BEGGARS AND VAGABONDS
- Economic changes in the 15th century (e.g. sheep farming) led to increasing unemployment
- There was no government help for the poor and the monasteries (that would have given aid) had been closed
- Increasing population put a strain of food supplies, and inflation caused prices to rise
- There were different types of beggar, ranging from the deserving poor to the sturdy beggar
- Sturdy beggars were those who pretended to be needy and conned people out of money
- Genuine beggars were given licence to beg; sturdy beggars were whipped out of the parish
- The 1601 Poor Law taxed the rich to fund new Houses of Correction
- Houses of Correction were strict so people did not want to enter them; the number of beggars fell…

GUNPOWDER PLOT
- This was an attempt by Catholic plotters to blow up the king and Parliament in 1605
- Catholics had been persecuted during the reign of Elizabeth I
- James I had promised them better treatment, but he did not deliver – Catholics felt betrayed
- The plot was betrayed to the government by Lord Monteagle, who had received an anonymous tip-off
- Guy Fawkes was later arrested as he sought to light the gunpowder under Parliament
- The plotters were either killed during the last stages of the plot or executed
- Even harsher laws were passed against Catholics

1450-1750

PURITAN ENGLAND
- Oliver Cromwell took control of England after Parliament's victory in the Civil War
- Cromwell's government was influenced by Puritans (extreme Protestant Christians)
- The Puritans introduced new laws banning many Sunday activities, such as They believed Sunday was a religious day and should be for worship only
- They did this to save people who did not treat worship seriously from the fires of Hell
- They banned many things that could interfere with work or worship, such as drinking
- They even banned Christmas and other festivals because these were not considered pagan festivals
- The Puritan laws were ended when Charles II was restored as king in 1660

PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE
- Henry VIII changed the religion of England from Catholic to Protestant
- The Pilgrimage of Grace was a protest from the North of England to restore the old religion
- Henry managed to gain control of the situation, ended the protest and had the leaders executed
- He wanted harsh punishment in order to discourage others and because he believed an protest against the king was an offence against God

THE BLOODY CODE
- This was a period when many crimes, such as cutting down trees, were punishable by death
- Execution and other corporal punishment still took place in public as a warning to others
- It was introduced because people thought there was more crime, society was changing as the Industrial Revolution took hold in the 18th century, and people thought harsh punishments worked
- The wealthy were also fearful of challenges to the order, especially in the growing towns where it was hard to keep control
- Smuggling was a growing crime, and Parliament (who lost out on customs duties) wanted to crack down on this
- Imprisonment was still rarely used because people thought it expensive and a soft option

TORTURE AND TREASON
- Treason was when a person acted against the king or country; treason cases increased in Tudor time because many people questioned the right of Henry VII to be king
- Because people believed God had 'appointed' the monarch (through birth), treason was also seen as a crime against God
- The usual punishment for treason was hanging, drawing and quartering, though noble 'traitors' were normally just beheaded
- Torture was still used to find out information about treason (and other crimes)
- After the Reformation, those who opposed the religious changes of the monarch were also considered to be traitors
- Treason was rare by the 18th century once the political/religious situation stabilised

HIGHWAYMEN
- Highwaymen were criminals who lurked along roads to pounce on unsuspecting travellers
- Their number grew for several reasons: roads outside town were open and lonely, horses were cheap, there was no police force and constables tended not to give chase over county borders
- The problem was ended because of several factors: Mounted patrols were set up to catch them, the roads became busier and open land built upon, magistrates refused to license taverns known to shelter highwaymen and the development of banking meant travellers carried less cash on them