



The
Crime and **Deviance Channel**
Updates

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What is Crime and Deviance?

1. Overview

This activity is designed to be used near the start of the Crime and Deviance Unit, most usefully after definitions of crime and deviance have been introduced.

The initial objective of this activity is to get students thinking about the distinction between criminal, non-criminal and deviant behaviour. As the activity develops, however, it's possible to introduce further concepts for discussion as and if required. These include, for example, concepts like: "victimless crime"; how we measure the "seriousness" of criminal / deviant behaviour (an introduction to problems associated with the operationalisation of this concept and, if so desired, ideas about conflict and consensus crimes); societal and situational definitions of deviance; the importance of social reactions to people's behaviour in determining whether or not behaviour is defined as criminal / deviant.

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- a. Identify and explain the difference between criminal and deviant behaviour.
- b. Analyse actions in terms of degrees of deviant behaviour.
- c. Evaluate and rank actions in terms of different levels of deviant behaviour.

2. Process:

- a. Introduce definitions of crime and deviance (this might include ideas about rule-breaking behaviour, consensus and conflict crimes, the idea of primary and secondary deviation, societal and situational deviance, social reactions and so forth). These ideas – and any others you want to / normally include – can be developed during and after the activity.
- b. Give each student a copy of the "Crimes and Misdemeanours?" handout. They should then be given sufficient time, individually, to decide which actions are criminal and which are deviant, but not criminal. They should also be prepared to justify their decisions with reasons for their choice.
- c. Ask the students to rank the list of offences. The "most serious" should be ranked top while the least serious should be ranked bottom.
- d. Divide the class into small groups (four or five groups is manageable in terms of step "e"). If possible have an odd number in each group since this will make "democratic decision-making" easier if there are disagreements). Ask the groups to repeat steps "b" and "c" to arrive at a group consensus (with appropriate reasons to justify their choices).
- e. Ask one person from each group to read out their rankings and reasons and record the rankings on a white board / OHT for the whole class to see.
- f. Ask the whole class to discuss the rankings and arrive at a final "class consensus" on the rankings (and their reasons).

Crimes and Misdemeanours?

1. Steve (aged 17) robs a wine store at knife point.
2. Lauren (45) leaves a store with change for a £20 note after realizing she gave the cashier a £5 note.
3. Sally (34) approaches Michael (45) in the street for the purposes of prostitution.
4. Sam (15) approaches Robert (27) in the street for the purposes of prostitution.
5. Michael pays Sally £50 after receiving her services.
6. Robert pays Sam £50 after receiving her services.
7. Wayne (19) parks in a zone reserved for disabled drivers although he isn't disabled.
8. Sebastian (24) is a drug addict who sells heroin to feed his habit.
7. Bruce (53) and Brian (21) are homosexuals living together.
8. Wanda (23) picks a stranger's pocket in the street and steals a wallet containing £70.
9. Chris (47), a self-employed plumber, refuses to pay income tax on his earnings.
10. Dominic (18) is caught holding one ounce of cannabis he claims is for personal use.
11. David (33) is caught with two kilos of cannabis after Dominic's tip-off to the police.
12. Malcolm (25) refuses to wear a crash helmet while riding a motorcycle.
13. The DirtiSmelli Chemical Co. is suspected of polluting a local river with factory waste.
14. Tony (26) severely injures a small child while doing 40 mph in a 30 mph school zone. He is subsequently found to be 3 times over the legal alcohol limit.
15. Tracy (15) watches as her sister Brenda (19) steals a dress from a shop, but she does not turn her in to the authorities.
16. Martin (18) is caught leaving a private dwelling having stolen £25 from a wallet he found inside the house.
17. Max (18) leaves a private dwelling having stolen jewellery worth around £1,000. He is neither suspected of, nor arrested for, this behaviour.
18. Robert (68) assists his severely-disabled wife Susan (54) to commit suicide.
19. Alan (43) is suspected of sexually abusing a neighbour's child (12).
20. Shelly (15) uses a false "proof of age" card to get into nightclubs. She buys alcohol using the same card.

