A LEVEL 2022: THE RACE TO EXAMS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	MINS
28TH MARCH 2022								
4TH APRIL 2022								
11TH APRIL 2022		IN SCHOOL REVISION DAY						
18TH APRIL 2022								
25TH APRIL 2022								
2ND MAY 2022								
9TH MAY 2022								
16TH MAY 2022								
23RD MAY 2022								
30TH MAY 2022								
6TH JUNE 2022		**TRAGEDY EXAM IN MORNING**						
13TH JUNE 2022								
20TH JUNE 2022	CRIME EXAM IN AFTERNOON							

Each day you should complete at least one revision activity. This can be a bronze, silver, or gold revision task. In this booklet you have a series of example tasks for each (bronze, silver, gold) and you can select them from the booklet or allocate them yourself. A bronze task means 5- 20 minutes, silver is 20-40 minutes, and gold is 40 minutes – 1 hour. There are a range of suggested tasks for each level. On here, record your level AND the number of minutes spent revising in the final column.

	BRONZE: 5-20 minutes	SILVER: 20-40 minutes	GOLD: 40 minutes – 1 hour
SECTION A *Unseen Crime*	○ Read an extract and highlight it. Then write a plan of your response (10 minutes) ○ Take an extract from *Oliver Twist* or *Atonement* and plan a response as if it is unseen ○ Spend 10 minutes reading an extract from any of the websites given. Just read it! ○ Spend 10 minutes writing one paragraph of a response, focusing on one crime element ○ Spend 10 minutes doing some research into the origins of crime fiction ○ Spend 10 minutes on the crime terms KO	○ Complete the crime features overview grid on pages 18-19 ○ Read an extract, complete a plan, introduction and a full paragraph (25 minutes) ○ Spend 20-40 minutes reading a crime text of your choice. Jot down notes on elements of crime that you encounter. ○ Choose one element of crime fiction you struggle to write about (e.g setting or character) and go through three extracts on the website making detailed notes about how it is presented in each.	○ Complete a full response using any of the questions in here for 1 full hour
SECTION B *Oliver Twist*	○ Read a small event in the novel and jot down key quotations and crime elements ○ Spend 10 minutes revising the knowledge organiser (e.g flashcards, look cover write check) ○ Spend 10 minutes annotating a quotation, making analysis, context, crime etc points. ○ Write a paragraph on a quotation. ○ Spend 10 minutes planning, then five minutes writing an introduction, to any of the practice questions on page 22 ○ Open the novel at a random page. Read it. Write down what is happening and any crime elements	○ Spend 20-40 minutes re-reading a section of the novel. Make notes on what happens. ○ Complete one of the mind-maps in here. Start by writing everything you already know, then use your KO/ the book/ research to add some more ideas. Remember to cover the AOs. Pages 23-29 ○ Pick a question on page 22. Write a plan (10) introduction (5) and then your four points (5) for a 25 minute activity - Add 10 minutes to the activity above by writing one of the paragraphs in full ○ Read one of the further reading links on P4-5	○ Complete a full response using any of the questions in here for 1 full hour
SECTION C *Atonement and Poetry*	○ Read a small event in the novel/poem and jot down key quotations and crime elements ○ Spend 10 minutes revising the knowledge organiser (e.g flashcards, look cover write check) ○ Spend 10 minutes annotating a quotation, making analysis, context, crime etc points. ○ Write a paragraph on a quotation. ○ Spend 10 minutes planning, then five minutes writing an introduction, to any of the practice questions on page 38 ○ Open the novel/poem at a random page. Read it. Write down the events and any crime elements	○ Spend 20-40 minutes re-reading a section of the novel/poem. Make notes on what happens. ○ Complete one of the mind-maps in here. Start by writing everything you already know, then use your KO/ the book/ research to add some more ideas. Remember to cover the AOs. Pages 39-45 ○ Pick a question on page 38. Write a plan (10) introduction (5) and then your four points (5) for a 25 minute activity - Add 10 minutes to the activity above by writing one of the paragraphs in full Read one of the further reading links on P4-5	○ Complete a full response using any of the questions in here for 1 full hour

RESOURCES IN THIS PACK – CONTENTS PAGE

FURTHER READING

Oliver Twist

- PATTEN, ROBERT L. "CAPITALISM AND COMPASSION IN 'OLIVER TWIST.'" Studies in the Novel, vol. 1, no. 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969, pp. 207-21, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29531329.
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- Wolff, Larry. "'The Boys Are Pickpockets, and the Girl Is a Prostitute': Gender and Juvenile Criminality in Early Victorian England from 'Oliver Twist to London Labour.'" New Literary History, vol. 27, no. 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 227-49, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057349.
- Meyer, Susan. "Antisemitism and Social Critique in Dickens's 'Oliver Twist.'" Victorian Literature and Culture, vol. 33, no. 1, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 239-52, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25058705.
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Atonement

- Finney, Brian. "Briony's Stand against Oblivion: The Making of Fiction in Ian McEwan's 'Atonement.'" Journal of Modern Literature, vol. 27, no. 3, Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 68-82, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831941.
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Crabbe, Wilde and Browning

- Buckler, William E. "Oscar Wilde's 'Chant de Cygne': 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' in Contextual Perspective." Victorian Poetry, vol. 28, no. 3/4, West Virginia University Press, 1990, pp. 33–41, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40002288.
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- Adler, Joshua. "Structure and Meaning in Browning's 'My Last Duchess.'" Victorian Poetry, vol. 15, no. 3, West Virginia University Press, 1977, pp. 219–27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40002116.
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Unseen crime

- *To Love and Be Wise* L Josephine Tey: https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/tey-tolove/tey-tolove-00-h.html (Golden Age of crime fiction story – can read online)
- A website where you can access an overview of some of Agatha Christie's most famous novels along with links of where to read them online: https://bonafidebookworm.com/read-agatha-christie-books-online-free/
- *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* Arthur Conan-Doyle: https://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Arthur_Conan_Doyle/The_Adventures_of_Sherlock_Holmes/
- To find unseen crime extracts, use https://www.deadgoodbooks.co.uk/category/books/extracts/
- To find more unseen crime extracts, use https://crimereads.com/category/excerpts/
- An article about why crime fiction is so popular: https://www.beemgee.com/blog/crime-fiction/
- An article about the strange appeal of crime fiction: http://www.shotsmag.co.uk/feature_view.aspx?FEATURE_ID=120
- The British Library section for articles on crime fiction: https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/themes/crime-and-crime-fiction Some of these are on *Oliver Twist*, and some feature more broad elements of crime fiction

ELEMENTS OF CRIME WRITING

In the case of Elements of crime writing, many of the texts pre-date the crime fiction genre that emerged as a recognisable literary genre in the mid-19th century and with academic recognition in the 20th century. However, in all the texts a significant crime drives the narrative and the execution and consequences of the crime are fundamentally important to the way the text is structured.

All set texts are narratives which focus on transgressions against established order and the specific breaking of either national, social, religious or moral laws. The focus in this component must be on 'Elements' and students need to consider the elements that exist in each of their texts. The elements that might be explored, depending on the individual text, include:

- the type of the crime text itself, whether it is detective fiction, a post-modern novel, a revenge tragedy, an account of a life lost to crime
- the settings that are created as backdrops for criminal action and for the pursuit of the perpetrators of crime: both places and times will be significant here
- the nature of the crimes and the criminals, the criminals' motives and actions
- the inclusion of violence, murder, theft, betrayal
- the detection of the criminal and the investigation that leads to his or her capture or punishment
- how far there is a moral purpose and restoration of order
- guilt and remorse, confession and the desire for forgiveness
- the creation of the criminal and their nemesis, the typical detective hero
- the sense that there will be a resolution and the criminal will be punished
- the victims of crime and the inclusion of suffering
- the central motifs of love, money, danger and death
- punishment, justice, retribution, injustice, accusation, the legal system, criminal trials and courtroom dramas, imprisonment, death
- the structural patterning of the text as it moves through a series of crises to some sense of order
- the specific focus on plotting
- the way that language is used in the world that is created; there may be use of a criminal register, legal register, police register
- the way that crime writing is used to comment on society, particularly the representation of society at particular historical periods
- ultimately, how crime stories affect audiences and readers, creating suspense, repugnance, excitement and relief.

UNSEEN PRACTICE 1

This extract is from the opening of Lee Child's *Better Off Dead,* published in 2021

The stranger got into position under the streetlight at eleven p.m., as agreed.

The light had been easy to find, just like he'd been told it would be. It was the only one in the compound that was still working, all the way at the far end, six feet shy of the jagged metal fence that separated the United States from Mexico.

He was alone. And unarmed.

As agreed.

The car showed up at 23:02. It kept to the centre of the space between the parallel rows of lock-up garages. They were made of metal, too. Roofs warped by the sun. Walls scoured by the sand. Five on the right. Four on the left. And the remains of one more lying torn and corroded ten feet to the side, like something had exploded inside it years ago.

The car's lights were on bright, making it hard to recognize the make and model. And impossible to see inside. It continued until it was fifteen feet away then braked to a stop, rocking on its worn springs and settling into a low cloud of sandy dust. Then its front doors opened. Both of them. And two men climbed out.

Not as agreed.

Both the car's back doors opened. Two more men climbed out.

Definitely not as agreed.

The four men paused and sized the stranger up. They'd been told to expect someone big and this guy sure fit the bill. He was six feet five. Two hundred and fifty pounds. Chest like a gun safe and hands like backhoe buckets. And scruffy. His hair was coarse and unkempt. He hadn't shaved for days. His clothes looked cheap and ill-fitting, except for his shoes. Somewhere between a hobo and a Neanderthal. Not someone who was going to be missed.

