

Film and TV

TV / Crime series

Teacher's notes

Age: Teenager/Young adults

Level: Upper intermediate (B2)

Time: 90 minutes + 30 minutes for optional role-play

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. practise speaking about crime and the legal system;
2. improve listening comprehension of real-life English from TV series;
3. utilise new language from this lesson in order to participate in an imaginary legal trial.

Language focus: speaking, listening, vocabulary

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student, a PC or projector, an internet connection in the classroom, the optional role-play activity will require you to cut up the role cards at the end of the student worksheet

1. Speak (10 minutes)

Aims: to introduce the topic of the lesson (crime and its representation on TV), to provide spoken practice, to identify target language related to crime which students might already know

Procedure: Put students in pairs. Ask them to briefly discuss the questions. Monitor their responses. If there are students who are not interested in Crime TV series, encourage them to explain why. At the end of the activity give some feedback, drawing attention to good language which students used. Focus particularly on language that was used which will be useful for the lesson (types of crimes, words related to the legal system, etc).

2. Listen, speak and vocabulary (15 minutes)

Aims: to refresh and expand vocabulary related to crime, to discuss/negotiate appropriate punishments for certain crimes

Procedure: Students remain in pairs. Ask them to read about the seven crimes and help each other to understand. Tell them that they should understand difficult words from the context (so they probably don't need a dictionary). Draw their attention to the five types of punishments and explain that they need to match each crime to a punishment. There are no definite answers: the task is to try to agree as a pair. Perhaps discuss the first crime with the whole class as an example (e.g. 'Steve is only 17 years old and a bicycle isn't a very valuable object. On the other hand, this is his second offence. We could imagine that the police will give him a second caution. What do you think?'). The students then do this for each crime. Monitor their discussions to ensure that they have understood all seven crimes correctly. After a few minutes, elicit suggestions of the appropriate punishment for each crime. There are no absolute answers, but you could mention the following guidelines related to crimes in the UK:

Warnings (also called Police Cautions)	vandalism, minor assault, minor antisocial behaviour, minor theft, etc
Fines	speeding, parking illegally, shoplifting, minor bribery, possession of cannabis, minor tax evasion, etc
Community service	serious damage to property, assault, benefits fraud, etc

Notes:

1. WARNING: This lesson refers to two online videos taken from TV series related to crime. While these videos don't contain explicit material, both videos refer (briefly) to murder. You should watch the videos before the lesson to judge whether they are appropriate for the particular group of students.
2. This lesson contains exercises which focus on listening, speaking, reading and vocabulary. If you wish to maximise class time for listening and speaking, you could ask students to complete the reading and vocabulary exercises as preparatory homework before the lesson. It would then only be necessary to quickly correct these parts in class. The exercises which could be done as preparatory homework are marked with a symbol.



Film and TV

TV / Crime series

Teacher's notes

Prison sentence	repeat offences (theft, bribery, etc), assault with a weapon, kidnapping, theft from a person who trusts you, selling of Class-A drugs, large-scale tax evasion, some types of murder, etc
Life sentence	repeat murder offence(s), murder linked to terrorism, murder of police officer, etc

Give students a few minutes to discuss 2b and agree on definitions/examples. Monitor and help weaker groups. In the end, elicit correct definitions for any words which may have caused confusion.

3. Listen and speak (20 minutes)

Aims: to provide listening practice of understanding a TV show, to provide spoken practice of language related to crime and detective series.

Procedure: Play the video. Ask students in pairs to briefly compare answers to the four questions. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback.

Key:

- a. He's gone missing or he's "just late".
- b. He can "keep his ear to the ground" and if he hears anything he'll let them know.
- c. He needs her to get out of the flat and "keep her head down for a while".
- d. Students' own speculative answers.

4. Read and vocabulary (20 minutes)

Aims: to understand the gist of a text describing the legal system, to expand vocabulary related to the legal system

Procedure: Ask students to read the text individually. Tell them not to worry if they don't understand all the vocabulary at this point, as they just need to get a general idea. Monitor as they read, and help weaker students. Put students in pairs. Give them a time limit of about eight minutes to complete the crossword. Again, monitor and help weaker pairs. Elicit the correct answers. Focus on the pronunciation of difficult words (e.g. adjourn, perpetrator).

Key:

Across – 3. jail, 6. witness, 7. judge, 8. court, 11. incriminate, 12. shoplifting, 13. perpetrator

Down – 1. mistrial, 2. adjourn, 4. lawyer, 5. victim, 9. trial, 10. defendant

5. Listen and speak (20 minutes)

Aims: to provide further listening practice of understanding a TV show, to provide spoken practice of language from previous activities related to crime and the legal system

Procedure: Play the video. Ask students in pairs to briefly compare answers to the four questions. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback, focusing especially on language related to court and the legal system.

