



Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9–1) History

Paper 1:
Whitechapel
historic
environment
teaching resource



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Paper 1: Whitechapel historic environment teaching resource

Introduction

For the Edexcel GCSE (9–1) History specification, a popular Paper 1 option is Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present. Nested within this thematic study is the historic environment Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city. It examines the relationship between Whitechapel and historical events and developments in crime and policing, giving students the opportunity to explore the issues of poverty and crime in Victorian London.

This historic environment includes a bullet point on investigative policing in Whitechapel, and students should explore how investigative policing was just beginning, how the policing structure worked, and how overlap between the Metropolitan police force and other police forces caused difficulties. Within this context, students should look at how the police dealt with the crimes of Jack the Ripper and the added problems caused by the media reporting of the ‘Ripper’ murders (*Specification*, p.10). The inclusion of the five murders considered to have been carried out in 1888 by the criminal known to history as Jack the Ripper is intended as a ‘case study’ to exemplify the methods of investigative policing available at the time and the challenges the police faced in bringing murderers to justice.

Recently, the challenge has been raised that traditional studies of the Ripper murders have dehumanised the victims and given too much attention to the murderer’s crimes and ‘solving the mystery’ of who he was. This is the premise of the engaging and extensively researched work *The Five*, by Hallie Rubenhold (Penguin, 2019). Rubenhold has shown the dangers of dehumanising the victims, for example in the resulting but questionable common assumption that they were all prostitutes. As a result of this work, some teachers have begun to address the balance by including the lives of the five women in their schemes of work. This is an admirable goal, which will help students to see the women as people and not just victims. At the same time, it is important to not lose focus on the specification content.

This resource pack is designed to help teachers to incorporate the lives of the five women into their teaching in a way that shows them as real people, with their own lived experiences, whilst maintaining a focus on the specification content and continuing to prepare students for the exam. By studying the five women and their documented life experiences, teachers can help students to better understand the realities of life for people in late Victorian Whitechapel. Their lives intertwine with many of the individual aspects of the specification content that students need to understand, such as the problems of housing, provision for the poor in the workhouses, the prevalence of lodging houses, and so on.

The resource consists of four parts, and a summary of what they cover is given on the next page. They are not designed to be run as a series of lessons, but rather are intended to be supplementary resources to be incorporated into existing schemes of work at appropriate points. These resources do not cover the full specification content of the Whitechapel historic environment.

Summary of the resource

	Content	Suggested point to use the resource
Resource 1	This resource introduces the five women as individuals. By a consideration of the background of each woman, as well as other individuals in Whitechapel, the topic addresses the groups of people who lived in Whitechapel. Although the resource mentions the women's relevance to the topic as murder victims in 1888, the resource does not develop the connection to the Ripper case.	This resource would work well as part of the introduction to the historic environment, connected to the first content bullet point.
Resource 2	This resource focuses on the living conditions in Whitechapel, including life in the workhouses and lodging houses, by drawing on the experience of the five women.	This resource would work well early in the topic, possibly soon after Resource 1.
Resource 3	This resource addresses the debate over whether the five Ripper victims were prostitutes or not. By comparing historical interpretations and using their own knowledge of Whitechapel and the five women, students will come to their own judgement on the issue.	This resource will work well toward the end of the course, after the content of fourth content bullet points has been taught, as it draws upon broad contextual knowledge.
Resource 4	This resource will address the way that the media created a popular viewpoint that the victims of the Ripper were all prostitutes, an assumption that has only recently been challenged. By connecting the social context of Whitechapel with how the media presented the women in reporting their murders, students will develop their understanding of how the media affected the investigation of the Ripper murders and how evidence influences the judgements of later historians.	This resource is intended to follow on from Resource 3. It would fit well as part of the coverage of 'the added problems caused by the media reporting of the "Ripper" murders.'

Differentiation

GCSE classes encompass students with different abilities, literacy levels, prior knowledge and individual needs. Teachers have to take this into consideration by differentiating work to be accessible and appropriate for all abilities.

It is not possible to provide this degree of differentiation within a single teaching resource, but to assist teachers, the resources have been differentiated into two levels of challenge. This has been marked by the following symbols:



Higher level of challenge



Simplified level of challenge, with simpler language

The differentiation in this pack has been deliberately selected to keep the tasks equivalent, to allow teachers to use them in parallel within the same lesson. Not everything has been differentiated, for example sources taken from past papers have not been amended from the level of language used within the exam paper.

Acknowledgements

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First source on p.19 from Fiona Rule, 'The Worst Street in London', Ian Allan Ltd (7 Jan. 2010); second source on p.19 taken from <http://www.umich.edu/~risotto/maxzooms/ne/nej56.html>; Interpretation 1 on p.25 from 'Jack the Ripper', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* online <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jack-the-Ripper>; Interpretation 2 on p.25 from Beth Fisher, 'How the Press created "Jack the Ripper"', *History Today*, 31 August 2018, <https://www.historytoday.com/history-matters/how-press-created-%E2%80%98jack-ripper%E2%80%99>; Interpretation 3 from Hallie Rubenhold, *The Five* (Penguin 2019) p.15; Source 1 on p.29, https://www.casebook.org/press_reports/british_daily_whig/bdw880910.html; Source 2A on p.29, https://www.casebook.org/official_documents/inquests/inquest_nichols.html; Source 2B on p.29, <https://www.jack-the-ripper.org/edward-walker.htm>; Source 3 on p.29, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook: An Illustrated Encyclopaedia* (Robinson, 2000) p.27; Source 4 on p.29, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook: An Illustrated Encyclopaedia* (Robinson, 2000) p.33; Source 5 on p.30, https://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880908.html; Source 6 on p.30, Hallie Rubenhold, *The Five* (Penguin 2019) pp.337–8; Source 7 on p.30, adapted from Andrew Barrett and Christopher Harrison (eds), *Crime and Punishment in England: a Sourcebook* (Routledge 1998).

Resource 1 – The women of Whitechapel

This resource introduces the five women as individuals. By a consideration of the background of each woman, as well as other individuals in Whitechapel, the topic addresses some of the major social themes in the specification, such as the issues of immigration and a fluctuating population, poor living conditions, poverty, prostitution and alcoholism.

For deliberate reason, no mention is made of the specifics of the deaths of these women to help students to focus on their lives rather than the circumstances of their deaths.

