by some knowledge taken from the source at face value, e.g. she was attacked brutally etc. [1]
- L2 Developed statements making inferences from the source, pointing out the weakness of the source or setting the source in context, e.g. people were surprised that poor prostitutes had been attacked, the two murders were linked at the time etc. [2-3]
- 4. Study Sources A, B and C.** **[4]**
- Does the evidence of Source C support the evidence in Sources A and B about the Ripper murders? Explain your answer.
- L1 Simple statements supported by some knowledge taking the sources at face value, e.g. yes they were all violent, a knife was used etc. [1]
- L2 Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge making inferences from the sources, pointing out the weaknesses of the sources or setting the source in context, e.g. A does not give details and was only interested in news, B and C give more accurate details etc. [2-3]
- L3 Developed explanation supported by selected knowledge and making positive use of the nature, origin and purpose of the sources, e.g. B and C official reports by people whose job was to investigate the murders, their tone is different, they comment on the likely murderer to some extent, but not in the same way that A does etc. [4]

5. Study Sources D and E.

[5]

How useful are these sources in helping you to understand why the Ripper was not caught?

- L1 Simple statements supported by some knowledge taking the sources at face value, e.g. vague, not sure, back yard, out of the way etc. [1]
- L2 Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge making inferences from the sources, pointing out the weaknesses of the sources or setting the sources in context, e.g. Long was making assumptions which may or may not have been etc. [2-3]
- L3 Developed explanation supported by selected knowledge and making positive use of the nature, origin and purpose of the source, e.g. Long gave evidence at the inquest, her information was taken seriously and the police acted on it, a great deal of effort was made into trying to find a foreigner. [4-5]

6. Use all of the sources and your own knowledge.

[10]

“The police were to blame for not catching Jack the Ripper”

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

- L1 Simple statements supported by some knowledge taking the sources at face value supporting *or* opposing the view, e.g. yes because they did not know much. [1-2]
- L2 Developed statements supported by relevant knowledge making inferences from the sources, supporting *or* opposing the view, e.g. describes what they did not do, false leads etc. [3-5]
- L3 Developed explanation which acknowledges that there are two sides to the case, supported by selected knowledge and making positive use of the nature, origin and purpose of the sources, e.g. shows that all levels of the police were poorly prepared for like this, considers the way that the Ripper acted and whether that made capture more likely etc. [6-8]
- L4 Sustained argument supported by precisely selected knowledge and using the sources as evidence to assess the view and compare it with alternative views, e.g. sets the murders in the context of the late nineteenth century, what did police have to go on, no accurate descriptions, killing at random etc. [9-10]