The driver stepped forward. He was a couple of inches shorter than the stranger, and a good fifty pounds lighter. He was wearing black jeans and a black sleeveless T-shirt. He had on black combat-style boots. His head was shaved, but his face was hidden by a full beard. The other guys followed, lining up alongside him.

'The money?' the driver said.

The stranger patted his jacket pocket.

'Good.' The driver nodded toward the car. 'Back seat. Get in.'

'Why?'

'So I can take you to Michael.'

'That wasn't the deal.'

'Sure it was.'

The stranger shook his head. 'The deal was, you tell me where Michael is.'

'Tell you. Show you. What's the difference?'

The stranger said nothing.

'Come on. What are you waiting for? Give me the money and get in the car.'

'I make a deal, I stick to it. You want the money, tell me where Michael is.'

The driver shrugged. 'The deal's changed. Take it or leave it.'

'I'll leave it.'

'Enough of this.' The driver reached behind his back and took a pistol from his waistband. 'Cut the crap. Get in the car.'

'You were never going to take me to Michael.'

'No shit, Sherlock.'

'You were going to take me to someone else. Someone who has questions for me.'

'No more talking. Get in the car.'

'Which means you can't shoot me.'

'Which means I can't kill you. Yet. I can still shoot you.'

The stranger said, 'Can you?'

A witness would have said the stranger hardly moved at all but somehow in a split second he had closed the gap between them and had his hand on the driver's wrist. Which he pulled up, like a proud fisherman hauling something

from the sea. He forced the guy's arm way above his head. He hoisted it so high the guy was raised up on his tiptoes. Then he drove his left fist into the guy's side. Hard. The kind of punch that would normally knock a man down. And keep him down. Only the driver didn't fall. He couldn't. He was suspended by his arm. His feet slid back. The gun fell from his fingers. His shoulder joint ripped apart. Tendons stretched and snapped. Ribs shattered. It was a grotesque cascade of injuries. Each one devastating in its own right. Each one enough to sideline the guy for weeks. But in the moment he hardly noticed any of them. Because his entire upper body was convulsing in agony. Searing bolts of pain shot through him, all stemming from one place. A spot just below his armpit, where a dense tangle of nerves and lymph nodes nestled beneath the skin. The exact spot that had just been crushed by the stranger's massive knuckles.

The stranger retrieved the driver's fallen gun and carried him over to the hood of the car. He laid him back, squealing and gasping and writhing on the dull paintwork, then turned to the other three guys. 'You should walk away. Now. While you have the chance.'

The guy at the centre of the trio stepped forward. He was about the same height as the driver. Maybe a little broader. He had hair, cropped short. No beard. Three chunky silver chains around his neck. And a nasty sneer on his face. 'You got lucky once. That won't happen again. Now get in the car before we hurt you.'

The stranger said, 'Really? Again?'

But he didn't move. He saw the three guys swap furtive glances. They had to decide what to do, but with their leader out of commission their command structure was disrupted. He figured that if the guys were smart, they'd opt for a tactical retreat. Or if they were proficient, they would attack together. But first they'd work one of them around to the rear. He could pretend to check on the injured driver. Or to give up and get in the car. Or even to run away. The other two could create a distraction. Then, when he was in place, they would all rush in at once. A simultaneous assault from three directions. One of the guys was certain to take some damage. Probably two. But the third might have a chance. An opening might present itself. If someone had the skill to exploit it.

They weren't smart. And they weren't proficient. They didn't withdraw. And no one tried to circle around. Instead, the centre guy took another step forward, alone. He dropped into some kind of generic martial arts stance. Let out a high-pitched wail. Feinted a jab to the stranger's face. Then launched a reverse punch to the solar plexus. The stranger brushed it aside with the back of his left hand and punched the guy's bicep with his right, his middle knuckle extended. The guy shrieked and jumped back, his axillary nerve overloaded and his arm temporarily useless.

'You should walk away,' the stranger said. 'Before you hurt yourself.'

The guy sprang forward. He made no attempt at disguise this time. He just twisted into a wild roundhouse punch with his good arm. The stranger leaned back. The guy's fist sailed harmlessly past. The stranger watched it go then drove his knuckle into the meat of the guy's tricep. Both his arms were now out of action.

'Walk away,' the stranger said. 'While you still can.'

The guy lunged. His right leg rose. His thigh first, then his foot, pivoting at the knee. Going for maximum power. Aiming for the stranger's groin. But not getting close. Because the stranger countered with a kick of his own. A sneaky one. Straight and low. Directly into the guy's shin. Just as it reached maximum speed. Bone against toecap. The stranger's shoes. The only thing about him that wasn't scruffy. Bought in London years ago. Layer upon layer of leather and polish and glue. Seasoned by time. Hardened by the elements. And now as solid as steel.

The guy's ankle cracked. He screamed and shied away. He lost his balance and couldn't regain it without the use of his arms. His foot touched the ground. The fractured ends of the bone connected. They grated together. Pain ripped through his leg. It burned along every nerve. Way more than his system could handle. He remained upright for another half second, already unconscious. Then he toppled onto his back and lay there, as still as a fallen tree.

The remaining two guys turned and made for the car. They kept going past its front doors. Past its rear doors. All the way around the back. The trunk lid popped open. One of the guys dropped out of sight. The shorter one. Then he reappeared. He was holding something in each hand. Like a pair of baseball bats, only longer. And thicker and squarer at one end. Pickaxe handles. Effective tools, in the right hands. He passed one to the taller guy and the pair strode back, stopping about four feet away.

'Say we break your legs?' The taller guy licked his lips. 'You could still answer questions. But you'd never walk again. Not without a cane. So stop dicking us around. Get in the car. Let's go.'

The stranger saw no need to give them another warning. He'd been clear with them from the start. And they were the ones who'd chosen to up the ante.

UNSEEN PRACTICE 2

The following is an extract from The Harbor, the third novel in the Kørner and Werner series, by Katrine Engberg. When Jeppe Kørner and Anette Werner are tasked to find a missing teenage boy, their colleagues assume that they're looking for a runaway who does not want to be found. But the detectives aren't so sure, especially because the boy has left behind a strange note, containing a violent excerpt from The Picture of Dorian Gray.

After spending his weekend in bed, Michael woke up Monday morning with a throat full of glass shards. He had just pulled the comforter up around his fever-laden head and decided to call in sick, when his wife came in to stand at the foot of the bed, crossing her arms and giving him that look. Michael got up. After all, she was right. His job as crane operator at the incineration plant was still new, and he couldn't risk making a bad first impression.

Pumped up on a mixture of Tylenol and black coffee, he drove out to Copenhagen's industrial island, Refshaleøen, the car radio alternating between soft hits and crisp commercials, and gradu-ally he started to feel better. He parked the car, nodded to the guards in the lobby, and rode the elevator up to the staff room to change his clothes. Strictly speaking that wasn't necessary, because the negative pressure in the sealed waste silo left the sur-rounding facility nearly odor-free, but Michael always changed into his boiler suit anyway. He laced up his protective work boots, put on his helmet, and walked through the plant with knees ach-ing from the flu.

The walkways around the silo made up their own world of steel and valves, control panels, boilers, and signs. There were no win-dows, the incineration plant comprising a closed system that lacked weather or any circadian rhythm. Michael casually ducked under the hot-water pipes, said hello to a couple of coworkers by the steam turbines, and let himself into the crane operator's room. He stuck his lunch in the refrigerator and made a pot of coffee before sinking into his work chair with a heartfelt sigh. A ferocious scene came into view in front of him, one that he still had not fully gotten used to.

A window—the only one in the entire waste silo—offered a view into the heart of the incineration plant: the underbelly of Western civilization, a massive aggregated heap of filthy futility. Michael hadn't worked with garbage before, and on his first few shifts he had felt sick to his stomach, as if he were witnessing the apocalypse and ought to be doing something instead of just watching it. It had gotten better over time. He had even started eating the cookies his coworkers left behind while moving the claw.

The claw! At eight meters across from leg to leg it resembled something from a dystopian world where giant spiders ruled a dead planet. Michael had brought many pictures of the claw home to his six-year-old son, who firmly believed his dad had the coolest job in the world.

In reality, his dad's job was a little boring. The system that con-trolled the claw—moving it from the chutes where the waste carts were emptied and over to the ovens—was automated. Michael was only there to observe the transfer of the waste from left to right ad infinitum and make sure that nothing went wrong.

"Good morning," said Kasper Skytte as he walked in and sat in the chair next to Michael.

Occasionally the process engineers came to check if there was trouble in the control system. Michael hadn't noticed anything.

"Any problems so far?"

"Nope."

Luckily the engineers rarely spoke to the crane operators or any-one, really, who didn't understand their technobabble. So Michael knew he would be able to work in peace, which was just as well. He felt feverish and hot and perhaps should have defied his wife and stayed in bed after all.

“Coffee?” Kasper asked.

“Thanks, I’m good.”

The engineer got up and clanked around with cups and spoons behind him, then yawned loudly and sank back into the chair beside Michael so they were once more seated side by side, watching the silo. Michael pulled his bag closer and dug around in it for some-thing to relieve his sore throat, hoping he still had a couple of loz-enges left. He found a pack of Ricola drops and gratefully popped one into his mouth.

The claw approached the window with a full load. It was always an impressive sight when it swung by really close. Trash dangled from its enormous grabbing arms, like tentacles on a jellyfish: a rope, a dirty tarp, a sneaker.

Michael leaned closer to the glass, squinting. That shoe was attached to something. Just as the load passed right in front of the window, an arm emerged, flopping out of the trash and dangling limply from the claw. Next to him Kasper spat his coffee at the win-dow.

