

5.4 THEMATIC STUDY B: POVERTY, C.1815 – C.1990

This assignment is from the specification.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1: POVERTY AND PAUPERISM BEFORE 1834

Following the teaching of this section of the content, candidates are given the following questions.

- 1 Describe how the Speenhamland System operated. (4 marks)
- 2 How did the Speenhamland System affect those who were in full-time employment? (5 marks)
- 3 Why were some people dissatisfied with the treatment of paupers by 1834? (6 marks)
- 4 The following are all reasons why there was an investigation into how the poor were dealt with before 1834:
 - the rising cost of poor relief;
 - the increasing numbers of poor people;
 - the encouragement of larger families.

Are these reasons equally important in bringing about the Poor Law Act of 1834? Explain your answer (10 marks)

Background Information

From 'Three Centuries of Change', Richard Staton, Ray Ennion and Wendy Moore, Collins Educational 1998.

How did the Speenhamland System work?

Magistrates at Speen in Berkshire were anxious to prevent the suffering of agricultural labourers which might result in riots. In 1795, they decided that labourers' wages would be made up to subsistence level by the parish, according to the price of bread and the number of children in the family. This system quickly spread through parishes in south and south-east England. It was not used in the north where people were employed in factories, and wages were comparatively high.

The effects of the Speenhamland System

Good

- It saved many people from starvation.
- It kept workers quiet at a time of high prices and low wages.
- The problem of poverty was brought to the attention of ratepayers.

Bad

- It encouraged labourers to be lazy as they could get just as much money by not working.
- Employers kept wages low as they knew workers' incomes would be made up by the parish.
- It encouraged people to have many children.
- Poor Rates went up alarmingly.

An extract from The Saturday Magazine, 15th June 1833

Is not the Allowance System a great hardship to the careful and hard working man, making him no better off than the laziest fellow in his parish? Is it not a hardship that his thoughtless, careless, idle neighbour, because he chooses to marry and have a large family, is sure of being highly paid from the parish funds, whilst the man who is willing to work can find no-one to employ him, even at the lowest rate, because the employers have to pay in rates much more than fair wages to the married neighbour and his family? By the system of Allowance, the labourer is not rewarded according to his character. He is either reduced to unfairly low wages, or receives, as charity from his parish, what should be paid him as the price of his work by his employer.

Mark Scheme

Question 1

Target: Description of key feature of period.

One mark for each point (4 marks)

e.g. *'Wages made up by the parish.'*
'Depended on price of bread.'
'Depended on number of children in family.'
'Wages only made up to subsistence level.'

Question 2

Target: Explanation of key feature.

Level 1 **General answer** (1 mark)
e.g. *'It changed attitudes'.*

Level 2 **Identifies impact** (2-3 marks)
e.g. *'It encouraged laziness.'* *'It kept wages low.'* *'It encouraged large families.'*

Level 3 **Explains impact** (4-5 marks)
e.g. *'It encouraged labourers to be lazy as they could get just as much money by not working.'*
'Employers kept wages low as they knew workers' incomes would be made up by the parish.'
'It encouraged people to have many children as this increased the amount of relief paid.'

Question 3

Target: Explanation of changing attitudes.

Level 1 **General answer** (1 mark)
e.g. *'Because it was not an efficient system.'*

Level 2 **Identifies reasons** (2-3 marks)
e.g. *'Because the system was based on the old Poor Law of 1601.'* *'The number of paupers was increasing.'* *'The cost was rising.'* *'Larger wages/allowances were being demanded.'* *'Employers were being threatened.'*

Level 3 **Explains importance** (4-6 marks)
e.g. *'The cost of Poor Relief was rising rapidly. It had risen to nearly £8 million. This is four times the amount it had been in 1785.'*
'During the Swing Riots in 1830 farmers and overseers were threatened and property destroyed.'
'At the time the treatment of the poor was still based on the 1601 Elizabethan Poor Law. This was inadequate to cope with the rising population and migration of people from the countryside to the town.'
'The number of paupers increased under the allowance systems as able-bodied workers claimed relief unnecessarily.'

Question 4

Target: Description, explanation and analysis of characteristics of the period.

