

# Derek Bentley - Knowledge Organiser

## The Case

Derek Bentley was an English man who was hanged for the murder of a policeman, which was committed in the course of a burglary attempt. The murder was said at the time to have been committed by a friend and accomplice of Bentley's, Christopher Craig, then aged 16, but whether he had fired the fatal shot was later called into question. Bentley was convicted as a party to murder, by the English law principle of common purpose,, "Joint enterprise". The jury at the trial found Bentley guilty based on the prosecution's interpretation of the ambiguous phrase "**Let him have it**" (Bentley's alleged instruction to Craig), after the judge, Lord Chief Justice Goddard had described Bentley as "mentally aiding the murder of Police Constable Sidney Miles". The judge sentenced Bentley to be hanged: at the time, no other sentence was possible.

The Bentley case led to a 45-year-long campaign to win Derek Bentley a posthumous pardon, which was granted in 1993, and then a further campaign for the quashing of his murder conviction, which occurred in 1998.

## Derek Bentley

- Born 30<sup>th</sup> June 1933
- Died 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 1953
- Mental age of an 11 year old.
- Dyslexic
- Epileptic
- Easily Led
- Animal Lover
- Close to his family
- Lacked close friends



## Christopher Craig

- 16 years old
- A notorious thug
- Obsessed with guns and the mafia
- Received 10 years for the murder of PC Miles because he was a juvenile
- Became a plumber in Buckinghamshire
- Despite the fact that Derek is 3 years older than Chris, and much taller, Chris has the higher status.

## Explorative strategies

Still image

Thought tracking

Cross cutting

Marking the moment

Hot seating

Role on the wall