Then Michael slammed the dead-man button.

UNSEEN PRACTICE 3

The following is an exclusive excerpt from The Sandman, the latest thriller from international bestseller Lars Kepler. On the cold outskirts of Stockholm, police find a man long believed dead at the hands of Sweden's most infamous serial killer; his terrifying story launches agents into a dangerous undercover search. Kepler is the pseudonym used by wife and husband, Alexandra Coelho Ahndoril and Alexander Ahndoril, together a leading light of the Nordic Noir phenomenon

A train is thundering through the nocturnal winter landscape. The locomotive is pulling almost three hundred meters of boxcars behind it.

In the cab sits the train engineer with his hand resting on the controls. The noise from the engine and the rails is rhythmic and monotonous.

The snow rushes out of a bright tunnel formed by the two headlights. The rest is darkness.

As the train emerges from the broad curve around Vårsta, the engineer increases speed.

He's thinking that the snow is so bad that he's going to have to stop at Hallsberg, if not before, to check the braking distance.

Far off in the haze, two deer scamper off the rails and away across the white fields. They move through the snow with magical ease and disappear into the night.

He brakes gently as the train heads out across the high bridge. It feels like flying. The snow is swirling and twisting in the headlights.

The train is already in the middle of the bridge, high above the ice of Hallsfjärden, when he sees a flickering shadow through the haze. There's someone on the track. The engineer sounds the horn and sees the figure take a long step to the right, onto the other track.

The train is approaching very fast. For half a second, the man is caught in the light of the headlights. He blinks. A young man with a dead face. His clothes are trembling on his skinny frame, and then he's gone.

The engineer isn't conscious that he's applied the brakes and that the whole train is slowing down. There's a rumbling sound and the screech of metal, and he isn't sure if he ran over the young man.

He's shaking and can feel adrenaline coursing through his body as he calls the emergency number.

"I'm a train engineer. I've just passed someone on the Igelsta Bridge. He was in the middle of the tracks, but I don't think I hit him."

"Is anyone injured?" the operator asks.

"I don't think I hit him. I only saw him for a few seconds."

"Where exactly did you see him?"

"In the middle of the Igelsta Bridge."

"On the tracks?"

"There's nothing but tracks up here—it's a fucking railroad bridge."

"Was he standing still, or was he walking in a particular direction?"

"I don't know."

“My colleague is alerting the police and ambulance in Södertälje. We’ll stop all rail traffic over the bridge.”

The emergency control room immediately dispatches police cars to both ends of the long bridge. Nine minutes later, the first car pulls off the road from Nyköping with its lights flashing and makes its way up the narrow gravel road alongside the train tracks. The road leads steeply upward and hasn’t been plowed. Loose snow swirls up over the windshield.

The policemen leave the car at the end of the bridge and set out along the tracks with their flashlights on. It isn’t easy going. Cars are passing far below them on the highway. The four railroad tracks narrow to two and stretch out over the industrial complexes of Björkudden and the frozen inlet.

The first officer stops and points. Someone has clearly been walking along the right-hand track ahead of them. The shaky beams of their flashlights illuminate footprints and traces of blood.

They shine their flashlights into the distance, but there’s no one on the bridge as far as they can see. The lights at the harbor below make the snow between the tracks look like smoke.

Now the second police car reaches the other end of the deep ravine, more than a kilometer and a half away.

The tires crunch on the gravel as Police Constable Jasim Muhammed pulls up along the railroad line. His partner, Fredrik Mosskin, has just contacted their colleagues on the bridge over the radio. The wind is making so much noise in the microphone that it’s difficult to hear, but they pick up that someone was walking across the railroad bridge very recently.

The headlights illuminate a steep rock face. Fredrik ends the call and stares blankly ahead of him.

“What’s happening?” Jasim asks. “Looks like he’s heading this way.”

“What did they say about blood? Was there much blood?”

“I didn’t hear.”

“Let’s go and look,” Jasim says, opening his door.

The blue emergency lights play upon the snow-covered branches of the pine trees.

“The ambulance is on its way,” Fredrik says.

There’s no crust on the snow, and Jasim sinks in up to his knees. He pulls out his flashlight and shines it toward the tracks. Fredrik is slipping on the track bed but keeps climbing.

“What sort of animal has an extra asshole in the middle of its back?” Jasim asks.

“I don’t know,” Fredrik mutters.

“A police horse,” Jasim says.

“What the . . . ?”

“That’s what my mother-in-law told the kids.” Jasim grins and heads up onto the bridge.

There are no footprints in the snow. Either the man is still on the bridge, or he’s jumped. The cables above them whistle eerily.

UNSEEN PRACTICE 4

The following extract comes from chapter 6 of 15 in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Hound of the Baskervilles' published in 1902. Sherlock and Watson are visiting the setting of a crime in order to carry out some investigations.

Our driver half turned in his seat. "There's a convict escaped from Princetown, sir. He's been out three days now, and the warders watch every road and every station, but they've had no sight of him yet. The farmers about here don't like it, sir, and that's a fact."

"Well, I understand that they get five pounds if they can give information."

"Yes, sir, but the chance of five pounds is but a poor thing compared to the chance of having your throat cut. You see, it isn't like any ordinary convict. This is a man that would stick at nothing."

"Who is he, then?"

"It is Selden, the Notting Hill murderer."

I remembered the case well, for it was one in which Holmes had taken an interest on account of the peculiar ferocity of the crime and the wanton brutality which had marked all the actions of the assassin. The commutation of his death sentence had been due to some doubts as to his complete sanity, so atrocious was his conduct. Our wagonette had topped a rise and in front of us rose the huge expanse of the moor, mottled with gnarled and craggy cairns and tors. A cold wind swept down from it and set us shivering. Somewhere there, on that desolate plain, was lurking this fiendish man, hiding in a burrow like a wild beast, his heart full of malignancy against the whole race which had cast him out. It needed but this to complete the grim suggestiveness of the barren waste, the chilling wind, and the darkling sky. Even Baskerville fell silent and pulled his overcoat more closely around him.

We had left the fertile country behind and beneath us. We looked back on it now, the slanting rays of a low sun turning the streams to threads of gold and glowing on the red earth new turned by the plough and the broad tangle of the woodlands. The road in front of us grew bleaker and wilder over huge russet and olive slopes, sprinkled with giant boulders. Now and then we passed a moorland cottage, walled and roofed with stone, with no creeper to break its harsh outline. Suddenly we looked down into a cuplike depression, patched with stunted oaks and firs which had been twisted and bent by the fury of years of storm. Two high, narrow towers rose over the trees. The driver pointed with his whip.

"Baskerville Hall," said he.

Its master had risen and was staring with flushed cheeks and shining eyes. A few minutes later we had reached the lodge-gates, a maze of fantastic tracery in wrought iron, with weather-bitten pillars on either side, blotched with lichens, and surmounted by the boars' heads of the Baskervilles. The lodge was a ruin of black granite and bared ribs of rafters, but facing it was a new building, half constructed, the first fruit of Sir Charles's South African gold.

Through the gateway we passed into the avenue, where the wheels were again hushed amid the leaves, and the old trees shot their branches in a sombre tunnel over our heads. Baskerville shuddered as he looked up the long, dark drive to where the house glimmered like a ghost at the farther end.

"Was it here?" he asked in a low voice.

"No, no, the yew alley is on the other side."

The young heir glanced round with a gloomy face.

“It’s no wonder my uncle felt as if trouble were coming on him in such a place as this,” said he. “It’s enough to scare any man. I’ll have a row of electric lamps up here inside of six months, and you won’t know it again, with a thousand candle-power Swan and Edison right here in front of the hall door.”

The avenue opened into a broad expanse of turf, and the house lay before us. In the fading light I could see that the centre was a heavy block of building from which a porch projected. The whole front was draped in ivy, with a patch clipped bare here and there where a window or a coat of arms broke through the dark veil. From this central block rose the twin towers, ancient, crenelated, and pierced with many loopholes. To right and left of the turrets were more modern wings of black granite. A dull light shone through heavy mullioned windows, and from the high chimneys which rose from the steep, high-angled roof there sprang a single black column of smoke.

“Welcome, Sir Henry! Welcome to Baskerville Hall!”

A tall man had stepped from the shadow of the porch to open the door of the wagonette. The figure of a woman was silhouetted against the yellow light of the hall. She came out and helped the man to hand down our bags.

“You don’t mind my driving straight home, Sir Henry?” said Dr. Mortimer. “My wife is expecting me.”

“Surely you will stay and have some dinner?”

“No, I must go. I shall probably find some work awaiting me. I would stay to show you over the house, but Barrymore will be a better guide than I. Good-bye, and never hesitate night or day to send for me if I can be of service.”

The wheels died away down the drive while Sir Henry and I turned into the hall, and the door clanged heavily behind us. It was a fine apartment in which we found ourselves, large, lofty, and heavily raftered with huge baulks of age-blackened oak. In the great old-fashioned fireplace behind the high iron dogs a log-fire crackled and snapped. Sir Henry and I held out our hands to it, for we were numb from our long drive. Then we gazed round us at the high, thin window of old stained glass, the oak panelling, the stags’ heads, the coats of arms upon the walls, all dim and sombre in the subdued light of the central lamp.

“It’s just as I imagined it,” said Sir Henry. “Is it not the very picture of an old family home? To think that this should be the same hall in which for five hundred years my people have lived. It strikes me solemn to think of it.”

I saw his dark face lit up with a boyish enthusiasm as he gazed about him. The light beat upon him where he stood, but long shadows trailed down the walls and hung like a black canopy above him. Barrymore had returned from taking our luggage to our rooms. He stood in front of us now with the subdued manner of a well-trained servant. He was a remarkable-looking man, tall, handsome, with a square black beard and pale, distinguished features.