Suggested usage within a scheme of work

This lesson would work well early on in the study of the historic environment. It could be best used straight after covering the first bullet point of the specification content when students have an awareness of some of the issues like overcrowding, workhouses, etc.

Suggested lesson structure

Please note that this is a suggested lesson structure, and as such is deliberately simple to leave room for teachers to develop it for their own class. This could be expanded, reduced or used as a section of a longer lesson, in which case the plenary would become a progress check before continuing with the lesson.

Starter

- A class discussion, or creating mind maps in small groups on large paper, with the question – “What have you already learned about life Britain (or Whitechapel, if you have already covered the local context) for poor people?” Spend a few minutes helping the class to be familiar with the local context and some of the big social and contextual issues.

Main task

- As a class, read the information card on Mary Ann Nichols. This could be the teacher, or individuals in the class reading. Highlight some of the key features of her life, and then review the first line on the worksheet table, which has already been completed, as a class.
- Divide the class into groups of four. Each person needs one information card, so that the group communally has information on all four remaining women. The instructions for using the cards and the table are on the task sheet. The task sheet is provided in two differentiated versions, which are designed to be able to be used alongside each other in a mixed-ability class, since the group part of the task is the same on both versions.
- Once the groups have completed their tables, students should continue with the individual questions on the task sheet.

Plenary

Any one, or a combination, of the following.

- Option 1 – Class discussion of the key points learned from the study of the women's lives, or individually make a five-point bullet list of the most important things learned in the lesson about life in Whitechapel.
- Option 2 – A discussion based upon the extension question on the higher-level task sheet. Discuss with the class what inferences can be drawn from the items found on four of the five bodies. Possible answers could include the level of poverty, the mix and match nature of the clothing, the fact that the women all had combs pointing to social expectations of appearance, the lack of money or real valuable items, the use of large pockets for carrying all belongings on the person, or the hoarder nature of holding onto small, even broken items due to personal need.
- Option 3 – Only one of the women (Annie Chapman) has a photo of her whilst alive. What can be inferred from this about the lives of the women and the poor in general. What issues are there with relying on the newspaper sketches of the other women? Why do we not even have a life newspaper sketch of Mary Ann Nichols? What explains why Chapman has a photo, but the other women do not?

Individual Number 1 – Mary Ann Nichols



Image: PAL

Some of the possessions on Polly's body when she was found:

- A black straw bonnet
- Two petticoats, stamped with "Lambeth Workhouse"
- One dress
- One coat
- Men's boots
- A comb
- One handkerchief
- A piece of a mirror

My name is Mary Ann Nichols, but people call me Polly Ann. I was born on 26th August 1845 to a family which was quite poor. I grew up in Holborn, London. There were five of us in the home. But when I was six years old, my mother and baby sister died from tuberculosis. I had to help my father by looking after the home and my brother.

Although we had a poor life, my father believed in education, so he used valuable pennies to allow me to be educated, including learning to read and write, until I was 15.

When I was 18, I married and started my own family – I had five children who survived, plus some who died young. When I was 30, my family were fortunate to get an apartment in a Peabody Estate, which meant that we had more comfortable, well-kept housing than most families. However, my marriage broke down, probably due to suspecting my husband was in a relationship with a neighbour, and in 1880 I left my husband and children behind.

For brief periods I lived with my father, but that did not last as we argued, and I spent several periods of time in different workhouses in London. I hated the conditions in the workhouses, and regularly resorted to begging and sleeping rough to avoid staying there. I was arrested and taken in front of a magistrate for begging. Time and time again, I ended up in the workhouse or begging for money to sleep in a lodging house. When I could not afford a lodging house or face going to the workhouse, I stayed on the streets. I developed alcohol addiction, which took much of my money for rent. In the summer of 1888, I was surviving by begging in Whitechapel.

Individual Number 2 – Annie Chapman



Image: Axis Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Some of the possessions on Annie's body when she was found:

- One coat
- One skirt and bodice
- Two petticoats
- A large pocket worn secretly under skirt and tied around waist.
- Lace up boots
- Scrap of muslin (a type of cloth)
- Two small combs
- Two pills for treating lung disease

My name is Annie Chapman. I was born in 1840. I was raised in army barracks as my father was a soldier. We had to move several times as my father was posted to different bases. Later, he worked as a personal servant to wealthy men, so I had a comfortable life for a working-class family. I even received a surprisingly good education from the military. I was well spoken. Unfortunately, four of my siblings died within a few weeks of each other from scarlet fever. My father committed suicide a few years later as well. Fortunately, my mother was hardworking and maintained a comfortable standard of living.

Most of my family did not drink alcohol, but possibly because of the tragedies in my life, I developed a strong alcoholic addiction. I controlled it for some years by hiding it from my family. I married a stage coachman, which was a well-paid career. However, six of my children died, and in desperation I turned to alcohol even more. My husband and sister got me into a year-long stay at a rehabilitation clinic, but soon after, I returned to alcohol. I had to leave my husband and family, because the wealthy man my husband worked for did not want an alcoholic on his property.

I ended up in London, living off money my husband sent me. It was not safe for a woman on her own, so I lived with three different men, one after the other. Eventually, my husband died, and his money stopped. The man I was with left me. I could not go to the workhouse as they would not allow alcohol, and my addiction was too strong to stop. By 1888, I had tuberculosis and was surviving by begging and sleeping rough in Whitechapel. I only occasionally had enough money for a lodging house.

Individual Number 3 – Elizabeth Stride



Image: Lordprice Collection / Alamy Stock Photos

Some of the possessions on Elizabeth's body when she was found:

- One coat
- One skirt and bodice
- Two petticoats
- One bonnet, stuffed with newspaper as it was too large
- Stockings
- A scarf
- Boots
- A thimble
- A comb and a broken piece of a comb
- A metal spoon
- A small piece of a pencil

My name is Elizabeth Stride. I am not English, but Swedish. I was born into a religious farming community on 27th November 1843. I had little education and could not write. At 15, I moved to a city to work as a servant. I became pregnant to a person connected to the family I worked for, and contracted syphilis. Unfortunately, in Sweden at this time, the law treated single mothers and prostitutes equally. I faced public humiliation, including being on a police register of prostitutes. I found myself locked in a hospital enduring dangerous treatments for syphilis and I miscarried my baby. I had to work as a prostitute to support myself.

