CRIME

"When a man is denied the right to live the life he believes in, he has no choice but to become an outlaw."

Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013), former anti-apartheid revolutionary and president of South Africa

1. Crime Discussion

1. What are some of the main causes of crime? What might convince someone to turn to crime?
2. Which countries have a bad reputation for crime? Does your country have a high crime rate compared to other countries? If so, why do you think that is?
3. What are some common crimes that happen in your country?
4. Do you feel safe walking around your neighbourhood? What about other parts of your city? Are there any areas you would avoid?
5. Has the level of crime in your country increased or decreased during your lifetime? Why is that?
6. Do you think crime in your country will increase or decrease in the future? Why?
7. What has your government done to reduce crime? What are some solutions you can think of to reduce the level of crime?
8. What would you do if you were the victim of crime? What precautions can people take to avoid becoming a victim of crime?

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2. Crime Vocabulary

- **petty crime / misdemeanour** (noun) – *a crime that is not considered as a serious crime.*
- **theft** (name of crime), **thief** (name of criminal), **to steal** (verb) – *to take something that does not belong to you.*
- **burglary** (name of crime), **burglar** (name of criminal), **to burgle / to break into** (verb) – *to enter a property without permission to steal.*
- **pickpocketing** (name of crime), **pickpocket** (name of criminal), **to pickpocket** (verb) – *to steal an object from a person without them noticing.*
- **(to) witness** (noun, verb) – *to see something happen.*
- **to victim blame / blame victims** (verb), **victim blaming** (noun) – *to suggest that the actions (or inactions) of a victim of crime caused the crime to happen.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (making sure to use the correct form of the verb – it is common to use the passive voice when talking about crimes as we often don't know who committed the crime)

1. A politician was accused of **victim blaming** for suggesting women who wear revealing clothing could be putting themselves at risk.
2. I can't come into work today. My car was **stolen** last night.
3. **Pickpocketing** is a major problem on the metro, so make sure you keep your eye on your belongings at all times.
4. Police are calling for **witnesses** to come forward with any information on the murder.
5. The **burglar** entered through an open bedroom window.
6. There has been an increase in **petty crime** due to a recent spate of shoplifting offences and vandalism.

Crime vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What kind of petty crime is common in your city?
2. What are some common items that are stolen?
3. How can you protect your house from burglars?
4. Which locations do pickpockets target?
5. Have you ever witnessed a crime? If so, what did you do? If not, what would you do if you did?
6. Why do some people blame victims? Is victim blaming ever justified?

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3. Video: Violent Crime

You are going to watch a video by Bloomberg QuickTake about violent crime in Scotland. The video discusses a scheme in the Scottish city of Glasgow that successfully reduced violent crime levels.

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-crime/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. Which city was known as the murder capital of Europe?
   a) Dundee *b) Edinburgh* ***c) Glasgow***
2. Which of the following was not mentioned as contributing to Scotland's social crisis?
   a) alcohol addiction *b) a lack of jobs* ***c) drug gangs***
3. Which organisation released a report naming Scotland as the most violent place in the developed world?
   a) The European Union ***b) The United Nations*** *c) The OECD*
4. What approach did the VRU take towards violence?
   a) public health *b) zero tolerance* *c) tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime*

Sentence completion

5. When Gary Slutkin returned to Chicago, he was confronted with a **gun violence** epidemic.
6. After mapping **crime data**, Slutkin realised that violence followed the same pattern as contagious diseases.
7. Slutkin also discovered that violence could be **transmitted** between people.
8. In 2000, a pilot project on the **West Side** of Chicago was launched to control outbreaks of violence.

Short answer

9. Who carries out the task of interrupting transmission of violence to other people? **Violence interrupters**
10. As well as helping people break free of violence, the VRU has also called for what? **Stronger penalties**
11. Between 2007 and 2016, by how much had Scotland's murder rate fallen? **49%**
12. How many fatal stabbings were there in London? **97**

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4. Crime Conversation Questions

1. What are the main causes of violent crime? What should be done to reduce violent crime? Should guns be legal for people to defend themselves with?
2. Are violent movies, song lyrics or video games responsible for crime in any way?
3. Should drugs be legalised for personal use? How would this affect the crime rate?
4. Is there a connection between crime and education?
5. What might cause the perception of crime to increase, even if the actual crime rate does not increase?
6. Are parents to blame if their children become criminals? If they are, does that make criminals with bad parents victims as well?
7. Do you think anyone is capable of committing a crime if the opportunity presented itself? Have you ever been tempted to commit a crime?
8. Can certain crimes ever be justified? Can you think of any examples?

5. Crime Writing Task

Write about your opinion of crime. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Common types of crime that happen in your country.
- Causes of crime.
- Solutions to reduce crime.

Alternative exam practice question:

For some people, the law must never be broken, no matter what the circumstances. Others, however, argue that there are certain circumstances in which crimes can be justified. Which side of the argument do you agree with?

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