“Would you wish dinner to be served at once, sir?”

“Is it ready?”

“In a very few minutes, sir. You will find hot water in your rooms. My wife and I will be happy, Sir Henry, to stay with you until you have made your fresh arrangements, but you will understand that under the new conditions this house will require a considerable staff.”

“What new conditions?”

“I only meant, sir, that Sir Charles led a very retired life, and we were able to look after his wants. You would, naturally, wish to have more company, and so you will need changes in your household.”

UNSEEN PRACTICE 5

The following extract comes from Agatha Christie's novel 'Murder on the Orient Express'. A body has been discovered on a train during a journey. M. Bouc, who runs the train, wants Poirot - an old friend and famous detective - to help with the investigation. This extract comes from the end of chapter 5, once the body has been

"Come, my friend," said M. Bouc. "You comprehend what I am about to ask of you. I know your powers. Take command of this investigation! No, no, do not refuse. See, to us it is serious—I speak for the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits. By the time the JugoSlavian police arrive, how simple if we can present them with the solution! Otherwise delays, annoyances, a million and one inconveniences. Perhaps, who knows, serious annoyance to innocent persons. Instead—you solve the mystery! We say, 'A murder has occurred—this is the criminal!'"

"And suppose I do not solve it?"

"Ah, mon cher!" M. Bouc's voice became positively caressing. "I know your reputation. I know something of your methods. This is the ideal case for you. To look up the antecedents of all these people, to discover their bona fides—all that takes time and endless inconvenience. But have I not heard you say often that to solve a case a man has only to lie back in his chair and think? Do that. Interview the passengers on the train, view the body, examine what clues there are, and then—well, I have faith in you! I am assured that it is no idle boast of yours. Lie back and think—use (as I have heard you say so often) the little grey cells of the mind—and you will know!"

He leaned forward, looking affectionately at the detective.

"Your faith touches me, my friend," said Poirot emotionally. "As you say, this cannot be a difficult case. I myself last night—but we will not speak of that now. In truth, this problem intrigues me. I was reflecting, not half an hour ago, that many hours of boredom lay ahead whilst we are stuck here. And now—a problem lies ready to my hand."

"You accept then?" said M. Bouc eagerly.

"C'est entendu. You place the matter in my hands."

"Good—we are all at your service."

"To begin with, I should like a plan of the Istanbul-Calais coach, with a note of the people who occupied the several compartments, and I should also like to see their passports and their tickets."

"Michel will get you those."

The Wagon Lit conductor left the compartment.

"What other passengers are there on the train?" asked Poirot.

"In this coach Dr. Constantine and I are the only travellers. In the coach from Bucharest is an old gentleman with a lame leg. He is well known to the conductor. Beyond that are the ordinary carriages, but these do not concern us, since they were locked after dinner had been served last night. Forward of the Istanbul-Calais coach there is only the dining-car."

"Then it seems," said Poirot slowly, "as though we must look for our murderer in the Istanbul-Calais coach." He turned to the doctor. "That is what you were hinting, I think?"

The Greek nodded. "At half an hour after midnight we ran into the snowdrift. No one can have left the train since then."

M. Bouc said solemnly, "*The murderer is with us—on the train now. ...*"

CHAPTER 6: A WOMAN

"First of all," said Poirot, "I should like a word or two with young Mr. MacQueen. He may be able to give us valuable information."

"Certainly," said M. Bouc. He turned to the chef de train. "Get Mr. MacQueen to come here."

The *chef de train* left the carriage. T

he conductor returned with a bundle of passports and tickets. M. Bouc took them from him.
"Thank you, Michel. It would be best now, I think, if you were to go back to your post. We will take your evidence formally later."
"Very good, Monsieur," said Michel, and in his turn left the carriage.
"After we have seen young MacQueen," said Poirot, "perhaps M. le docteur will come with me to the dead man's carriage."
"Certainly."
"After we have finished there—" B
ut at this moment the *chef de train* returned with Hector MacQueen.
M. Bouc rose. "We are a little cramped here," he said pleasantly. "Take my seat, Mr. MacQueen. M. Poirot will sit opposite you—so."
He turned to the *chef de train*. "Clear all the people out of the restaurant car," he said, "and let it be left free for M. Poirot. You will conduct your interviews there, mon cher?"
"It would be the most convenient, yes," agreed Poirot.
MacQueen had stood looking from one to the other, not quite following the rapid flow of French.
"Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?" he began laboriously. "Pourquoi—?" With a vigorous gesture Poirot motioned him to the seat in the corner. He took it and began once more.
"Pourquoi—?" Then checking himself and relapsing into his own tongue: "What's up on the train? Has anything happened?"
He looked from one man to another.
Poirot nodded. "Exactly. Something has happened. Prepare yourself for a shock. *Your employer, M. Ratchett, is dead*!"
MacQueen's mouth pursed itself into a whistle. Except that his eyes grew a shade brighter, he showed no signs of shock or distress.
"So they got him after all," he said.
"What exactly do you mean by that phrase, Mr. MacQueen?"
MacQueen hesitated.
"You are assuming," said Poirot, "that M. Ratchett was murdered?"
"Wasn't he?" This time MacQueen did show surprise. "Why, yes," he said slowly. "That's just what I did think. Do you mean he just died in his sleep? Why, the old man was as tough as— as tough—"
He stopped, at a loss for a simile.
"No, no," said Poirot. "Your assumption was quite right. M. Ratchett was murdered. Stabbed. But I should like to know why you were so sure it was murder, and not just—death."

Crime Genre Tropes

Use the grid to jot down anything you think

CRIMINALS	VICTIMS
SETTINGS	LAW AND PUNISHMENT

Overview grid

is typical of the crime genre (traditionally)

CRIMES	JUSTICE

TYPICAL THEMES

CRIME ELEMENTS: OLIVER TWIST

CRIMINAL ACTS

Given the heavy focus on crime and the London underworld, it is not difficult to see the novel as a clear example of a specific type of Crime Writing, one rooted in social realism. Oliver Twist's narrative is driven by a number of crimes. Bill Sikes' murder of Nancy is the most horrible and dramatic; Fagin's corruption of young boys, specifically his attempt to pervert Oliver, covers more of the story's action; Monks' vengeful spite as he tracks down Oliver and seeks his ruin provides a narrative structure; but perhaps surpassing all these are the terrible crimes committed by the state against its people, especially children, through the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834. The creation of workhouses, the authorities' condoning child labour and the wide-held belief of those with power that poverty equalled criminality, are included by Dickens to show that the values held by the state are more devious and cynical than the criminal world itself. Since 1838 many of the laws that underpin the novel have been abolished, and public attitudes have likewise changed. Some practices which were once lawful are now crimes themselves, like making young children work and hanging them for acts of theft. As a result, pinning down crimes and judging them is problematic for modern readers.

The novel reflects the London of the 1830s as Dickens saw it and incorporates his reactions to it. His own views were complex. There is abhorrence for many laws and accepted practices but also contempt for law breakers. Sometimes there is criticism of the middle classes and of criminals, and sometimes there is sympathy. Fagin and Sikes are outlaws, but also social outcasts. They are developed with more psychological realism than Oliver and, at their ends, they are figures of terrifying loneliness.

CRIMES AND CRIMINALS

As Oliver progresses through childhood he encounters the criminal world first hand: theft, abduction, murder, prostitution, deception and fraud are at the heart of Dickens' novel.

Thieving is the profession of Fagin's gang and his empire depends on children of poverty being recruited as pickpockets. Stealing leads to some of the children being hanged.

Whereas modern readers are likely to be horrified at the practice of abducting children, Fagin and his adult gang think that this is their right, and the authorities seem to turn a blind eye to it. Some children are lured into Fagin's den and this is certainly the case when Oliver first goes, persuaded by the Artful Dodger that he will be given a home. When Oliver escapes from Fagin, he is forcibly kidnapped from Mr Brownlow's and returned to the den. Oliver is also an unwilling accomplice in Sikes' robbery and, when he is shot, his abductors show little compassion.

The most violent and terrible crime is the brutal murder of Nancy by a raging Sikes who accuses her of betrayal. The incident is charged with emotional intensity. Sikes beats his pistol on the upturned face of Nancy until she "staggered and fell; nearly blinded with the blood that rained down from a deep gash in her forehead" and then as she attempts to pray "he seized a heavy club and struck her down".

Dickens mainly makes his criminals detestable. He is censorious of their behaviour, their lifestyle and seemingly their poverty. In some ways he validates prevailing 19th century attitudes regarding the lives of the poor, supporting the views that led to the Poor Law. At times the novel seems to support the belief that the population needed checking because, rather than working, people would prefer a dissolute life and claim parish relief. Dickens' criminals are made to look horrible, as if God is displeased with them. He paints them as being deformed and wretched and their lives as squalid and miserable. They skulk "uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life, with the great black ghastly gallows closing up their prospect..." In creating his characters, Dickens establishes a link between their immorality and their physical repulsiveness. Fagin, for example, is reptilian and "villainous looking".

Fagin is the chief criminal, a manipulative and intellectual kind of villain, feeding off others. He preys on children, whom he brutally trains to pick pockets. He does not care if they are caught and hanged so long as they do not "peach" on him. Although the children are given a home of sorts, they have to deliver the proceeds of their filching to him.

Sikes is a more terrible and terrifying villain, trumping Fagin's evil; he is a violent, brutal robber, inspiring terror in most who come across him. His murder of Nancy is vicious, an act of vengeance and anger.