Eventually, I found work as a servant for a family that travelled to London. I learned to speak English, and I met and married a carpenter. We opened a coffee shop together in East London, which was a home as well as a business. However, our business failed, and we became poor. We expected money from my father-in-law but he refused to help us. I could not give birth to a healthy baby, possibly because of syphilis, and this, along with our money problems, broke our marriage up.

I arrived in Whitechapel, where I slept in lodging houses. I even met Dr Barnardo whilst in a lodging house. By this point, I had developed an alcohol addiction. I made money by working as a servant for different families, especially for Jewish families on the Sabbath. I also conned people into giving me money, by claiming my family had died in a shipwreck. I tricked one woman into believing I was her sister. I could usually get enough money for lodging houses, though there were nights where I slept outside. Between 1886 and 1888, the syphilis was affecting my mind and behaviour. Combined with my regular drinking and begging, I was charged by the police on four occasions for anti-social behaviour on the streets of Whitechapel.

Individual Number 4 – Catherine Eddowes



Image: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo

Some of the possessions on Catherine's body when she was found:

- Black straw bonnet with beads
- One jacket
- Three skirts and one petticoat
- One bodice
- A man's vest
- Men's boots, one held together by red thread
- Smalls tins of tea and sugar
- Two smoking pipes
- Three large pockets
- Six pieces of soap
- One table knife
- One spoon
- One mitten
- A tin with two pawn tickets
- Part of a pair of spectacles

My name is Catherine Eddowes, though my family called me Chick. I was born on 14th April 1842 in Wolverhampton. When I was just two months old, my family travelled by canal to London. There were 11 of us in a small house. My parents managed to send half the children, including me, to school and I got a good education.

But then my mother died of tuberculosis in 1855, and my father lost his job and then died in 1857. Three of my sisters found work or marriage; the rest went to the workhouse. I was sent to Wolverhampton to distant family. I worked in the tin industry, which was dull. In desperation to avoid this dull life, I took up with a travelling pedlar. We wrote songs and poems describing executions and crimes, which we sold. We walked backwards and forwards, as far as Newcastle and London. I gave birth in a workhouse, but we continued travelling. It was a very poor life but at least I avoided factory work.

We returned to London, where we had a small house. But life was harder than we expected in London. Our marriage became abusive, and my husband regularly beat me. But most people, including my family, believed that it was the wife's fault if she was beaten, so I got no help. I turned to alcohol to cope, especially after one of my children died of malnutrition.

When our marriage broke down, I took up with a poor labourer called John Kelly in Whitechapel. We found seasonal work or sold small items on the street. In Summer we would walk to Kent for seasonal farm work and then return to London. When we could afford it, we slept in lodging houses, or the street if not. We were both alcoholics and spent much of our money on alcohol. I was well known in Whitechapel in 1888 amongst the people who slept in the streets.

Individual Number 5 – Mary Jane Kelly



Image: The Picture Art Collection / Alamy Stock Photo






No list of personal property was recorded for Mary as her body was found inside her home.

My name is Mary Jane Kelly – or at least that is what I tell people. I won't tell people my real name, or where I am from. I tell some people I was born in Ireland in 1863 and that my family moved to Wales. But many people think I might have come from a middle-class family in Wales. Many people think I might have had a very good education and a comfortable childhood. I won't tell you whether that is true or not. I don't tell people much about my life, and what I do say isn't supported by any evidence.

About 1884, I arrived in London, where I worked as a prostitute for wealthy men in a rich part of London. I was successful. I rode a carriage and had fine clothes. I started drinking at this time. However, after escaping a failed attempt to kidnap me for the sex trade in Paris, I moved to the less wealthy areas of London to avoid people who knew me. I was still successful as a prostitute and was able to rent my own rooms. My alcohol drinking became more constant and I had to move home at least once following drunken rows with my landlord.

After some time, I met and moved in with a poor labourer called Joseph Barnett. His wage meant I could stop working as a prostitute. Unfortunately, by November 1888 Barnett had lost his job and I was forced to return to prostitution. Barnett couldn't face this and moved out to a lodging house, leaving me on my own in my room. My room was small, just 3m by 3.5m, at the end of a dark alley. It had little furniture, just a bed, table, one chair and a washstand. The room cost 4 shillings every week. One night whilst drunk, I broke a small window by the door. Even though it made the room easy to break into, I had no money to repair it, so I just stuffed the gap with rags. I worked as a prostitute for the last few days of my life to pay the rent, and I allowed friends who were homeless to stay with me when they needed somewhere to sleep.

**Worksheet –
The women of
Whitechapel**

	Where was she from?	How old was she in 1888?	What was her family situation?	How was she supporting herself in Whitechapel in 1888?	Were any health conditions or problems a factor in her living conditions?	Where was she living in Whitechapel in 1888?
Mary Ann Nichols 	Holborn in London	43	Left family when marriage broke down, and ended up alone	Begging or labour in the workhouse	She suffered from alcohol addiction	The workhouse or the street
Annie Chapman 						
Elizabeth Stride 						
Catherine Eddowes 						
Mary Jane Kelly 						



Task sheet 1 – The women of Whitechapel1

The purpose of this task is to learn something about the lives of the five women who lived in Whitechapel were, and what their lives were like. In doing so, you will explore their experiences of living in Whitechapel.

- 1) In groups of four, take an information card for one of the women. Read it carefully, then complete the line on your table for that individual. Make sure you have the right line before writing!
- 2) Working as a team, take it in turns to tell your group about the individual you read about. Speak clearly, so that they can fill in the table. When other people speak, fill in the right line on your table.

Now you have the information, you will work individually:

- 3) How many women were originally from Whitechapel? What can you infer about the population of Whitechapel from this?
- 4) What similarities and patterns can you find in the lives of the five women?
- 5) What can you learn about living conditions in Whitechapel from the lives of these women?
- 6) What examples from the lives of these women supports the fact that being a woman in Whitechapel was challenging?

Extension – What can you learn about the women from the items they had on their bodies? *If you have Mary Jane Kelly, you will need to look at the card for Mary Ann Nichols instead.*



Task sheet 1 – The women of Whitechapel

This task is about the lives of the five women who lived in Whitechapel. You will study what their lives were like. This will help you understand what it was like to live in Whitechapel.