- Level 1 **Unsupported assertions** (1 mark)
e.g. *'Yes because they are all reasons and are equally important.'*
- Level 2 **Identifies impact** (2-3 marks)
e.g. *'The cost on the rates of poor relief was rising fast.'* *'More and more people in the countryside, rather than the industrial towns, were living in poverty.'* *'The population was growing fast as allowance systems encouraged large families.'*
- Level 3 **Explains importance** (4-7 marks)
e.g. *'The cost of poor Relief was rising rapidly. It had risen to nearly £8 million. This is four times the amount it had been in 1785.'* *'During the Swing Riots in 1830 farmers and overseers were threatened and property destroyed.'* *'At the time the treatment of the poor was still based on the 1601 Elizabethan Poor Law. This was inadequate to cope with the rising population and migration of people from the countryside to the towns.'* *'The number of paupers increased under the allowance systems as able-bodied workers claimed relief unnecessarily.'*
- Level 4 **Considers equality of importance** (8-10 marks)
Using arguments about each, the candidate discusses relative importance, building on the Level 3 answer.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES 2 AND 3: THE ANDOVER WORKHOUSE SCANDAL

Study Sources A to G and then answer all the questions. To answer the questions, use the sources and your own knowledge.

Questions

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the workhouse at Andover? (5 marks)

2 Study Source B.

Source B is about national developments in the Poor Law. How useful is Source B for a local study of Andover Workhouse? Explain your answer using Source B and your own knowledge. (7 marks)

3 Study Sources C and D.

Which of Sources C and D provides the most reliable evidence about conditions in the workhouse at Andover? Explain your answer using sources C and D and your own knowledge. (8 marks)

4 Study Sources C, D and E.

Historians often refer to the events at Andover Workhouse in the mid-1840s as the 'Andover Scandal'. How far do Sources C, D and E agree with this view? Explain your answer. (8 marks)

5 Study Sources F and G.

'Interpretations like these are of little use to an historian studying the Andover Workhouse.' Do you agree? Explain your answer with reference to the sources and your own knowledge. (8 marks)

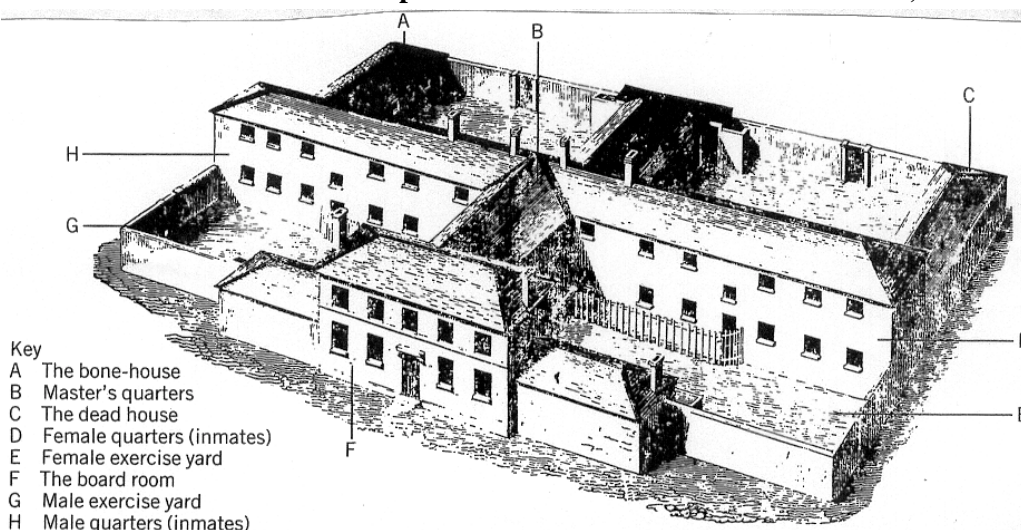
6 Study all the Sources.

'Andover Workhouse in the mid-1840s was not typical of the workhouses of that time. The poor were treated more harshly at Andover than in other workhouses.' Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain whether you agree with this view. (14 marks)

Sources

SOURCE A

The workhouse at Andover. A print from *The Illustrated London News*, 1842.



The workhouse was built on a hill just outside the town. The Key has been added to show what the different parts of the building were used for.

SOURCE B

Changes made by the New Poor Law, 1834

Instead of allowing each separate parish to deal as it wished with its own poor, the Act set up a uniform pattern for the whole country. The parish, or more usually a number of parishes uniting in a Union, had to build a workhouse, staffed by paid officials. The ratepayers were to elect a Board of Guardians who were to supervise the work of the officials, and see that the new regulations were carried out.

These regulations, laid down in the Act, were to be issued by a Central Board of three Commissioners. One of the regulations was that no able-bodied man was to be given any relief from the poor rates. If such a man asked for help, he and his family were to be forced to live in the workhouse. The conditions in the workhouse had to be worse than the conditions endured by the lowest paid workmen outside the workhouse.

