



FREMANTLE PRISON
The Convict Establishment

FREMANTLE PRISON ENGLISH LANGUAGE HELP SHEET

- **Anglican Chapel** – place where prisoners carried out their religious worship. Anglicans are members of the Church of England, a branch of the Christian religion.
- **ballast** – heavy material carried by a ship to ensure stability and stop it from capsizing. Sometimes this was metal bars used to secure areas below decks for holding convicts. Because metal was scarce in the colony this was sometimes brought ashore and used as a building material in the Prison.
- **bushranger** – person, often an escaped convict, who commits criminal acts, such as robbery, in the countryside or bush (usually 19th and early 20th centuries).
- **Catholic Chapel** – place where prisoners carried out their religious worship. Catholics are members of the Roman Catholic Church, a branch of the Christian religion.
- **cat-o-nine-tails** – whip with nine rope strands, each strand sometimes knotted at its end, used to punish prisoners who have broken prison rules.
- **cell** – individual room in a prison for a convict or prisoner; he spends time locked in his cell whilst serving his sentence.
- **Comptroller-General of Convicts** - person in charge of the convict system and its buildings in all parts of the colony from 1850 to 1878. He was subject to orders from England and advice and consultation from the governor.
- **convicts** – prisoners sent by ship from Britain to Australia in the 18th and 19th centuries to serve out a prison sentence. Convicts were sent to Western Australia between 1850 and 1868.
- **corporal punishment** – physical punishment such as whipping or caning given to prisoners who break prison rules.
- **death sentence** – when someone was sent to prison to be legally put to death or executed. In Western Australia prisoners were legally executed by hanging.
Note: a person who is executed by hanging is said to have been hanged (not hung). Also known as **capital punishment**.

- **division** – the main prison building is divided into four sections; each section held prisoners graded according to the nature of their crimes.
- **exercise yard** – yard attached to a Division where prisoners went during the daytime to sit, to walk around, to stand around and to engage in physical activity.
- **gallows** – execution room where prisoners sentenced to death were hanged
- **hostage situation** – when a number of prisoners rebel and attempt to take over control of the prison by overpowering some prison officers, holding them captive, and using them to bargain with the authorities.
- **larceny** - theft, stealing, burglary.
- **noose** – the loop at the end of a rope used to hang people when the death sentence was carried out.
- **Pensioner Guards** - retired soldiers who volunteered to act as guards on convict ships and for a period after their arrival in the colony, in return for a 10-acre grant of land and assistance in building a cottage.
- **prison** – place where people found guilty of certain criminal activities are sent as punishment; also referred to as a gaol or jail.
- **prisoners** – people found guilty of a crime and sentenced to a period of time in prison.
- **prison officer** – person who works in a prison helping to control and manage prisoners.
- **riot** – when a large group of prisoners rebel, refusing to follow proper procedures and obey the legal commands of prison officers.
- **segregate** – to separate one type of prisoner from another.
- **sentence** – the length of time a criminal spends or serves in prison
- **solitary confinement** – punishment for a prisoner who has broken prison rules; it involves being locked away for specific periods of time without company and with only the bare essentials for daily survival.
- **ticket of leave** – document issued to a convict by prison management allowing him to leave prison and find work in a certain named area.
- **transportation** – the practice of sending British convicts by ship to Australia. Male convicts were sent to Fremantle, Western Australia from 1850 to 1868.
- **warder** – name given to person working in a prison helping to control and manage prisoners from 1850 to about the first decade in the 20th century (after which they were called prison officers).