- 1) In groups of four, take an information card for one of the women:
 - a. Read it carefully
 - b. Fill the line on your table for that individual using what you have read.
- 2) Working as a team, take it in turns to tell your group about the individual you read about. Speak clearly, so that they can fill in the table. When other people speak, fill in the right line on your table.

Now you have the information, you will work individually:

- 3) None of the women were originally from Whitechapel. What does this tell you about the population of Whitechapel?
- 4) Compare the lives of the women in your table and then copy and complete this paragraph:
One similarity between the lives of the five women was _____. Another was _____.
- 5) What are two things you can learn about the living conditions in Whitechapel from the lives of these women?

Resource 2 – Living in Whitechapel

This resource is intended to link the lives of the five women to living conditions in Whitechapel. As part of the specification, students learn about the conditions in Whitechapel, including overcrowding, poverty and the workhouse, and their connection to crime.

Since the five victims of the Ripper killings lived in these conditions for some or all of their lives, students can use the lives of the five women to help them to understand more fully, and even empathise with, the experience of people in Whitechapel in the years c1870–c1900. Being able to make connections with the experiences of these women will help students to grasp more fully how the experience of life in Whitechapel contributed to a community that was high in crime and where life was dangerous. It will also help students to see the women as individuals, rather than simply names in a gruesome murder story.

The task includes a short piece of creative writing, which can be used to personalise the women but also to help students to empathise with the people who lived in Whitechapel. This should help them to remember the contextual information which they need to analyse and evaluate sources.

Suggested usage within a scheme of work

This lesson would work well early on in the study of the historic environment. It could be best used following the use of Resource 1, since the students would be familiar with the five women's lives. The task is designed to utilise the grid from resource 1, though the lesson could be designed to work without this.

Suggested lesson structure

Please note that this is a suggested lesson structure, and is deliberately simple to leave room for teachers to develop it for their own class. This could be expanded, reduced or used as a section of a longer lesson, in which case the plenary would be a progress check before continuing on.

Starter

- In groups, make a list of similarities and differences between the lives of the five women.
- Share the findings as a class.

Main task

- Students will need access to information sheets 1 and 2. The yellow boxes frame sources, which have all been taken from Edexcel past papers or sample assessment materials.
- There are two equivalent, differentiated versions of the task sheet. These have been designed in parallel so that they could be used within a mixed-ability class.
- The extension task is intended to embed the key links to the specification content by thinking about the wider context of Whitechapel.

Plenary

Either or both of the following.

- Option 1 – Class discussion based around the two extension tasks. Considering which accommodation students consider to be the worst could lead to a discussion of reasons why some women (and men) chose to live on the streets. This could help students understand the realities of life in Whitechapel.
- Option 2 – Although this resource is not a source analysis task, students need to continue to hone source analysis skills in this topic. A group or class discussion to make a comparison of the *Daily Mail* source and the account by Edward Hoare is interesting, since the way they present lodging houses is very different and can be explained using the provenance and purpose of each passage.

Please note that the utility question (Q2a) on Paper 1 does not require a direct comparison between the two sources.

Living in Whitechapel – Information Sheet 1

From an article published in the *Daily Mail* newspaper, 16 July 1901. The article was about Dorset Street in Whitechapel and was called *'The Worst Street in London'*.

The lodging houses of Dorset Street and of the surrounding district are the headquarters of the criminal population of London. In Dorset Street we find common thieves, pickpockets, men who rob with violence and also murderers. The police seem to feel that it is better to have these criminals together in one area, where the police can easily find them, than to have them scattered all over London.

However, there are also respectable people living there whose main problem is their poverty. They become familiar with crime. They often see the best side of the criminals around them. If poverty makes the respectable people desperate, as it usually does, it is often a thief who shares his loot* with them to give them bread. And there are always those who are ready to teach newcomers the ways of crime.

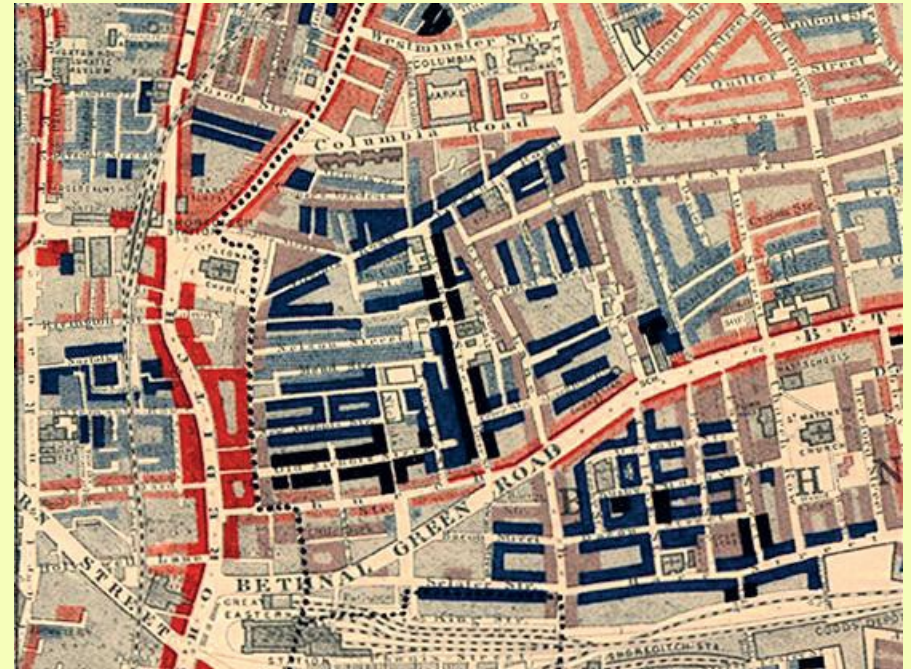
*loot – profit from stolen goods

The workhouse






For individuals who were too poor to pay for lodging houses, the only alternative to living on the streets was the workhouse. Inmates included the old, sick, disabled, orphans and unmarried mothers. People in poverty could get a bed and food in return for hard work. Conditions were deliberately made worse than those that could be provided by a labourer for his family. This was to discourage people from entering the workhouse – except as a last resort. Inmates were expected to do tough manual labour and wear a uniform. Families were split up and could be punished for speaking to each other.