*From *British Social and Economic History*, (1979) by Peter Lane. This textbook was written for use in British schools.*

SOURCE C

An opinion about the conditions in Andover Workhouse.

I consider this house for industry, cleanliness and good order cannot be exceeded, with the healthy appearance of men, women, and children.

From comments made by L T Nayle, a doctor who visited Andover Workhouse in the early 1840s.

SOURCE D

A pauper describes conditions in Andover Workhouse.

We looked out for fresh bones. We used to tell the fresh bones by the look of them and we used to be like a pack of dogs over them. Sometimes I have had one that was stale and stinking. I ate it because I was hungry I suppose. You see we only had bread and gruel for breakfast, and as there was no bread allowed on meat days for dinner, we saved our bread from breakfast. Because a pint and a half of gruel is not much for a man's breakfast, we ate the stale and stinking meat. I never saw anyone but Reeves and Eaton eat horseflesh. I once saw Eaton take up a horse's leg, and take the hair off it, and eat the flesh. The leg was not cooked.

From the Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee into Andover Workhouse, 1846.

SOURCE E

Andover Workhouse in the late 1830s and 1840s.

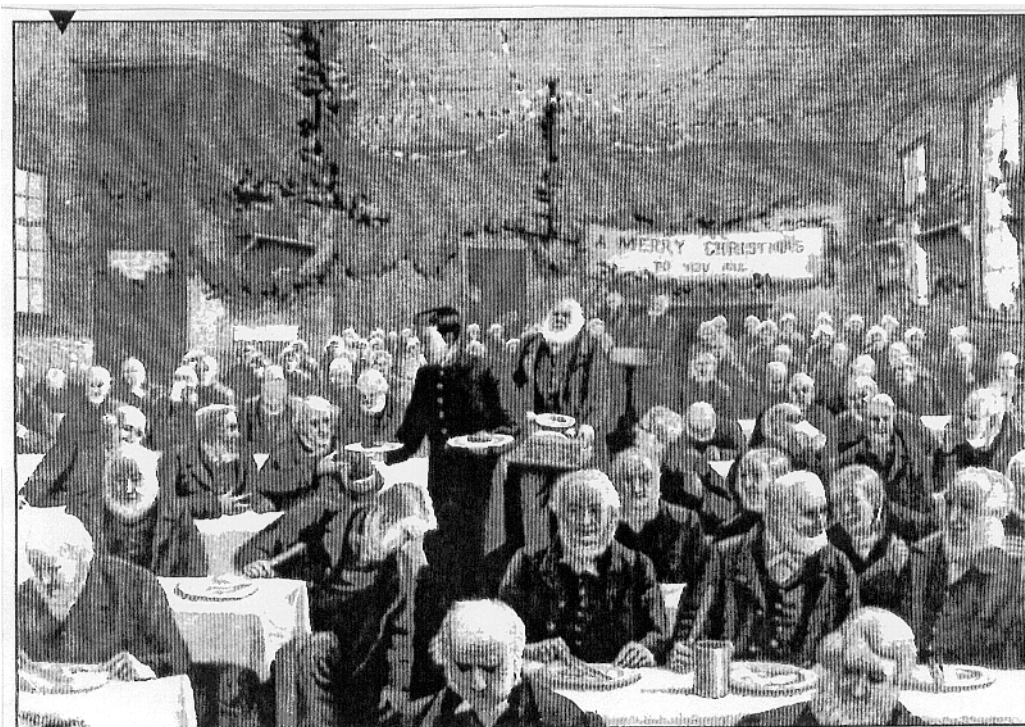
The union workhouse at Andover was built in 1836. A Board of Guardians was elected, under the chairmanship of the Reverend Christopher Dodson. The master of the workhouse was an ex-sergeant major, Colin McDougal. Like other union workhouses, Andover followed the instruction from regulations issued by the Poor Law Commissioners in London.

In 1845 Andover became the subject of a national scandal. Reports leaked out that the inmates at the workhouse were so hungry that they were eating raw flesh on animal bones while working in the bone-crushing house. One of the guardians informed the MP for Andover, who raised the matter in the House of Commons. *The Times* sent a reporter to Andover and soon the newspaper was carrying stories of the scandal. Such was the feeling aroused by these articles that Parliament set up a Select Committee of Inquiry to find out the facts of the matter.

From Poverty, (1990) by David Taylor. This textbook was written for use in British schools.

