

GCSE Crime and Punishment  
Medieval

Key Term	Meaning
Anglo Saxon	A cultural group who inhabited England from 5AD until 1066
Benefit of the Clergy	The right to be judged in a Church court.
Blood Feud	The early Saxon right of a murder victim's family to track down and kill the murderer in revenge.
Capital crime	A crime punishable by death
Capital punishment	The death penalty
Compensation	Money paid to the victim of crime or the victim's family
Compurgation	The oath taken during the Medieval period by witnesses or people known to the accused in support of his or her innocence
Coroner	An official responsible for investigating violent or suspicious deaths
Coroner's inquest	A legal hearing which investigates causes of death.
Corporal punishment	A physically painful punishment
Custody	Being locked up
Deterrence	To scare/warn people from committing a crime
Forest laws	Norman laws that banned ordinary people from hunting or gathering wood in the King's forests.
Hue and cry	Raising the alarm (by means of shouts or cries) when a crime has been committed. Everyone within hearing distance was expected to join the hunt for the suspect.
Justices of the Peace	Local magistrates appointed to keep the peace, hear minor legal cases, and ensure the Poor Laws were being maintained.
Magistrate	Local magistrates appointed to keep the peace and hear minor legal cases
Manor Courts	Local Medieval courts that dealt mainly with minor crimes
Market regulations	Laws relating to the buying and selling of goods in a market
Moral offences	An action that offends the moral standards of the majority of society.
Murdrum fine	Norman law that made the whole community pay a heavy fine if a Norman was killed
Pillory	A wooden frame with holes in it that held the head and hands of a convicted offender. Intended to publicly humiliate the criminal.
Posse	A group of men called upon by the sheriff to track down a criminal
Retribution	Revenge
Sanctuary	A safe place within a church or cathedral. Once a person claimed sanctuary they could not be removed by force.
Sheriff	The chief law officer in each county during the Medieval period.

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Stocks	A wooden frame with holes in it that held the feet of a convicted offender. Intended to publicly humiliate the criminal.
Tithings	Groups of ten men who were responsible for each other's behaviour. If a member of the tithing broke the law then the others had to bring him to justice or face a fine.
Treason	Disobedience or disloyalty to the monarch or government
Trial by combat	A type of trial by ordeal. Guilt is decided if the participant is defeated in combat.
Trial by ordeal	A trial, usually held in or near a church in which God judges the accused with a sign of guilt or innocence.
Wergild	A form of compensation paid to victims of crime in Saxon times.