Monks is another villain who exhibits a festering kind of evil which works below the surface; he is manipulative and malignant. Unlike other criminals in Fagin's camp, he is not poor. However, although he inspires some terror and mystery when he first enters the novel, he becomes little more than a plot mechanism, seeking to destroy his half-brother Oliver out of spite.

The Artful Dodger is a cunning worldly-wise thief, who sees himself as a professional man, wanting to rise in the world. The 'dodger', despite being drawn with some affection, is self-seeking and full of guile.

Victims

Oliver is the novel's insipid victim and literary hero. He is a victim of the official world which first abuses him and, after his escape, he becomes a victim of Fagin's villainy, Sikes' cruelty and Monks' vindictiveness. However Oliver also breaks laws: he assists Sikes, albeit unwillingly, in the house robbery because he is small and can get through windows. Even earlier, when he runs away from the workhouse, he breaks the law by being on the road with no money (the 1824 vagrancy act criminalised begging and sleeping outdoors without means of support). Yet he is no true criminal and Dickens makes his face attractive to signify his innocence.

Nancy is a law breaker in that she supports Fagin and Sikes in acts of robbery. She is also a prostitute, though her prostitution is only alluded to. However, she is also a victim, immersed into Fagin's world from the age of five and ultimately beaten to death by her brutal lover, Sikes. Nancy's representation in the novel as primarily being a victim is secured by her sacrificing her life to keep Oliver away from a world she cannot leave. She also breathes 'one prayer of mercy to her Maker' as she dies.

SETTINGS Dickens creates very clear place and time settings in Oliver Twist: the streets of 1830s London are specifically named, there is the workhouse, Fagin's den, the three Cripples and Newgate prison. These dark and dangerous settings are contrasted with the middle-class residences of Brownlow and Mrs Maylie and are an important element of the crime writing genre.

POLICE/LAW ENFORCERS There is a police force of sorts operating in the world of Oliver Twist, but Dickens does not place police constables in the foreground. The work of detection and arresting criminals is carried out by individual citizens like Brownlow (who tracks down Monks and interrogates him), and by mobs; though police assistance is in the background should it be needed. When it is thought Oliver has stolen Brownlow's handkerchief, the crowd shout "Stop thief" and they hound him with "a passion for hunting". Later a dehumanised mob pursues Sikes, in a state of frenzy and fury.

CRIMINAL TRIALS AND PUNISHMENT

In Oliver Twist, punishment is meted out on criminals to serve Dickens' moral purpose. The apparatus of the law abounds: courts of law, magistrates and court officials, prisons and executions.

Formal trials are an important part of the framework of the novel. When Oliver is taken to the metropolitan police office for apparently stealing Brownlow's handkerchief, despite Brownlow's reluctance to press charges, Oliver is tried by the magistrate Mr Fang. He is sentenced to three months hard labour which is only retracted when a late witness arrives at the trial to say that Oliver is not the thief.

The Artful Dodger's trial for stealing a silver snuff box is a humorous farce. His punishment is transportation to Australia.

Fagin's trial contrasts with the two above in that it is utterly serious. The scene is recounted through Fagin's eyes and suspense is created when the jury return their verdict: "The jury returned, and passed him close. He could glean nothing from their faces; they might as well have been of stone. Perfect stillness ensured – not a rustle – not a breath – Guilty."

To Sikes, Dickens administers a different justice. After Sikes kills Nancy he is fearful of the consequences. He is terrified by shadows "but these fears were nothing compared to the sense of that morning's ghastly figure following him at his heels". It seems here that Sikes' conscience is at work; in no way can murderers escape, or justice be evaded. In Oliver Twist Providence is not asleep. Sikes is terrified by his guilt and, like Macbeth, is transfigured by the act of murder. He tries to escape but cannot, and after being pursued by the crowd onto a house roof he accidentally hangs himself.

Monks' punishment is less severe. After his capture he is given a second chance by Oliver's generosity and allowed to leave England, though in America he reverts to crime and dies in prison.

For Fagin, Dickens reserves the harshest form of institutionalised punishment: Newgate prison and then hanging. When Fagin is condemned to the gallows he screams in terror as the crowd gather. He does not repent.

Moral purpose

In Oliver Twist, ultimately the good prosper and the evil are punished. In this example of Crime Writing there is a moral outcome. Oliver discovers he has noble origins and being adopted by the kindly Mr Brownlow is his reward for his inner goodness.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: OLIVER TWIST

Below each statement with to what extent do you agree?

- 'In *Oliver Twist* the criminals are more interesting than the crimes'
- 'Fagin is not a criminal at all; he only lies and deceives!'
- 'At the end of *Oliver Twist*, justice triumphs'
- 'Sikes is as much a victim of his own crime as Nancy is'
- 'In spite of being a criminal, Nancy is essentially an honourable woman'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* the victims are rarely innocent'
- 'At the end of the novel the evil are punished and the good triumph'
- 'It is difficult for readers to like Oliver despite his innocence'
- 'Oliver is a complete innocent who does not deserve to suffer as he does'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* physical cruelty is presented as the worst crime of all'
- 'Sikes' harshest punishments are his isolation and guilt'
- 'Fagin's harshest punishments are his isolation and madness'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* Dickens shows criminals to be products of the society they live in.'
- 'In spite of the terrible crimes committed during the course of the story, the novel has a happy ending'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* the criminals rarely feel guilt for their actions'
- 'Sikes' murder of Nancy is presented as the most serious crime of the novel'
- 'It is the society which Dickens condemns, rather than the criminals'
- 'The worst crimes in *Oliver Twist* are committed against other criminals, rather than victims'
- 'Oliver Twist is not a victim but an unlikely detective and hero'
- 'The crimes caused in a reckless way are more shocking than the crimes that are planned'
- 'In spite of the appearance of respectability, Dickens exposes a society whose member are essentially corrupt and dishonest'
- 'Fagin's dishonesty has far worse consequences than Sikes' brutality'
- 'The settings in *Oliver Twist* are as important as the characters'
- 'None of the criminals in *Oliver Twist* seek forgiveness'
- 'Dickens focus is on the crimes rather than the punishment'
- 'By the end of *Oliver Twist* we feel relief for the victims'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* Dickens makes the reader feel satisfied by the punishments given'
- 'In the novel most of the criminals are not complex characters'
- 'By the end of the novel it is the criminals, not the victims, who suffer'
- 'Although it takes time, the legal system is successful by the end of the novel'
- 'Dickens ensures we feel disgusted by the major criminals of the novel'
- 'A restoration of order is achieved by the end of *Oliver Twist*.'
- 'At the end of *Oliver Twsit* the morally good characters triumph'
- 'Many of the criminals in the novel commit crimes of betrayal'
- 'The criminal gang are likeable despite their crimes'
- 'In *Oliver Twist* little attention is paid to the motives behind the crimes'
- 'There is nothing likeable or sympathetic about Fagin and Sikes'
- 'Nancy blurs the lines between criminal and victim'
- 'The pursuit of criminals is largely ignored in *Oliver Twist*'
- 'The various sentences given in the novel seem equal to the crime commited'
- 'The criminal behaviour in *Oliver Twist* seems realistic and convincing'
- 'Violence plays a big role in the crimes of the novel'
- 'Money motivates all of the crimes of the novel'

You could also write your own question – just come up with a statement that can be argued both ways!

Criminality

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Motives
- Psyche
- Psychological
- Society
- Suffering
- Behaviour
- Desires
- Innate/inherent

Crimes
IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Legal
- Moral
- Societal
- Religious
- Morality
- Murder
- Theft
- Class

justice

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Conclusion
- Fair
- Just
- Accurate
- Moral
- Guilt
- Societal
- Internal/external

Law and punishment

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Trial
- Punishment
- System
- Prison
- Sentence
- Condemned
- Judicial
- Society

Guilt and innocence

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Remorse
- Atonement
- Sin
- Virtue
- Morality
- Psychological
- Victim
- Punishment

Violence and fear

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Aggression
- Anger
- Vulnerable
- Victims
- Physical
- Abusive
- Neglect
- Motive

secrecy and mystery

IN OLIVER TWIST

Consider the following vocabulary:

- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Puzzle
- ☐ Discovery
- ☐ Investigation
- ☐ Suspense
- ☐ Tension
- ☐ Relief
- ☐ Frustration

Oliver Twist KO

CRIME ELEMENTS: ATONEMENT

'There was a crime. But there were also lovers.'

Overview

This is a complex post-modern crime writing text, in which the reader's choices about what to believe are consciously manipulated by McEwan and the narrator draws attention to her own untrustworthiness at the end. It is therefore important to carefully consider the novel's form, and the tricks (or crimes) that it plays on the reader, before drawing conclusions about the morality of the characters that it depicts. At the most superficial level, the novel tells the story of Briony's desire for atonement for the crime of falsely accusing Robbie (her sister Cecilia's lover) of raping her cousin Lola. Lola is assaulted on the night she arrives at the Tallis home after a search party is sent out to look for her two brothers who have run away. Briony is a witness to the crime and, for motives that are never quite satisfactorily illustrated, assumes that the man whom she sees commit the assault is her family's protégé and she convinces Lola that she too had recognised Robbie. Although there are hints of Briony's doubt, by the time they emerge, it is too late: the police have arrived at her home; she is lavished in attention; and the real criminal, Paul, is busy playing the role of innocent and concerned bystander and she is locked in to the fantasy she has created. Robbie's cinematically heroic return with the two lost boys through the early morning mist gives her a 'flash of outrage' and she uses her feelings to consolidate her story. Robbie is arrested and Briony withdraws. Her power to control the legal 'truth' is contrasted with Robbie's mother's futile cries of 'Liars!'

