

## Crime

Crime is a major problem in big cities across the world. Common crimes include theft, assault and drug abuse. This sheet describes the causes of crime and possible measures that can be taken to reduce it. First, look at this key vocabulary:

Commit (a crime) – we use the word commit with crime. *Commit* a crime means *do* a crime.

Offence – a synonym of crime.

Offender – a synonym of criminal.

Reform – to give up bad behaviour. If a criminal *reforms*, they stop committing crimes.

Rehabilitate – to rehabilitate a criminal means to help them to become a good member of society.

Vocational (training) – vocational means related to a certain job or career. So vocational training means training for a specific job or career.

### Causes of Crime

The main causes of crime are poverty, unemployment and lack of education.

People who commit crimes often have no other way of making a living.

The prison system can make the situation worse.

Offenders mix with other criminals who can be a negative influence.

A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult.

Many prisoners re-offend when they are released.

### Summary

The main causes of crime are poverty, unemployment and lack of education. People who commit crimes often have no other way of making a living. If someone is from a poor background and didn't do well at school, they will not have many opportunities. They may struggle to live a healthy lifestyle and be jealous of wealthy people. In these circumstances, they may think that crime is the only way they can be successful.

The prison system can make the situation worse. Offenders mix with other criminals who can be a negative influence. Furthermore, a criminal record makes finding a job more difficult. Therefore, many prisoners are in a bad position when they leave jail and may be tempted to reoffend in order to make money.

### **Possible Measures to Reduce Crime**

Prisons should provide education or vocational training.

Rehabilitation programmes prepare prisoners for release into society.

Community service is another way to reform offenders.

It makes offenders useful in their local communities.

They might be required to talk to school groups or clean public areas.

### **Summary**

There are several possible ways to reduce crime. Firstly, prisons can provide education or vocational training. For example, a prisoner could learn a trade like plumbing, so that when they are released, they are more likely to find work. A similar policy is rehabilitation programmes, in which offenders are given support to live in the outside world again. For instance, they can be given help when looking for accommodation and work.

In addition, community service is another way to reform offenders. It makes offenders useful in their local communities. An example of community service is for offenders to clean public areas, or to talk to school groups explaining how they can avoid the same mistakes that they have made. I believe doing community service will make offenders appreciate their community, and they will therefore be less likely to reoffend.

### **Practice Question**

Many criminals reoffend after they have been punished. Why do some people continue to commit crimes after they have been punished, and what measures can be taken to tackle this problem?