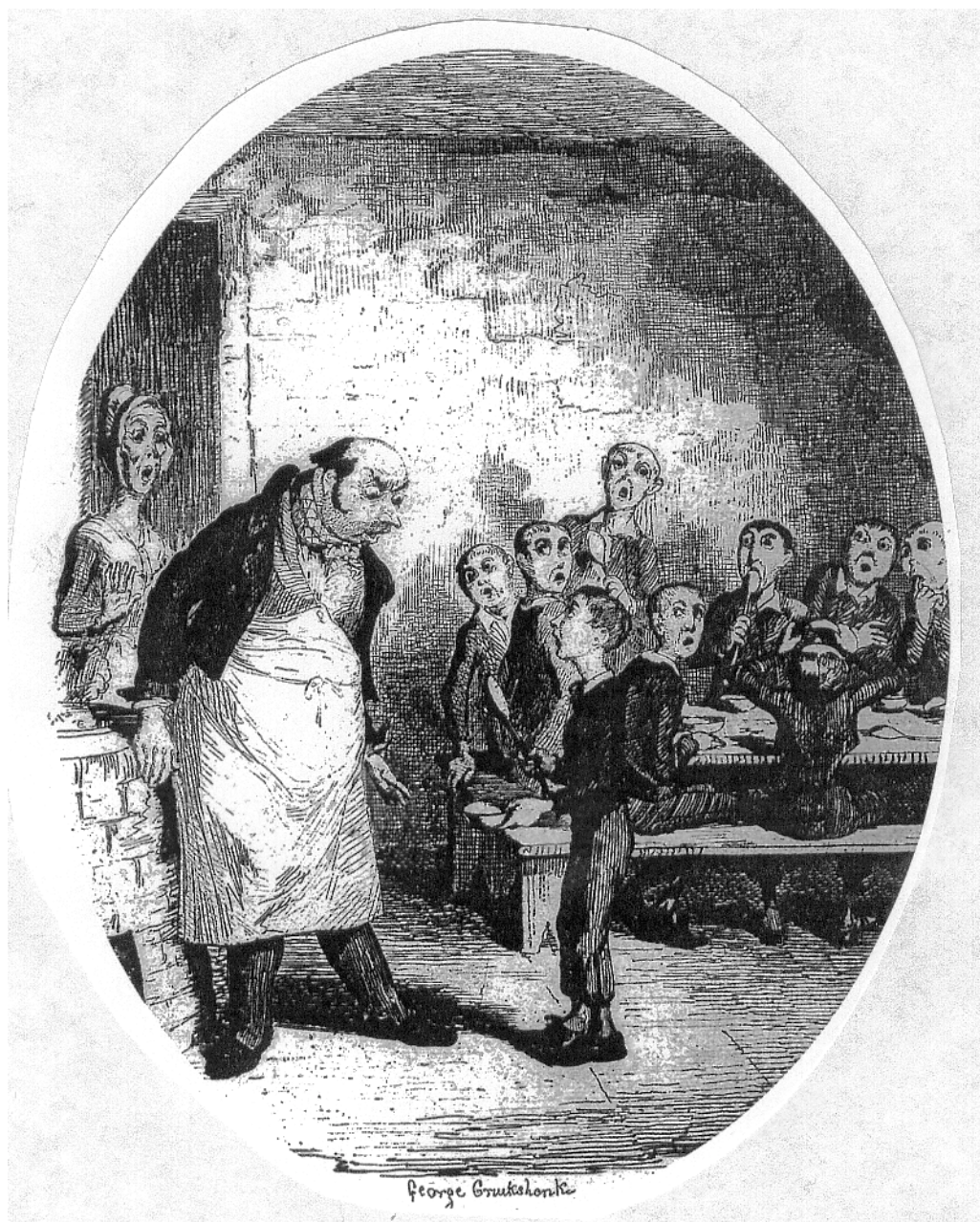
SOURCE F

A painting of Christmas dinner in the workhouse.



SOURCE G

An illustration from the novel 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens, 1838. It shows Oliver asking for more food.



Mark Scheme

Question 1

Target: Source comprehension and inference.

- Level 1 **Direct lifting from the source.** (1-2 marks)
e.g. *'There was a house for the dead'.*
- Level 2 **Unsupported inference.** (2-3 marks)
e.g. *'It looks like a prison' 'It was an imposing building'.*
- Level 3 **Supported inference.** (4-5 marks)
e.g. *'It shows that men and women were separated because there are different areas for men and women'. 'It was built on a hill to signify and represent its importance and to deter people as it looked like a prison'.*

Question 2

Target: Evaluation of Source for Utility.