There are hence two crimes that form climactic moments in the early part of the narrative: Lola's rape and Briony's lie to the police. The novel can be read as an exploration of the consequences of these two crimes. On the one hand, Robbie and consequently Cecilia are punished unjustly by their separate banishments. Robbie suffers the indignity of being imprisoned and his reputation slurred; Cecilia has a life of sadness. On the other hand, Briony is punished by her guilt and spends her life seeking atonement, firstly by becoming a nurse instead of going to Cambridge, and then by becoming a writer and trying to right the wrongs to her sister and Robbie through fiction and through writing a love story. In the world of the text, she is ultimately unable to achieve her atonement by publishing the 'truth' since she has to wait for the deaths of the 'real' criminal and the victim who are now married and are likely to outlive Briony who has vascular dementia. Perhaps of greater significance though is the final crime against the reader which McEwan rather shockingly reveals at the end, because only then is it made clear that the whole story is Briony's (even the long section of the novel which is set in war-torn Northern France); it is her fantasy to ease the guilt she has felt all her life, her attempt to rewrite history and create a happy conclusion for Cecilia and Robbie when there was none.

setting and crime

The novel's story begins in the summer of 1935 and ends in 1999, so for Briony there is a life time of guilt in a number of different time periods. There are also five main settings, each with its own morality and each making its own contribution to the novel as a crime text. The country house, in which McEwan chooses to set part one, is a typical setting for crime fiction of the early twentieth century. The wealthy Tallis family and its guests see themselves as superior to the law, unwilling to call the police when the twins run away and only contacting them when they think the lower class Robbie is guilty of raping Lola. For the most part the law seems answerable to them. The second setting is Northern France during the retreat to Dunkirk. It is a similarly lawless place, the focus for the terrible crime of war, and on a smaller scale a place where petty crime and insubordination are overlooked. Briony's hospital is the third setting, one which befits Briony's needs to try to find reparation: it is a place of both misery and comfort, wounds and healing. 'London 1999' provides the fourth setting: Briony is now seventy five and though her life has security and comfort, she is still wracked with guilt and eager to atone for her sins through her writing. In a neat final twist, McEwan chooses to make the final setting a return to the Tallis' country mansion, now Tilney's Hotel, for a family reunion. It is in this setting that Briony completes her story (at five in the morning she is still at her writing desk) where she tells us that this whole tale has been her attempt to repair the damage of her crime by changing the ending. Her fiction (in which Robbie and Cecilia live and are still in love) she sees as 'a final act of kindness, a stand against oblivion'. But in this setting, the crime against the reader is most pronounced. McEwan

chooses the name Tilney's Hotel deliberately - its connection to the epigraph and Austen's Northanger Abbey (the Tilney home) a reminder that stories are not to be trusted.

Paul Marshall

Paul Marshall is the novel's villain, though interestingly McEwan chooses to somewhat marginalise his criminality. He is given relatively little space in the novel and he is not pursued and punished. Briony speculates on the possibility of his feeling guilt ('perhaps he has spent a lifetime making amends'), but in every obvious way he is a criminal who gets away with it. His crime is a dreadful one: he rapes a minor, a young girl who is outside searching for her twin brothers who have run away. Marshall is rich and privileged and even as a young man he is a successful business man making chocolate bars. When he is given a voice or presence in the novel he is insistent, commanding and a bore (when Cecilia takes the visitors into the garden he takes control of the conversation with 'a ten minute monologue'). It seems that he wants Britain to go to war with Germany so that he can increase his business empire (the army will buy his chocolate bars for the soldiers). There is nothing attractive about him. His arrogance is evident in his disparaging of Robbie because of his working class roots and it is therefore not surprising that after his crime he uses his class privilege in his dealings with the police and the family and lets Robbie take the blame.
Although much is made of Briony's crime, little is said of Paul Marshall's. Eventually it emerges that he marries Lola, a union in which Briony feels implicated. By the end of the story, Marshall is even richer, now a lord and very well respected (he has a Foundation and does good work for medical research), but he has untold crimes and even Briony cannot publish her novel of the truth because publication could lead to litigation. So he gets away scot free. Perhaps McEwan suggests that this is like life and the privileged have more opportunity to evade detection.

Victims of Crime

Lola, the victim of Marshall's crime is also somewhat sidelined in terms of her victim status. This is perhaps because the story is told through Briony and Briony is concerned with her own position as criminal and her own need to repair the damage done to Robbie. As a result Lola, like Marshall, is rather on the edge of the text. Yet she is a victim. Even before the assault: her parents' bitter divorce has left her fragile, a refugee 'from a bitter domestic civil war' and after the rape she is traumatised. The account of Briony's finding her contains some harrowing details: ' Lola was sitting forward, with her arms crossed around her chest, hugging herself and rocking slightly. The voice was faint and distorted, as though impeded by something like a bubble, some mucus in her throat'. There is no doubt that rape is terrible. But after the event, little attention is given to her as a victim. Instead she becomes a party to the crime of falsely accusing Robbie. She is distanced further from the role as victim when, rather strangely, she later marries the villain, to whom, according to Briony, she is faithful seeming to know 'the side on which her bread was buttered'. She is ultimately seen by Briony as a kind of Cruella de Vil.

Robbie is of course a victim in that he is accused of a crime he does not commit and then sent to jail. But he is also a victim of his social class (Cecilia's mother never 'forgave' him for getting a first at Cambridge given his working class origins). In the 1935 world McEwan recreates, Robbie has little chance to protest against his higher class accusers. Criminal and social laws come down hard on the man who has the audacity to 'violate' one (or rather two if his letter to Cecilia is taken into account) of his social superiors. Cecilia later understands 'the snobbery that lay behind [the family's] stupidity'. Briony, who reads Robbie's letter believes that he is a 'maniac' from whom her sister needs protection. In one sense then this is a class issue and part of the reason for her accusation when Lola is raped.

In the war section of the novel, Robbie is a victim of the brutality of war; he is disabled by his injuries and his aching wounds. He himself wonders about the crimes committed by one set of human beings on another. McEwan carefully reveals the crimes against humanity that result from war and the particular image of a child's leg in a tree is haunting both for Robbie and the reader: 'The leg was twenty feet up…severed above the knee…it seemed to be on display'. Robbie's life is finally taken by the war when he dies of septicemia at Dunkirk.

Briony, though guilty of a crime, can also be seen as a victim. She is a victim of her biology and emerging sexuality, her parent's inadequate parenting and her febrile imagination. When she wrongly accuses Robbie she is still a child and while the child does wrong, the novel raises the question of how much the child is responsible and how much it is a product of its environment and its conditioning.

Cecilia, Briony's older sister, is another victim, a victim of social laws that indicate who she should or should not love and a victim of her sister's malice. Although her social background enables her to enjoy a university education, she becomes slightly outcast because of it. Her mother thinks that no-one will want to marry an educated woman. But Cecilia mainly suffers because her love affair with Robbie is tragic. At the moment she realises she is in love with him he is taken away and put in jail for Paul Marshall's crime. This leads to her isolation; she disowns her family because of their treatment of Robbie and goes to train to be a nurse. Tragically her life is cut short by the war: she is 'killed in September [1940] by a bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station'.

Briony's narration and the crime against the reader

McEwan creates a narrative voice for this novel that indicates, for the most part, a conventional third-person, omniscient narrator. On first reading, responses to the subscription at the end of part three ('BT London 1999') are likely to be powerful. The feeling that Briony, and McEwan, have tricked the reader, principally by Briony's writing about herself in the third person and by writing about Robbie's wartime experiences without first-hand knowledge of them, might lead that reader to feel robbed or cheated. In this sense, the narrative structure might be considered to be a crime against the reader's expectations. We realise that Briony has been the moral arbiter of the story and that, just as she was an 'unreliable witness', she has also been an unreliable narrator. Her concern with 'verisimilitude' seems exaggerated given her admission that she neglected to include the facts of Robbie and Cecilia's deaths in her story.

The author

Of course, Briony is not the author, McEwan is. His control over the novel allows us to perceive the ironies in Briony's account and call into question her own judgements about the events that she describes. We are invited in this way to challenge the various claims to veracity in the novel, and the validity of the accusations and confessions of the characters is called into doubt. In this way, perhaps, the reader is placed into the position of the detective solving a mystery.

Punishment and reward

Since crime writing is essentially a moral genre, this novel raises key questions when it is looked at through the lens of writing about crime: 'Who is punished?' and 'For what crime or transgression are they punished?' As a post-modern novel, Atonement might be expected to challenge conventional morality, and indeed it does. The only two characters to have their lives curtailed are the principal innocents Robbie and Cecilia, the victims of Briony's crime; and rewards go to the profiteering rapist who becomes ennobled and the liar who becomes a fêted novelist. Briony might also seem to be rewarded by McEwan's narrative in that she lives long, has a happy marriage and has her work studied in schools. Significantly, too, in the novel's coda she is surrounded by her extended family, in her ancestral home, and given what she always wanted: a performance of The Trials of Arabella. In this respect morality is turned upside down as it often is in a different genre, that of tragedy.

But Briony is punished. Within the limits of her narration, the reader can see that she punishes herself by refusing to go to Cambridge and by working as a nurse during the war. Her experiences at the hospitals, where she nurses broken men, are horrific. Her inner life is also tortured as she seeks atonement for what she does as a child. She desperately wants forgiveness. Hence her writing a number of versions of the story to try to ease her burden. She says at the end that now she must sleep, but whether this is a peaceful conclusion or not is unclear. She wanted to impose a moral order on the story by letting her lovers live, but the final telling of the 'truth' undercuts the pleasure the reader might have had at Robbie and Cecilia's romantic ending in the 'untrue' version. This throws doubt also on whether her sleep is peaceful.

