Crime and Punishment

Roman laws were called 'the Twelve Tables'.

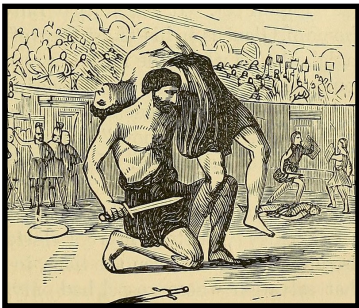People accused of a crime were tried in a **court.**

If you were a **slave** and found guilty, you would probably be **killed** or **forced to become a gladiator**.

If you were a **noble**, you might be sent into **exile**.

For everyone else, you might be **flogged, executed, have limbs amputated** or be forced into becoming a **gladiator.**

The worse punishments were for anyone who went against the **emperor**.

There were no prisons so punishments were designed to be a big deterrent. Each Anglo Saxon king had his own punishments.

Villages were divided into **tithings**, which were groups of ten men who were responsible for each other's behaviour and bringing criminals to court.

Like today, a **jury** would decide if the accused was guilty. If they were undecided, the accused could face a **trial by ordeal** (cold water, hot water or iron bar) where the gods would decide.

Wergild was money paid as compensation. Other punishments included: **stoning, whipping, branding, drowning, exile and the stocks**.

Food became more expensive in Tudor times, so a lot more people had to resort to stealing and particularly in London, there was a lot of crime.

Even stealing a few pounds, could get you the **death penalty**. Other punishments included: the **stocks, the pillory, the scold's bridle, the drunkard's cloak, the rack the ducking stool and branding**.

Public executions were popular events and people often took their children to watch. Some historians think that around **70 000** people were executed when Henry VIII was king.

Highwaymen became a bigger threat than before. This was partly due to the invention of the **pistol**, and partly because more wealthy people were travelling on the roads than before. Highway men would threaten to kill the people in their carriages if they didn't hand over their money.

One of the most famous highwaymen was called **Dick Turpin**. He was eventually caught and hung when the postman recognised his handwriting.

Sir Robert Peel introduced the **police force** in London in 1929. They carried **truncheons** as weapons.

Prisons became the most common punishment in Victorian times. Prisoners had to do **hard labour**: physically hard tasks that often had no point.

Hard labour punishments included: **The treadwheel** – this was a huge iron wheel that prisoners moved with their feet. **The shot drill** – prisoners had to move a cannon ball backwards and forwards for no reason. **Picking oakum** – prisoners had to pull apart used rope. **The crank** – prisoners had to turn a crank 10,000 times a day.

This 10-year old had a month's hard labour for stealing two rabbits.

Romans	Anglo Saxons	Tudors	Georgians	Victorians
753 BC–476 AD	410 to 1066	1485-1603	1714 – 1837	1837-1901