Many residents stayed in the workhouse long-term but vagrants could stay for the short-term. Short-term inmates were kept separate from long-term residents, as they were thought to be lazy and a bad influence on the others. The law said that a person had to stay for at least two nights, to make sure that the workhouse got a full day of work out of them.

From Charles Booth's survey of London, published 1889. Booth's researchers investigated different levels of poverty. The results were shown on a colour-coded 'poverty map', classifying the type of people living in each area of London. This map shows part of the Whitechapel area.



Key

	Black	Poorest area, people often criminal and violent
	Dark blue	Very poor people, often unemployed
	Light blue	People poor but they are employed
	Pink	People fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings
	Red	Middle-class people

Living in Whitechapel – Information Sheet 2

An illustration of Wentworth Street, Whitechapel, drawn in 1872. The illustration appeared in *London: A Pilgrimage*, a book of illustrations by Gustave Doré, a French artist who visited London.

Image: Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Images



A description of the inside of a lodging house by Hugh Edward Hoare which was published in the *National Review* on 14 September 1888. Hoare was a wealthy philanthropist who took over the running of a lodging house in Whitechapel in 1886 and later became an MP.

Passing the outer door, we found ourselves opposite a little window in a recess, where the “deputy”, or manager, sits to collect the four pence for the night’s lodging, and where he keeps the food which he sells to the lodgers. Passing through the second door, we enter a moderate-sized low “kitchen”, where about twenty men and women were sitting on long wooden benches, or standing round the fire. ... Plain long deal tables and benches were set round the room. On the chimney-piece were several tin teapots, and in a cupboard the coarse plates and cups and saucers for the free use of the lodgers ... Underground was the washing-place and coke cellar, on the first floor were the beds for the couples, and above that a large dormitory for single men, containing sixteen beds.

Sleeping on the streets

Many people in Whitechapel did not have a fixed address. About 1 in 4 Whitechapel residents at any time were living in lodging houses, which charged 4d per night to sleep in a dormitory bed. Some offered a cheaper option to sleep standing up, slumped over a rope which ran across the room.

On the nights where individuals could not earn or beg the money to sleep indoors, or if they spent it on food or alcohol, they would sleep in the streets. The rookeries and winding alleys of Whitechapel gave plenty of doorways and corners that could give a little shelter. Unfortunately, crime was a common problem for people sleeping in the streets of Whitechapel, and it was not unusual for a sleeping person to be assaulted or robbed.

Peabody Estate

In 1881, the Peabody Estate opened in Whitechapel, one of a series of developments in London. It had 286 apartments, which cost between 3 and 6 shillings to rent. Many families in Whitechapel were paying up to 8 shillings on rent. The Peabody Estate offered a safer, better quality of living, but there were strict rules for families to stay there.

Private rooms

Many families rented private rooms in the rookeries. Few families could afford more than one or two rooms, and most buildings were divided into several apartments. Overcrowding was a major issue. The quality of housing varied greatly, and many houses were cold, damp and had poor sanitation.



Task sheet 2 – Living in Whitechapel

The purpose of this task is to combine what you have learned about Whitechapel to understand more about the lives of the five women killed by Jack the Ripper. You will use the table that you already made summarising the lives of the five women.

- 1) Using the information sheets, write a two-sentence summary for each of the following key words for accommodation in Whitechapel:
 - a. Private rooms
 - b. Lodging houses
 - c. Workhouses
 - d. Sleeping on the streets
- 2) Choose the life of EITHER Mary Ann Nichols OR Annie Chapman OR Catherine Eddowes. In the style of a diary, write an account of an afternoon and evening in the life of that individual. Focus on the worries that would be in her mind, the choices she might have to make, and the experience of sleeping rough, or in a lodging house or workhouse. Use language to express how she might have felt. You can use the information sheets or other class notes to make your account detailed and realistic.
- 3) How does studying the living conditions of these women in Whitechapel help historians to explain why there was so much crime in Whitechapel?

Extension – Some men and women in Whitechapel chose to live on the streets, rather than use lodging houses or the workhouses. What are some possible reasons that could explain this decision?



Task sheet 2 – Living in Whitechapel

This task will help you to learn more about the lives of the five women killed by Jack the Ripper. You will need the table that you completed about the lives of the five women.

- 1) Using the information sheets to help you, complete these sentences:
 - a. Private rooms in Whitechapel were (small/large) and expensive, as well as (empty/overcrowded).
 - b. Lodging houses were places where...
 - c. A workhouse was...
 - d. If they could not find money for rent, many people had to sleep...
- 2) Look at what you already know about the life of Mary Ann Nichols.
Write a diary entry to describe a day and evening in her life, begging for the money for rent. You need to decide whether she ends up on the street, or in a workhouse or lodging house. Use descriptive words to show how she would have felt.

Extension – If you were in Whitechapel and had to choose where to stay, which option do you think would be the worst? Why?

Resource 3 – Interpreting the lives of the women

This resource is intended to address the current debate which has developed over whether or not the five women accepted to have been killed by the Ripper were prostitutes. This has been a widely held viewpoint, which is often part of the introduction line of articles. A commonly held view is that the women were killed by a customer. Hallie Rubenhold (*The Five*, Penguin 2019) makes a strong argument for the historical and moral necessity of reconsidering the evidence, arguing that not only is there limited evidence for prostitution on the part of three of the five women, but that such a label has been used to denigrate the women as individuals, even implying that they may somehow have deserved their fate.

There is a further reason to address this issue within the scope of teaching the Whitechapel historic environment. The specification content includes ‘the added problems caused by the media reporting of the “Ripper” murders.’ In understanding how the media shaped this viewpoint, students will gain a wider understanding of the impact of the media on the Ripper enquiry. Additionally, it will help history students to develop their conceptual understanding of how historians form interpretations on the basis of evidence; whilst this is not an assessed skill in Paper 1, it is an important concept which is used in Paper 3 to assess AO4.

Resources 3 and 4 are designed as a pair; Resource 3 will establish the debate between the two interpretations and challenge students to use their knowledge to judge between the opposing viewpoints. Resource 4 will build on this by looking for why the debate arose.

Suggested usage within a scheme of work

This lesson would work well late in the course. It would be effective if students already had an awareness of the lives of the five women (Resources 1 and 2) as well as their murders and the investigative techniques used by the Metropolitan Police.