CRIME ELEMENTS: POETRY

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,

looking as if she were alive." - My Last Duchess

Overview

This collection of poems offers a variety of insights into different elements of the crime writing genre. What is particularly interesting are the voices that the poets choose to tell stories which have crimes of some magnitude at their heart. The voices Browning chooses are those of murderers or in the case of the female speaker in The Laboratory, one who has murderous intent. All Browning's speakers reveal their crimes with confidence and impunity and have no fear of detection. Crabbe's narrator is censorious, condemning Peter for his ghastly crimes though giving him a long confessional in which some sympathy is established for the fallen and hopeless man. Wilde's speaker, so easy to identify as the poet himself given that his personal story of his own imprisonment in The Ballad of Reading Gaol is interwoven in the narrative, writes elegiacally and sympathetically not about the victim of crime but about the criminal who is punished by incarceration and then hanged. The focus in Wilde's poem paradoxically is on the injustice of justice and the horrors of Victorian punishment.

Murder and violence

Crabbe's and Browning's stories centre on a murder or murders while Wilde's poem has a murder in its back-story. Crabbe describes how Peter abuses his father, indirectly bringing about his death and is then responsible for the deaths of three "piteous orphans" he buys from the workhouse. Browning's jealous Duke in My Last Duchess "gave commands" and stopped the smiles of his young wife permanently; the lover of Porphyria strangles her so that she remains eternally his and the female poisoner in The Laboratory wants her rivals in love to suffer agonising deaths. Their behaviour marks them as criminals of the most heinous of crimes. Wilde also writes about a murderer – here a real life figure, trooper Charles Thomas Wooldridge, who cut the throat of the wife whom he loved out of jealousy. Wilde says little about the crime itself other than that she was a "poor dead woman whom [Wooldridge] loved" and he slightly romanticises and sanitises the real story by saying she, like Desdemona, was "murdered in her bed" (in real life Wooldridge had been violent to his wife some weeks before the murder, had told a colleague that on the day of the murder he was "going to do some damage" and had actually put a razor to his wife's throat in the street). Significantly Wilde also says nothing of her apparent unfaithfulness or of Wooldridge's jealousy. What Wilde focuses on is the potential for murder that is in all human beings ("Yet each man kills the thing he loves"). He does not single out Wooldridge as an aberrant individual; he is simply a flawed human being, one who like others has been ensnared in the "iron gin that waits for Sin".

In crime stories, a key element that is often found is violence. Violence is described explicitly in Peter Grimes and Porphyria's Lover. Peter's "savage" acts are listed and repeated (the first boy has bruises that make him stoop and the third suffers "vile blows" that lead to his death); and the lover calmly explains how "he found a thing to do" and strangles Porphyria with her yellow hair. In My Last Duchess the violence is implied. The Duke resents his wife's cheerfulness and smiling at others so gives commands so that "all smiles stopped", implying that he commissioned the violence done to her rather than committing it himself. In The Laboratory the female speaker delights in the brutal and painful deaths her rivals will suffer. The violence is vividly imagined and although it does not occur in the poem itself, the speaker's desire that the poison will "brand, burn up, bite into" her victims is disturbing. In The Ballad of Reading Gaol, there is no description of the violence inflicted on the murdered woman, but Wilde details both the psychological and physical violence inflicted on all prisoners (sewing sacks until hands bleed, tearing ropes to shreds, walking past graves that gape for those who are executed) and in particular there is a focus on the horror of hanging: although it might be sweet, Wilde suggests, to dance to violins, it is "not sweet with nimble feet/To dance upon the air". In this respect the poem is a protest poem about the dehumanisation of prison life and the use of capital punishment in the 19th century.

The criminal psyche

All five poems explore the criminal psyche in some detail but in very different ways. Peter's motive appears to result from a psychopathic need to subject a "feeling creature" "to his power" and when the ability to buy a victim is finally removed by the burghers, Peter begins a descent into madness, coaxed along both by the "spirits" of his victims and

the village people's cries of "wicked man" as he begins to experience guilt for what he has done. His speech to the priest at the end of the poem is a confession of sorts, but while he appears to feel some remorse, in particular for the second boy whose death "hit [his] conscience", the main focus of his ramblings is self-pity and terror of "the place of horrors", presumably the hell to which he fears he is headed. His confessional is also interwoven with a desire to defend his actions, perhaps to save himself from everlasting torture. Peter clearly is terrified of punishment. This is not the case with Browning's characters who do not fear or expect punishment; neither do they exhibit any regret for crimes committed or, in the case of the poisoner, any moral qualms about the deed to be done. Browning's poems offer disturbing insights into the darker side of the human psyche in which no moral framework operates. Porphyria's lover justifies his act by claiming that his victim felt "no pain" and that her death was a result of "her darling one wish" to be with him forever, implying a psychopathic inability to emotionally engage with Porphyria and a desire to justify his actions, evidenced most clearly when he boasts that he has sat with her body all night long and God has not said a word. The speaker here is coldly objective in his delivery and it could be argued that he displays signs of madness, hardly surprising perhaps given that Browning first published the poem under the title Madhouse Cells. In My Last Duchess the Duke's criminal psyche is conterminous with his aristocratic male power. There is undisguised arrogance and pride in his speech and the feeling that he is convinced he was right to take things in hand with his wayward wife who ranked his "gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name/With anybody's gift". In The Laboratory, Browning perhaps encourages some sympathy for his narrator who, while plotting her murders, describes her motives which are borne of imagining her rivals' laughing at her suffering as the abandoned lover. The speaker is excited as she plots her revenge, delighted in the pain she will inflict. There is something manic and perhaps also enchanting about the way she savours the exquisite colours and textures of the ingredients for the poison. All three Browning poems are dramatic monologues and this form allows the writer to make readers complicit in the dark deeds of the speakers. In this respect the poems are discomforting. The Ballad of Reading Gaol works differently in the way that it offers insights into the criminal psyche. Here the first person narrator, who is himself a criminal – though significantly Wilde does not say what his crime is – seems to suggest that there is a collective criminal consciousness that suffers guilt and shares a common humanity, a consciousness that is not depraved or insane. The poem is interesting in that Wilde bypasses the crimes that have led to incarceration and says nothing of the mindset or motivations of the offenders. He focuses instead on the thoughts and feelings of the criminals in relation to their punishments, their humiliation, emptiness and shared misery: "I never saw sad men who looked/With such a wistful eye/Upon that little tent of blue/We prisoners call the sky".

Victims

There are victims in all the stories of Crabbe, Browning and Wilde, though given that Browning uses first person narrators who are murderers and speak with impunity, there is little sympathy given to the victims by the speakers, though some is afforded by the writers in spite of the narrators. Porphyria is shown to be warm and loving, trusting her lover as she places her smiling rosy little head on his shoulder. After he has murdered her, the lover claims that she felt "no pain" but his eerily detached voice makes this an unconvincing assertion. Browning allows us to see that the duchess is open, friendly and free of any kind of pride that might be associated with her social position. She clearly loves life, appreciates nature and is grateful to anyone who shows her kindness. All activities draw "from her alike the approving speech/Or blush". No details are given of how the duke's commands are carried out and readers can only speculate on how her smiles are stopped. The narrator of The Laboratory excitedly imagines how her victims will die: Pauline will have only thirty minutes to live and Elise, "with her head/and her breast and her arms and her hands" will simply "drop dead" but the narrator's focus is more on the power of the poison than the victims who, in the narrative present, are happily dancing at the King's. The child victims in Peter Grimes are directly presented as innocent and Peter's father, who is God-fearing, caring and a hard worker, is elevated by the writer. The boys are "pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd and abused"; their cries are heard by the town and their injuries are stark. In contrast, in The Ballad of Reading Gaol, Wilde only gives brief mention in the opening stanza of the wife- victim of Wooldridge's crime. There is no discussion of her suffering, her unfaithfulness or her loss of life. Instead Wilde casts the murderer as the victim in his crime story: Wooldridge is depicted as a casualty of a punitive judicial system which claims to uphold Christian values yet shows itself incapable of forgiveness, denying sinners the possibility of redemption. Wilde pities his doomed fellow prisoner who killed the thing he loved. He wonders what Wooldridge must have thought during his last three weeks on earth, how he felt when he was watched during prayer and when he wept and how on the scaffold he will have been wistful as he took his "last look at the sky".

Punishment

In terms of the key crime writing element of punishment, the three writers clearly differ. In Peter Grimes, Crabbe includes a detailed description of Peter's torment as he is punished by the society which rejects him and by the "three spirits" who torture him. In the poem Crabbe presents the trial and punishment of Peter, both elements we would expect to find in crime writing. After the death of the third child, Peter is summoned to appear before the town's burghers. Although the mayor allows him to go free Peter can never again have a "boy abide" with him and he is hated and shunned by the people of the town. His isolation is the first part of his punishment and he becomes oppressed with "misery, grief, and fear". Like Macbeth, his sleep is disturbed by horrible images that shake him nightly. Crabbe suggests that Peter's terrors are a result of his meditating on his crimes, though there is no certainty. What is clear is that he becomes a "distempered man", haunted by images of those he killed or abused. Significantly it is his father who rises before him, like the ghost of old Hamlet, and it drives his son to madness. The poem ends with the implication that his punishment will continue beyond the grave. Even in death the spirits will never allow him to rest in peace: "Again they come", he mutters as he dies.

