

4 Mapping Death

The Cholera Story

Picture yourself in London in 1832. What do you think life would be like? How would you dress? What kind of food would you eat? What would the air be like? What kind of house would you live in?

CHALLENGE

Cholera (CALL-er-ah) is a disease that is spread by a bacterium in water or through person-to-person contact. Place yourself in London in 1832 and imagine what it would be like if a member of your family were struck with cholera.



A tenement in London, named for John Snow.

Dr. William Brooke O'Shaughnessy was one of the first doctors to investigate the causes of cholera. He wrote the following observations in 1832:

Wanting to acquaint myself with the celebrated cholera, I traveled down to (London) from Edinburgh, prepared yet unprepared, dear sirs. I saw a face, a girl I never can forget, even were I to live beyond man's natural age.

The girl lay . . . in a low-ceilinged room. I bent to examine her: The color of her skin—a silver blue, lead colored, ghastly tint; eyes sunk deep into deep sockets as though driven back or counter-sunk like nails, her eyelids black, mouth squared as if to bracket death; fingers bent, inky in their hue. Pulse all but gone at the wrist.

This is another description of cholera:

It (is) not easy for survivors to forget a cholera epidemic. . . . The onset of cholera is marked by diarrhea, acute spasmodic vomiting, and painful cramps. Consequent dehydration (the victim can lose up to 5 gallons of liquid in 24 hours), often accompanied by cyanosis (the body turns blue), gives the sufferer a characteristic and disgusting appearance: his face blue and pinched, his extremities cold and darkened, the skin of his hands and feet drawn and puckered. . . . Death may intervene within a day, sometimes within a few hours of the appearance of the first symptoms. And these symptoms appear with little or no warning.

(From Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.)

Cholera Deaths

In 1849, another outbreak of cholera killed over 500 people—rich and poor, young and old—in South London. John Snow, a medical doctor in England, had an idea. He thought that if he checked the city's death records and mapped exactly where people were living when they died, he might find some clues about what was causing the disease.

CHALLENGE

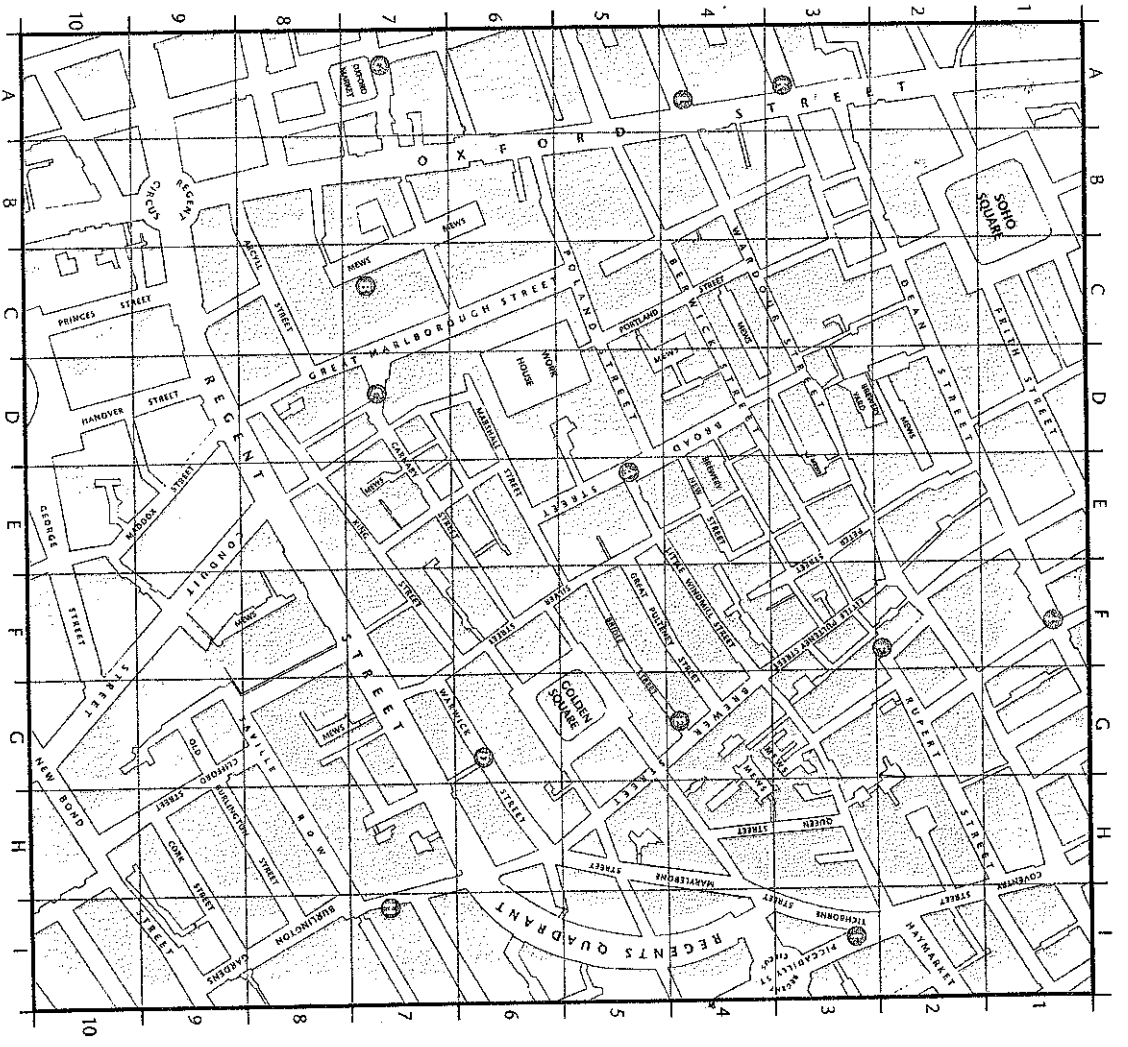
Examine the list of deaths from cholera in London in 1849 and plot their location on the map. See if there is a pattern that could explain how the disease spreads.