Suggested lesson structure

Please note that this is a suggested lesson structure, and is deliberately simple to leave room for teachers to develop it for their own class. This could be expanded, reduced or used as a section of a longer lesson, in which case the plenary would be a progress check before continuing on.

Starter

- Task 1 on the task sheet (making a list of five words to describe the five women) could be adapted to a lesson starter. One alternative is to present the class with a list of options on the board and get them to vote on the best words to describe the women.
- Alternatively, the teacher could verbally summarise the life of one of the women in three sentences as an example, then, working in groups of four, each student could summarise the life of one of the other women in three sentences to their group.
- Working in five large groups, each group should have a large piece of paper with the name of one of the five women. They have 60 seconds to write everything they can remember around the name. Then pass the papers clockwise and give 60 seconds to see what they can add to the second sheet.

Main task

- The task sheet is designed to show the contrasting interpretations of the women killed in the Ripper murders. By using three interpretation boxes, students have the chance to see how historians have described the women.
- The second part of the task sheet is about building evidence for and against the women being prostitutes. This is relevant since so much of the conventional interpretation of these individuals assumes that they were prostitutes and that this was therefore a key aspect of the murders. Part of the challenge facing historians is that evidence suggesting that the women were prostitutes, circumstantial or otherwise, appears more straightforward; in contrast, evidence that they were not prostitutes is less clear, since it is essentially the absence of evidence. Students could be helped to see the issues inherent to trying to use generalised, circumstantial evidence to draw conclusions about individuals, and consider whether the burden of proof should be on showing that each woman was a prostitute, rather than placing the burden of proof on justifying that they were not.
 - If students have had deep discussion in previous lessons, you may choose to base the task on past class notes and prior discussion.
 - Alternatively, there is a Fact Sheet which contains statements about the women which can be used to build the evidence for either side. The sheet could be given to students. Or, if students work in small groups or pairs, the sheet could be taped face down on the table, so that if a group or pair has run out of ideas, they can choose to rip the sheet off the table to gain help, introducing a form of optional self-differentiation. A further example is to divide the facts on the Fact Sheet up and stick them around the classroom, so that students move around the room to find the evidence and return to their desks to record it.

Plenary

Any one, or a combination, of the following.

- Option 1 – Using the three options from Box 2 on the lower challenge task sheet, discuss/debate the validity of the three conclusions. Or, as a class, build a convincing conclusion statement that the majority agree with, using at least one piece of evidence in support.
- Option 2 – Rewrite one of the interpretations that the class disagree with to reflect what they consider to be a more accurate statement.
- Option 3 – Using the extension thinking questions on the Fact Sheet, identify which facts could be considered more or less convincing as evidence of these women. In particular, you could focus on the issues from inquest statements made by friends, neighbours and family members. After all, these could have known the women best, but equally may not have known their private life or chosen to protect their reputation.
- Option 4 – With higher-ability pupils, you could discuss the issues surrounding the generalisation that these women were all prostitutes.
 - How could it affect how the police treated the crime?
 - How could it affect how we think about the crime?
 - If Nichols, Chapman or Eddowes had been involved in casual prostitution (in contrast, for example, to Kelly), is this relevant to the Ripper case or not? If not, why has it become such a focus for writers and historians?
 - For historians studying the topic, should the burden of proof be on proving that the women were, or were not, prostitutes?



Task sheet 3 – Interpreting the lives of the women

- 1) Based upon what you already know about the five women murdered by ‘Jack the Ripper’, make a list of five words that you would use to describe their lives.
- 2) Read Interpretations 1 and 2.
 - a. What claim about the women is made in each of the Interpretations?
 - b. How far does this claim fit with what you have learned about the lives of the five women?

Interpretation 1:

Part of the introduction to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* online article ‘Jack the Ripper’

Jack the Ripper... murderer of at least five women, all prostitutes, in or near the Whitechapel district of London’s East End, between August and November 1888... All but one of Jack the Ripper’s victims were killed while soliciting customers on the street.

Interpretation 2:

Part of an article by Beth Fisher, ‘How the Press created “Jack the Ripper”’, *History Today*, 31 August 2018

The similarities between the murders – all the victims were prostitutes whose throats were cut – provided a field day for the press.

- 3) Now read Interpretation 3. How far does it agree with the viewpoint in Interpretations 1 and 2?

Interpretation 3:

From *The Five* by Hallie Rubenhold (Penguin, 2019)

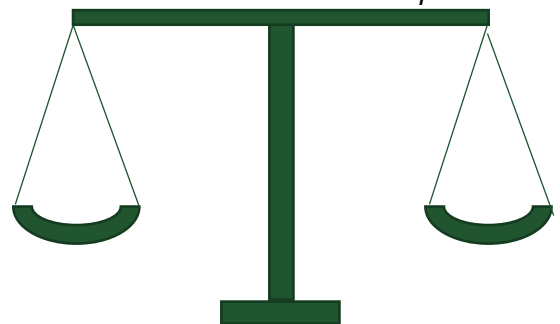
Jack the Ripper killed prostitutes, or so it has always been believed, but there is no hard evidence to suggest that three of the five victims were prostitutes at all... The police assumed that they were prostitutes and that they had been killed by a maniac who had lured them to these places for sex.

- 4) You will now use your knowledge of the lives of the women and of Whitechapel to evaluate the evidence for and against this argument.
 - a. Draw out a copy of the scales in Box 1.
 - b. Using what you know of the lives of the women, as well as life and conditions in Whitechapel, write any evidence that supports the two interpretations on either side of the scales.
 - c. Considering the evidence you have for each interpretation, write at least two sentences to summarise your judgement – which side are you most convinced by, and why?

Box 1

Evidence for Interpretations 1 & 2

Evidence for Interpretation 3





Task sheet 3 – Interpreting the lives of the women

- 1) You already know about the lives of the 5 women killed by the Ripper. Make a list of 5 words that you would use to describe their lives. (For example, you could use the word 'poor'.)
- 2) **Read Interpretations 1 and 2.**
 - a. What do the interpretations say about all 5 women?
 - b. What have you learned about any of the women that supports this description?

Interpretation 1:

***Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, 'Jack the Ripper'**

Jack the Ripper... murderer of at least five women, all prostitutes, in or near the Whitechapel district of London's East End, between August and November 1888.