- Level 1 **Provides a simple, uncritical description of the type or nature of the sources.** (1 mark)
e.g. *'The source shows changes made by the New Poor Law, therefore it must be useful'*
or
Accepts source as information at face value and describes what it provided in terms of content.
- Level 2 **Combines both features of the Level 1 response.** (2-3 marks)
- Level 3 **Evaluates the provenance of the source or analyses the utility of the information in it.** (4-5 marks)
e.g. *considers the possible reasons why and/or the circumstances in which the source has been produced – does this make the source less or more useful for a local study?*
- Level 4 **As in level 3, but the evaluation or analysis leads to a judgement and is tested against the candidate's own detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context.** (6-7 marks)
e.g. *develops and sustains the arguments in Level 3 but is able to produce own knowledge about The New Poor Law. Comes to logical and well-argued judgement and conclusion about the utility of the source when matched against own knowledge of the type of source, its historical context and value for a local study.*

Question 3

Target: Reliability.

- Level 1 **Provides a simple, uncritical description of the type or nature of the source(s).** (1-2 marks)
e.g. *'Nayle was a doctor therefore it must be reliable'*,
or
Accepts source(s) as information at face value and describes what is provided in terms of content.
- Level 2 **Combines both features of the Level 1 response.** (3-4 marks)
- Level 3 **Compares and evaluates the provenance of the sources(s) or analyses the reliability of the information in them.** (5-6 marks)
e.g. *considers the possible reasons why and/or the circumstances in which these sources may have been produced – do they make the sources less or more reliable because of this?*
- Level 4 **As in Level 3, but the evaluation or analysis leads to a judgement and is tested against the candidate's own detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context.** (7-8 marks)

Question 4

Target: Sufficiency.

- Level 1 **Questions limitation of sources** (1-2 marks)
e.g. *'Source A is biased, Source D is reliable as it is from an official report.'*
or describes surface detail
e.g. *'Yes they do because Source D tells us how men ate food off bones.'* *'In Source E it says that they had to have many official investigations so here must have been a problem.'*
- Level 2 **Accepts sources at face value.** (3-6 marks)
e.g. *'Source C does not agree and says that there was cleanliness and good order. Source D says that men had to save their food for certain meals yet the diet they should receive would be enough to keep them healthy. Source E is a modern source that says an enquiry was needed as people were concerned about the treatment of the people in the workhouse who appeared to be underfed.'*
- Level 3 **Questions sufficiency/reliability of sources.** (6-8 marks)
e.g. *'Source D is the view of one person who had the view that the men were not receiving enough to eat and that they had to eat the meat off fresh bones. Did every man do this? Source E indicates that the idea of a scandal exists as the matter is to be the subject of an investigation. If the matter is to be brought up on Parliament and also be investigated by 'The Times', a supporter of the New Act, then there must be a problem. However, the doctor (Source C) feels that everything is in order. Is his report for the authorities? What do other people think about the workhouse?'*

Question 5

Target: Interpretations and representations.

- Level 1 **Simple description of sources.** (1-2 marks)
e.g. 'Source F shows Christmas lunch in a workhouse. Source G shows a boy with his bowl asking for more food.'
- Level 2 **Basic comment on purpose of sources.** (3 marks)
e.g. 'Source F is a painting and made to look good. Source G is to support a novel.'
- Level 3 **Comment on value of impressions sources give.** (4-6 marks)
e.g. 'Source G is drawn to help the reader of the novel understand the story and is intended to shock the readers. Source F is a painting to show how good workhouses were to the inmates.'
- Level 4 **Places interpretations fully in context.** (7-8 marks)
e.g. adds to Level 3 by putting the work of Dickens and Cruikshank into context of the period and questions the validity of the Christmas lunch – one day of year.

Question 6

Target: Evaluation of sources and interpretations in context.

- Level 1 **Simple statements made quoting from the sources without agreeing or disagreeing.** (1-4 marks)
e.g. 'Source E describes the conditions in Andover Workhouse.'
- Level 2 **Developed statements agreeing/disagreeing using examples from the sources.** (5-8 marks)
e.g. 'Source E shows that the poor were treated more harshly because they had to eat horseflesh.'
- Or uses own knowledge without reference to the sources.**
e.g. 'The main aim of The New Poor Law was to deter people from wanting to go in.'
- Level 3 **Developed statements giving a conclusion/judgement making use of sources and supported by appropriately selected knowledge.** (9-12 marks)
e.g. uses the Andover Workhouse Scandal and uses examples from the sources to support their argument. Some evidence of own knowledge but may be thin.
- Level 4 **Sustained argument giving a balanced case by making consistent use of the sources supported by accurately selected knowledge.** (13-14 marks)
e.g. develops and adds to the examples given in Level 3. Uses other examples from Workhouses in other areas and the aims of The New Poor Law.