

Asking Questions and Making Notes

I've used the story of Hannah Pierson as a starting point:

'Hannah Pierson aged 14 committed the 16th day of July 1822, charged upon the oaths of Hannah Reynard and William Walter Howard, with having feloniously stolen divers and sundry articles of wearing apparel, the property of the said Hannah Reynard.'

What do you think happened?

Did she take her mistresses clothes or did she steal them off a washing line?

Perhaps William Walter Howard gave them to her and then lied to Hannah Reynard?

As we only have the briefest of facts, as creative writers we can imagine the rest.

Group of York police officers, c1870 yppol_2903





THE CROWN CALENDAR

FOR THE

Yorkshire Summer Assizes,

Preparatory Tasks

Character notes

What does Hannah Pierson look like?
What is her job? (It would have been common for a fourteen year old to work, or help bring up younger siblings.)

Where does she live and who else lives with her?

What are her hopes and fears?

Make similar notes about William Howard and Hannah Reynard.

Plot notes

Sketch out notes about what you think actually happened – remember, you don't have to tell the story in the order it happened, you might want to keep the reader guessing.

What happened next? She might have faced transportation – most commonly to Australia, perhaps for up to seven years, or she might have been discharged as innocent, if the testimony of the witnesses didn't stand up.

Setting notes

Make notes about the setting: the place the crime took place or the court itself. What is the weather like? Are there any strong smells or colours? How does the setting help create the atmosphere of your story?

Form

Is this story asking to be told in prose, or in a poem, such as a ballad form? Or is it a play? Once you've decided this, you're ready to start.



YORK
Gateway to History



LOTTERY FUNDED

explore



SUPPORTED BY

CITY OF
YORK
COUNCIL