Interpretation 2:

Beth Fisher 'How the Press created "Jack the Ripper"', *History Today*, 2018

The similarities between the murders – all the victims were prostitutes whose throats were cut – provided a field day for the press.

- 3) **Now read Interpretation 3.**
 - a. How does Interpretation 3 agree with Interpretations 1 and 2?
 - b. How does Interpretation 3 disagree with Interpretations 1 and 2?

Interpretation 3:

From *The Five* by Hallie Rubenhold (Penguin, 2019)

Jack the Ripper killed prostitutes, or so it has always been believed, but there is no hard evidence to suggest that three of the five victims were prostitutes at all... The police assumed that they were prostitutes and that they had been killed by a maniac who had lured them to these places for sex.

- 4) You will now use your knowledge to judge between the two interpretations.
 - a. Draw out a copy of the scales in Box 1.
 - b. On each side, write 2 or 3 facts that support or challenge the idea that the women were prostitutes.
 - c. Using your diagram to help you, choose the most appropriate sentence

Box 2

1. The evidence suggests that all 5 Ripper victims were definitely prostitutes.
2. The evidence suggests that some but not all 5 Ripper victims were prostitutes.
3. The evidence suggests that none of the women were prostitutes.

Box 1

Evidence suggesting the women were prostitutes

Evidence suggesting the women were not all prostitutes



Interpreting the lives of the women – Fact sheet

Prostitution was common in Whitechapel. In 1888, there may have been 1,200 prostitutes in Whitechapel.

Stride made money by fraud, telling them made up stories about a shipwreck she survived to get money.

At the inquests, friends & family of Nichols, Chapman & Eddowes stated that they were not prostitutes.

Mary Kelly was quite open about working in the sex trade.

None of the inquests reported that the women had STDs.

The newspapers claimed that the five women had been prostitutes and women of a low social position.

The bodies were found in alleys; prostitutes were known to take customers into alleys.

Nichols and Chapman were known to make money for rent by begging for money.

All five women were poor, and many poor women in Whitechapel had to resort to prostitution.

Several of the women often slept in the street or the workhouse as they had no money.

Elizabeth Stride worked as a prostitute in Sweden before coming to England as a servant.

Eddowes and her partner took farm work in summer and sold small items like poems in the street to pay for lodging houses.

The women may have been lying down when killed & no one reported hearing a struggle – they may have been asleep.

Extension thinking ideas:

- Are there other pieces of information you have learned that is relevant?
- Are any of these statements more or less convincing as proof? Why?
- What could be the advantages or disadvantages of the evidence or friends and family at the inquest?

Resource 4 – The women in the media

This resource continues the issue raised in Resource 3. In Resource 3, the debate was introduced as to whether the five women killed in the Ripper murders were actually prostitutes or not. Students used their knowledge to reach a conclusion over this, having considered alternative historical interpretations.

Resource 4 is designed to develop this concept by helping students to understand where these contradictory viewpoints came from. This is relevant because it not only develops understanding of a crucial historical concept, but it leads to thinking about the implications of this debate and the impact of the media on the Ripper investigation, as well as the wider issue of how historians need to think critically about source materials.

Suggested usage within a scheme of work

This lesson would work well to follow the use of Resource 3.

Suggested lesson structure

Please note that this is a suggested lesson structure, and is deliberately simple to leave room for teachers to develop it for their own class. This could be expanded, reduced or used as a section of a longer lesson, in which case the plenary would be a progress check before continuing on.

Starter

- Could begin with a mini debate in groups of 4–6, or as a class, on whether the women were involved in prostitution or not.
- Could begin with a media image or quote from the period of the Ripper murder and ask students to interpret the opinion of the author about the Ripper, the police and the women as appropriate.

Main task

- The task sheet works through the sources, which are provided on two information sheets. Students will need access to both information sheets.
- The last task leads students to begin to think about the impact of the assumptions by the police and media on the investigation itself. Source 7 exemplifies this by describing the police hunting for the Ripper by looking for a man in the company of a woman, since they assumed that he was finding his victims by locating prostitutes.

Plenary

Since this resource rounds up a complex idea, it would be effective to conclude with a discussion. It could be based around the following questions.

- Why do you think that the idea that the women were all prostitutes has not been widely challenged until over 100 years after their deaths?
- Does it matter if we think the women were all prostitutes or not?
- How does thinking about this issue improve your understanding of the issue of policing in Whitechapel in the years c1870–c1900?

The women in the media – Information sheet 1

Reason 1 – The media described the women as prostitutes

The media made judgements about the women and presented them as prostitutes even before investigating their background.

Source 1

From an article in *The British Daily Whig*, September 1888. This was a Canadian newspaper, written in English, which reported stories from the media in Britain.

The horribly mutilated body of a woman was found early yesterday morning in a yard attached to a common lodging house in Spitalfields. This is the fourth murder of a similar character that has been committed recently in this area. All the victims were women of the lowest character.

Source 2A

From an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, September 1888. This was reporting the questions from the coroner at Mary Ann Nichols' inquest, and the responses that her father gave.

Was she a sober woman? – Well, at times she drank, and that was why we did not agree.

Was she fast*? – No; I never heard of anything of that sort. She used to go with some young women and men that she knew, but I never heard of anything improper.

Have you any idea what she has been doing lately? – I have not the slightest idea.

Source 2B

From an article in the *East London Observer*, September 1888. This is a report of the same part of the inquest as Source 2A, but paraphrased by the journalist instead of quoted.

She was not particularly sober, and that was why they did not agree. He did not think she was fast*. He had no idea of such a thing. She did not stay out particularly late at night. The worst he had seen of her was her keeping company with females of a certain class.

*'Fast' was used to mean someone who had sex with different people without getting married first.

Reason 2 – The police treated the victims like prostitutes

The Metropolitan Police assumed from the start that the women were prostitutes because they were poor and in Whitechapel. This was how they referred to them in reports and statements.

Source 3

Adapted from a report after the murder of Nichols in September 1888, by a CID detective.

The enquiry has revealed the fact that a man named Jack Pizer, alias Leather Apron, has, for some considerable period been in the habit of ill-using prostitutes in this, and other parts of London...although at present there is no evidence whatsoever against him.

