

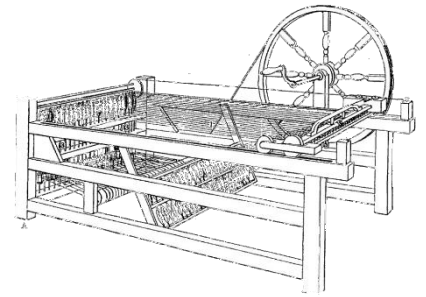
Why Were Convicts Sent to Australia?

Life in England during the Industrial Revolution was very hard.

Newly invented machines had taken farming jobs away from workers. As a result, people had moved to cities to look for work.

The cities soon became overcrowded and there were not enough jobs for all the new arrivals. This meant that many people were very

poor. People stole food and other items simply to survive. In order to reduce crime, the government introduced harsh penalties. Consequently, it wasn't long before prisons were full.



To help ease prison overcrowding, the government used old ships that were no longer able to sail. These floating gaols were called hulks. Hulks were miserable places to be locked up. They were dirty and cramped which meant that diseases spread quickly. These ships were moored in rivers and harbours.

Up until 1782, Britain had been sending many convicts to their colonies in America. However, after the War of Independence in 183, America refused to accept any more convicts. Britain was forced to look for a new place to send their convicts. Britain chose the land we now know as Australia as the site of its new penal colony. In 1787, the First Fleet, consisting of eleven ships, set sail for the new land.

