

# Who was Jack the Ripper? (a worksheet)

## Activity 1. Introduction

*Read the introduction to the webquest and find the key information.*

The identity of the killer of five - or possibly six - women in the East End of London in 1888 has remained a mystery, but the case has continued to horrify and fascinate.

Between August and November 1888, the Whitechapel area of London was the scene of five brutal murders. The killer was dubbed 'Jack the Ripper'. All the women murdered were prostitutes, and all except for one - Elizabeth Stride - were horribly mutilated.

After the largest criminal manhunt in British history, the police had interviewed over 8,000 people, shortlisting over 300 suspects and detaining 95 others. Eventually, the London police force conceded that they were never going to catch the elusive fiend.

130 years and hours of careful study and research later, most historians have outlined the five most candidates most likely to be Jack the Ripper.

## Activity 2. Suspects

*Read about Jack the Ripper suspects and do the tasks below.*

Go to <https://thejacktherippertour.com/blog/top-five-jack-ripper-suspects/>



1. Make a list of suspects and the reasons why they can be the serial killer. What suspect do you think was Jack the Ripper? Why?
2. Vote for the "best" candidate on the webpage <https://www.jack-the-ripper.org/vote.htm> and see the chart with results.

## Activity 3. Jack the Ripper's' victims

Complete the text with the necessary facts. Sometimes you need to change a word form to fit the gaps. Go to <https://history.howstuffworks.com/historical-figures/jack-the-ripper1.htm>



It is believed that Jack the Ripper murdered five women from August 31 to (1) \_\_\_ 9, 1888. The crimes are called the (2)\_\_\_murders. The canonical victims had a few things in common. All were (3)\_\_\_ (or were known to accept propositions on occasion), most were middle-aged and all were either drunk or known alcoholics.

The first victim **Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols**, who was 44, died from incisions to her (4)\_\_\_ and (5) \_\_\_. She was found lying in the narrow, poorly lit side street of Buck's Row in Whitechapel.

The second victim **Annie Chapman** was an alcoholic 47-year-old widow who supported herself in part through prostitution after her husband's death. The cause of death was (6) \_\_\_. Chapman's abdomen was incised and laid open; her (7)\_\_\_ were removed and placed on her shoulder.

The night **Elizabeth Stride** met Jack the Ripper, she was 45 and had been drinking earlier. She had deep lacerations on her on the left side of the (8)\_\_\_\_. Her body was less (9)\_\_\_\_. This suggests the Ripper may have been interrupted by the man who discovered the body After supposedly being interrupted during the Stride murder, the Ripper struck again an hour later.

**Catherine Eddowes** was a 46-year-old sufferer of a kidney disease. She had drunk (10) \_\_\_\_\_ for much of her life and was known as an intelligent, educated person. Most of her (11)\_\_\_ and her kidney had been removed and were missing.

25-year-old **Mary Jane Kelly** was young and thought to be (12)\_\_\_, unlike the victims that preceded her. Like the others, though, she was a prostitute and known to drink. She was the only canonical victim to be murdered (13) \_\_\_. With this privacy, the Ripper created his most gruesome work. Kelly was arguably the most (14)\_\_\_\_ of all the Ripper victims.

There are several other victims whose injuries (15)\_\_\_ the Ripper's technique in some ways but aren't included in the canonical murders.

## Activity 4. Jack the Ripper images

Go to <https://www.maryevans.com/> and search for *Jack the Ripper images*. Find one murder crime scene and one victim's body. Discuss them:

1. What impressions do you have of the East End in London in 1888?
2. Why were the bodies of victims mutilated in such a manner? Was the killer insane or did he just carry out experiments?

## Activity 5. Homework: Jack the Ripper in the newspaper archives.

Search for the archives about Jack the Ripper.

Go to <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>, register and view three publications for free. Choose the most interesting piece of news and make a screenshot. Print it out and bring to class to make a group composite

For example, *The Star* Thursday 15 November 1888

**DISGUISED IN FEMALE ATTIRE.**  
John Brinckley, forty, a porter, of Wilmington-place, Clerkenwell, was charged before Mr. Bros, at the Clerkenwell Police Court, with being drunk and disorderly in Goswell-road late on Monday night. A police-constable proved seeing the prisoner drunk in Goswell-road, with a woman's skirt on over his other clothes. There were several persons round him, and he cried out, "I'm **Jack** the **Ripper** I'm going down City-road to-night, and I'll do another there." The constable took him into custody.

From *The British Newspaper Archive*

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>