Source 4

The start of the police record on Mary Ann Nichols

Age 45

Profession or calling
Prostitute

Hair Dark (turning grey)

Eyes Brown

The women in the media – Information sheet 2

Reason 3 – The general public wanted sensational, gory stories

People in Britain were interested in the sensationalised news of the murders, rather than the women themselves. The middle classes, in particular, tended to take a very stereotyped view of the types of people who lived in Whitechapel. It was more exciting to report about prostitutes than simple poor women. This was especially the case with the murder of Mary Kelly, who was young, attractive and had lived a life as a prostitute for the wealthy as well as the poor.

Source 5

Adapted from an article in *The Star*, September 1888 about crime in Whitechapel. *The Star* was a popular, national newspaper.

London lies to-day under the spell of a great terror. A nameless reprobate – half beast, half man – is at large. That man is a murderous maniac. Hideous malice, deadly cunning, insatiable thirst for blood - all these are the marks of the mad homicide. The ghoulish creature who stalks through the streets of London is simply drunk with blood, and he will have more.

Source 6

Adapted from a letter published in *The Times*, October 1888. The writer was responding to a debate about whether poor people should be dispersed from Whitechapel to reduce crime.

The horror and excitement caused by the murder of the four Whitechapel outcasts imply a universal belief that they had a right to life.... If they had no such right, then it was, on the whole, a good thing that they fell in with an unknown surgical genius. He, at all events, has made his contribution towards solving, "the problem of clearing the East-end of its vicious inhabitants".... If they are systematically "dispersed," they will carry their taint to streets hitherto untainted.

Source 7

From an article in *The Times* newspaper, October 1888. *The Times* was a national newspaper, mainly read by the upper classes.

Many critical comments have been made about police failures in connection with the Whitechapel murders. However, it should be remembered that this type of woman chooses to go alone to the place where she has agreed to meet a man.

Some weeks ago, plain-clothes policemen were ordered to patrol this crime-ridden area of Whitechapel and to watch any man or woman seen together in suspicious circumstances.



Task sheet 4 – The women in the media

This task sheet is about explaining how the media helped to create the idea that all the victims of the Ripper were prostitutes. You will see how this affected the police investigation.

There are three main reasons that the media was able to create the idea that the women were all prostitutes.

REASON 1 – The media described the women as prostitutes

- 1) How does Source 1 describe the women? What does this phrase mean?
- 2) Some newspapers exaggerated the facts. Read Sources 2A and 2B. They are both reporting the same interview. How has the author of 2B deliberately worded their account to make Nichols sound like a prostitute?
- 3) Make a copy of the diagram in Box 1. Add one or more points to the branch of the diagram 'The media described the women as prostitutes'.

REASON 2 – The police treated the victims like prostitutes

- 4) Why would the police in H Division assume that the women were prostitutes?
- 5) How would reports like Sources 3 and 4 affect how the media described the victims in the Ripper investigation?
- 6) Add one or more points to the diagram you started in task 3.

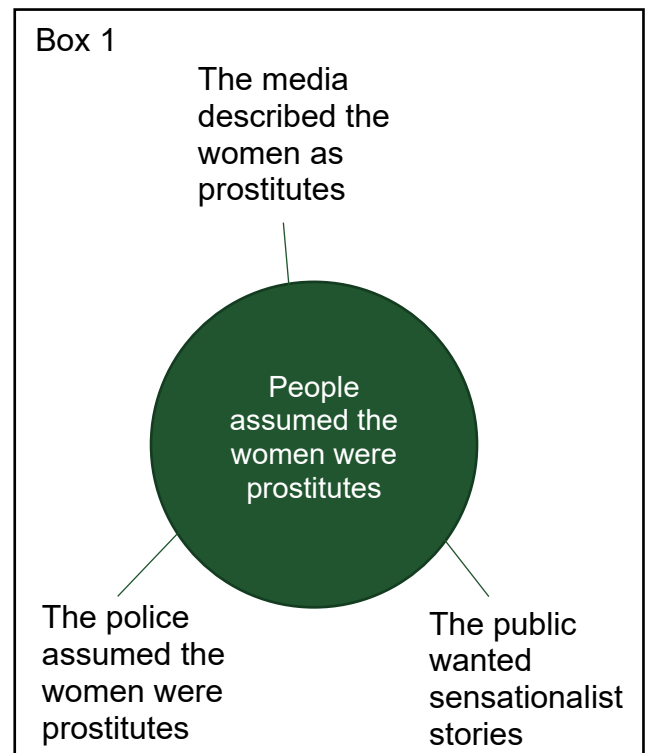
REASON 3 – The general public wanted sensational, gory stories

- 7) Read Source 5. Why would some newspapers be more interested in writing stories like this one than researching and describing the real daily lives of the five women?
- 8) Read Source 6.
 - a. What is the opinion of the author?
 - b. How would the attitudes of the British public affect how the media described the women?
- 9) Add one or more points to the diagram you started in task 3.

The assumptions of the police and media affected the police investigation.

In some ways, this issue was a circular process. The attitudes of the police affected the media, but the media articles also affected the police investigation.

- 10) Read Source 7. How does this source show that the police and media attitudes that the women were all prostitutes affected the police investigation and led to mistakes?





Task sheet 4 – The women in the media

There are three main reasons that the media was able to create the idea that the women were all prostitutes.

REASON 1 – The media described the women as prostitutes

- 1) Source 1 calls the victims 'women of the lowest character'. What does this mean?
- 2) Read Sources 2A and 2B. They are both writing about the same interview. Pick out one quote from Source 2B to show how they have tried to make Mary Ann Nichols sound like a prostitute.
- 3) Make a copy of the diagram in Box 1. Add one or more points to the branch of the diagram 'The media said the women were prostitutes'.

REASON 2 – The police treated the victims like prostitutes

- 4) The police often assumed poor women in Whitechapel were prostitutes. Why was this?
- 5) Why would the police treating the women like prostitutes affect how the media described the women?
- 6) Add one or more points to the diagram you started in task 3.

REASON 3 – The general public wanted sensational, gory stories

- 7) Read Source 5.
 - a. Pick out three words or phrases that show that the author was more interested in an exciting story than focusing on facts?
 - b. Why would some newspapers be more interested in writing stories like this one instead of writing about the real lives of the five women?
- 8) Add one or more points to the diagram you started in task 3.

The media reporting affected the police investigation.

- 9) Read Source 7. How had believing the women were prostitutes affected how the police were looking for the Ripper?