In Browning's poems there is no sense of punishment or moral resolution. This is unusual in terms of crime writing. In My Last Duchess, the Duke is free to negotiate another wife and dowry and Porphyria's lover appears to feel vindicated because "God has not said a word" against his crime. In The Laboratory the focus of the poem is on the plotting of multiple murders rather than the consequences. The alchemist seems happy to comply with the speaker's wishes to concoct the lethal poison and there is no indication in the poem that her criminal intentions will be discovered or that she will be punished. Punishment is not Browning's concern; he simply wants to show the speaker's lust for poisoning and her desire for revenge. Some readers may well admire and sympathise with the narrator who presents herself as wronged and betrayed in love, though whether they want her to carry out her plan is more unlikely. While much crime writing is reassuringly moral, with the criminals ultimately being caught and punished and justice being done, Browning's poems provide a snapshot of events which do not have a predictable moral structure. In this respect they are unsettling.

In Wilde's poem criminals are punished and there is moral retribution of sorts. However, it is the efficacy and humanity of punishment itself that is questioned rather than the criminal acts committed by individuals. Punishment is in fact the subject and key crime element of the poem and it is unreservedly condemned. Wilde's perspective on punishment opens up interesting questions for readers especially when their own contexts are taken into account and when the changes in legislation over the past 150 years are considered. Is it straightforward, though, to judge the speaker and the criminals about whom he writes from a modern standpoint? Are there further complexities even if we do this? How far, therefore, do we concur with the sentiments Wilde propounds? Is it justified to overlook the victims of crime in the way Wilde does? How much attention should be given to what Wilde does not say? Why, for example, is so much consideration given to the prisoners' deprivation of freedom and humanity and none to Wooldridge's depriving his wife of her life? Wilde also sidesteps the crimes of the other prisoners, including his own; those crimes are not even adumbrated but are loosely placed under the umbrella of the actions of "the fool, the fraud, the knave" and he seems to sympathise with them all.

Given the autobiographical nature of the poem and Wilde's belief that his homosexuality was not wrong, it is easy to see why he is on the side of the criminal. Many readers will similarly condemn the injustice and immorality of his incarceration given that attitudes and laws have now changed. Sodomy, for example, the crime for which Wilde was convicted in 1895, is no longer punishable by law. However, making judgements on the issues raised by what is both said and unsaid in the poem is problematic. In his own case, an interesting contextual point is that many of Wilde's lovers were boys and by modern standards this would of course make him a paedophile, a crime for which today he would be condemned and sentenced, though interestingly the age of the boys was not a specific issue for Victorian moralisers or legislators. (Children had few rights in the nineteenth century and there was no law against heterosexual males having sexual relationships with young girls or of their marrying them if the girls had parental consent).

But Wilde neither attacks the legislative system in this poem (he says he knows not whether laws be right or wrong) nor the behaviour of the criminals (the trooper's murder of his wife is only fleetingly mentioned and when it is, it is rewritten as an act of bravery). His concern is the degradation of prison life (every cell in which prisoners dwell is a "foul and dark latrine" and "every prison that men build/Is built with bricks of shame") and the horror and

inhumanity of capital punishment (when he is taken to the gallows, the trooper is hooked to the blackened beam by a greasy rope and his final prayer is strangled into a scream by the hangman's snare). The horror of the execution is intensified by the description of the contempt that is shown to the prisoner's body after his death. The warders mock the "swollen purple throat" and laugh at the shroud in which the convict lies. For the other prisoners who are witnesses, something dies in each of them - and that is "Hope". Wilde's experiences in Reading Gaol broke his spirit and the poem suggests why this was. As a Christian, Wilde despairs that prison is so cruel and unforgiving, that there are no flowers to grace the air, but only shards, pebbles and flints which harden the heart.

settings

The settings crime writers choose for their stories are always significant. Crabbe chooses a variety of settings for his grim tale. Peter Grimes is part of a collection of rural poems Crabbe published in 1810 called The Borough. The location for Peter Grimes is a quiet Suffolk fishing town. Given that Peter is a fisherman, many scenes take place on the sea on his fishing boat and this is where his criminal behaviour is carried out. The isolation of the sea is also used to reflect Peter's emptiness when he is exiled from his community. A remote setting is also chosen by Browning for the story of Porphyria's Lover. The lover lives in an isolated cottage and on the night of the murder, the winds are howling and vexing the nearby lake mirroring his inner turmoil and psychotic nature. The secluded setting from which the lover tells his story as he sits with the dead body of Porphyria propped up on his shoulder triumphing in God's not passing judgement, also suggests that the murder may never be discovered. My Last Duchess is set in the Duke's aristocratic residence in Ferrara where his valuable art collection is on display, as a sign of his power. The fact that he reveals his crime to an envoy who is being shown the portrait of his last duchess during negotiations for his next marriage, suggests that he has no fear of any repercussions. He gave commands to have his last duchess killed because he could. His magnificent residence is his power base. The setting for The Laboratory is as the title suggests central to the story. The speaker refers to it as the "devil's smithy" and she enjoys the associations the various chemicals and the curling white smokes have with hell. Here she delights in the construction of the poison that will destroy her rivals, the gold oozing and the phial of exquisite blue. The laboratory is secretive and apart and contrasts with both the empty church where she has apparently gone to pray and with the aristocratic dance at the King's, part of the world of the Ancien Régime. Wilde's setting is also announced in the title of his poem. Reading Gaol, a place of much suffering and much introspection, was where he spent two years of his life and where his identity was removed; he was simply C33: cell block C, landing 3, cell 3. In the poem's narrative, he himself does not refer to the trooper (or anyone by name), other than giving his initials C. T. W. in the inscription at the start of the poem. The prison is grey, oppressive and forbidding, contrasting always with the little patch of blue the prisoners call the sky. It is also the place of execution for the trooper and the place where he is ignominiously buried, "a stretch of mud and sand by the hideous prison-wall".

social commentary

All the poems imply criticism of the societies in which the crimes are committed and of which the murderers are products. Crabbe expresses clear disgust with the workhouses where boys are bought, describing them as "slave shops", and he criticises the values of a society where "none put the question" to Peter about his treatment of the boys. Although there is some disquiet about the ways he procures boys, nothing is done to stop him. Even after the death of the third boy, Peter is free. If the town's people and the burghers are seen as detectives of a sort, then they are ineffective, simply turning a blind eye. Similarly, Browning could be seen to be challenging the arranged marriages of both the Renaissance and Victorian times, through his reference to the Duke's desire for control over his young wife even in death, shown metaphorically through the curtain over her painting that "none puts by" but himself, and of his next wife, the sea-horse that Neptune will tame. Females in both Porphyria's Lover and My Last Duchess are presented as being at the mercy of cold and controlling men who view them as possessions while the seedy, criminal setting of The Laboratory paints a picture of a world with few morals or principles. Wilde is clearly condemning a society that sanctions capital punishment and a prison system that allows human beings to suffer "degraded and alone" without hope of forgiveness. He deliberately chose a ballad form for his poem so that he could speak widely to the proletarian. The ballad was circulated in Reynolds' Magazine, a magazine frequently read by members of the criminal classes with whom he came to identify.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: SECTION C

The first type of question you might get will be similar to your section B question, but not specific to the text. It will be a statement about crime fiction which can be argued either way, and you will have to explain 'To what extent do you agree with this statement in relation to the two texts you have studied. You can write more statements, but some examples are given below.	The second type of question you might get will be: Explore the significance of [CRIME ELEMENT/THEME] in relation to two texts you have studied. Below are a list of themes you could place in this gap and do a practice question for.
• 'In crime writing the victims always suffer' • 'Crime writing often contains crimes that are both legal and moral' • 'In crime writing the criminal's psyche is more interesting than the crime itself' • 'Crime writing often portrays a negative legal system' • 'Crime writing always ends with justice' • 'Often the criminals are not the only ones to blame for the crimes' • 'Criminals are always motivated by power and control' • 'Criminals rarely understand the difference between right and wrong' • 'Often crime texts centre on the victims rather than the criminals' • 'In crime writing justice is often found without legal punishment' • 'Crime writing is rarely about violence and destruction' • 'Settings often reveal something interesting about the criminal' • 'In crime writing often the criminals are as weak as the victims' • 'As a reader of crime writing, we want to see the criminals suffer' • 'People read crime writing because they have a desire to see a mystery solved' • 'People read crime writing because they want to understand the unknown' • 'Crime writing often has a puzzle for the reader to solve' • 'Crime writing always features an act of betrayal' • 'In crime writing, the discovery of who is responsible is the most exciting part'	• Crimes • Criminals • Justice • Punishment • Guilt • Innocence • Victims • Settings • Beginnings • Endings • Legal system • Motivation • Investigations • Pursuits • Morality • Secrecy • Mystery • The unknown • Violence • Fear • Betrayal • Murder • Moral crimes • Weakness • Strength • Forgiveness • Injustice • Suffering • Pain

Criminality

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Motives
- Psyche
- Psychological
- Society
- Suffering
- Behaviour
- Desires
- Innate/inherent

Crimes

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Legal
- Moral
- Societal
- Religious
- Morality
- Murder
- False evidence
- Class

justice

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Conclusion
- Fair
- Just
- Accurate
- Moral
- Guilt
- Societal
- Internal/external

Law and punishment

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Trial
- Punishment
- System
- Prison
- Sentence
- Condemned
- Judicial
- Society

Guilt and innocence

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Remorse
- Atonement
- Sin
- Virtue
- Morality
- Psychological
- Victim
- Punishment

Violence and fear

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- Aggression
- Anger
- Vulnerable
- Victims
- Physical
- Abusive
- Neglect
- Motive

secrecy and mystery

IN ATONEMENT AND POETRY

Consider the following vocabulary:

- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Puzzle
- ☐ Discovery
- ☐ Investigation
- ☐ Suspense
- ☐ Tension
- ☐ Relief
- ☐ Frustration