PROCEDURE

1. use the following listing of cholera deaths to plot the locations of the victims' homes on the London street map that your teacher provides
2. Use a colored marker to put a small dot at the approximate address for each death.
3. If there is more than one death at the same location, put the other dots as close as possible to each other. The grid location number will

Activity 4 • Mapping Death

Date	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Address	Grid
13 Feb	Anne Kelly	3	F	child	155 Broad St. between Marshall St & Little Windmill Streets	E-5
23 Feb	Dwain Drummond	48	M	steepirock	54 Little Windmill St. between Broad St & Silver St	E-5
18 Mar	Patty Orlord	23	F	seamstress	167 Broad St. near corner of Little Windmill St.	E-5
20 Mar	Sue Jordan	22	F	seamstress	16 Queen St. near the corner of Little Windmill St.	H-3
27 Mar	Patrick Kelly	39	M	barber	155 Broad St. between Marshall St & Little Windmill Streets	E-5
28 Mar	John Kelly	8	M	child	156 Broad St. between Marshall St & Little Windmill Streets	E-5
3 Apr	Mary Thornley	43	F	governess	300 Marshall St. between Broad St & Silver Streets	E-6
9 Apr	Thomas Ingram, Jr.	19	M	barber	8 New St. across from the brewery.	E-4
9 Apr	William O'roak	41	M	barber	Poland Street Work House	D-6
13 Apr	Margaret Kelly	27	F	housewife	166 Broad St. between Marshall St & Little Windmill Streets	E-5
21 Apr	Richard Raleigh	13	M	student	173 Broad St. between Poland St & Marshall Streets	D-5
24 Apr	Katherine Nelson	1	F	child	426 Warden St. next to the Brewery Yard	D-3
25 Apr	Russ Baker	40	M	steepirock	54 Little Windmill St. between Broad St & Silver Sts.	E-5
25 Apr	Sarah Kelly	3	F	child	156 Broad St. between Marshall St & Little Windmill Streets	E-5
1 May	Sir John Roge	55	M	magistrate	255 Broad St. between De Witt St & Poland Streets	D-4
2 May	Ann Nelson	19	F	housewife	426 Warden St. next to the Brewery Yard	D-3
3 May	Agatha Summerhill	26	F	white	172 Broad St. between New St & Little Windmill Sts.	E-5
11 May	Rudney Gowerhill	31	M	barber	Poland Street Work House	C-5
11 May	Rose Thornley	33	F	maid	300 Marshall St. between Broad St & Silver Streets	E-6
17 May	Winnifred Topham	17	F	factory worker	2 Peter St. at the end	E-4
21 May	Thomas Topham	38	M	barber	2 Peter St. at the end	E-4
22 May	Wynston Page	49	M	doctor	1000 Regent St. near the corner of Hanover Street	D-9
27 May	Henrietta West	6	M	child	19 Golden Square	G-6
27 May	Benjamin Brodley	23	F	housewife	255 Broad St. between De Witt St & Poland Streets	D-4
27 May	Elmora Kolesign	12	F	student	173 Broad St. between Poland St & Marshall Streets	D-5



Map of London in 1854. Letters indicate major city water pumps.