Key:

- a. She thinks that if she answers, she could be incriminated.
- b. He thinks she doesn't want to answer because she was involved in a murder.
- c. She says that she will tell the authorities that this is a mistrial.
- d. He decides to adjourn the trial until the following day.

6. Role-play (30 minutes)

Aims: to incorporate language from earlier tasks related to crime and the legal system, to practise asking and answering questions in an imaginary formal setting (a trial), to negotiate about information which has been presented and try to reach a consensus

Procedure: Tell students that they are going to do a role-play of a trial. Read the information about the trial aloud to the class. If possible, put the text on the board so that students can re-read it during the trial if they need a reminder. Decide a role for each student. Pick stronger students for the roles of defendant (Scarlett) and victim (Ray). If you have an all-male or all-female class, any of the roles could be adapted for either gender (by changing the name, changing 'father' to 'mother', etc).

Ideas for smaller classes:

- You could only have one defence lawyer and one prosecuting lawyer. In fact, you could leave out all lawyers and just get the judge to question each person.



Film and TV

TV / Crime series

Teacher's notes

- You could leave out the judge and jury and simply ask the students to decide which side argued their case better.
- You could leave out a witness or two.

Give each student his/her role card. Give them five minutes to read and prepare their roles as outlined in Step 3. Within these groups, allow students to help each other to understand their role cards. Tell them not yet to reveal information from their cards to students from different groups. Follow the instructions in Steps 4 and 5. If you hear good language from particular students as the 'trial' proceeds, write it on the board so that other students can also use it. Also help students who get stuck by suggesting words or eliciting language from classmates. Provide feedback at the end of the activity.



Film and TV TV / Crime series

Worksheet

1. Speak

Discuss the questions below with your classmate.

What are the most common crimes in your country?

Do you think that crime is a big problem in your city/region? Explain.

Can you think of any TV series related to crime and police? Describe them.

2a. Vocabulary and speak

In your pair, read about the seven crimes below. Then select an appropriate punishment from the box on the next page.

Types of crimes

Theft – Steve is 17 years old. Yesterday, he was caught **stealing** a bicycle that was parked on the street. This is the second time this year that he has been caught stealing.

Bribery – Frank is 50 years old. He is a politician. Last year, he selected a big construction company to build a new hospital in his city. The police then discovered that he had accepted £7,000 as a ‘donation’ from the same company.

Drug-dealing – Gary is 25 years old. The police suspected that he was a **dealer**. Last week they got an official **warrant** to allow them to enter Gary’s flat. They found five kilos of cocaine. They also found messages on his mobile which suggested that he was going to sell the cocaine.

Vandalism – Holly is 18 years old. Last week the police caught her spraying graffiti on a wall in the underground station. She doesn’t have a **criminal record**.

Murder – Kate is 35 years old. The police suspect that she killed an old man in order to steal his money. They found a knife with her **fingerprints** at the crime scene, so they want to use this as **evidence** to **prove** that she is **guilty**.

Tax evasion – Hank is 55 years old. He earns a good salary. The Tax Office recently did an **audit** of his finances and discovered that he didn’t declare about £5,000 in taxes last year. Hank says that it was a simple accident.

Kidnapping – Greg is 45 years old. The police know that he is a member of the mafia. Last month he kidnapped a businessman and asked the family to pay a **ransom** of £200,000.



Types of punishment

A caution	A fine	Community service	A prison sentence	A life sentence
The police take your name and give you a warning that if they catch you breaking the law again, they will give you a punishment.	The police tell you that you need to pay a certain amount of money as a penalty for a crime.	The judge tells you that you need to do some work as a penalty for your crime (e.g. clean the streets, work as a volunteer, etc).	The judge decides that you need to go to prison for a specific period of time.	The judge decides that you need to go to prison for the rest of your life (but this decision can be reconsidered after 15 years).

2b. Vocabulary 

Look at the words in **bold letters** in task 2a. In your pair, decide the meaning of each word.

3. Listen and speak

You are going to watch a clip from the detective series *Luther* (BBC). Watch the video and answer the questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbJcRsGj0ks>

- What has happened to Toby?
- What is the best the detective can do?
- What does the detective ask the woman on the phone to do?
- What do you think is going on in the story?

Discuss with your classmate:

- TV and literature are full of famous detectives. From the list below, talk about the characters and investigations of any detectives who you recognise:
 - Sherlock Holmes (*Sherlock*), Tintin (*The Adventures of Tintin*), Scooby Doo (various series), Columbo (*Columbo*), Batman (the 1960s TV series), Jessica Fletcher (*Murder, She Wrote*), Dale Cooper (*Twin Peaks*), Fox Mulder (*The X Files*), Inspector Poirot (*Agatha Christie's Poirot*)
- What type of personality do you need to work as a police officer?
- Could you work as a police officer? Explain.



Film and TV TV / Crime series

Worksheet

4. Read and vocabulary

Read the text below, and then complete the crossword using vocabulary from the text.

A legal procedure

Before any legal procedure, there needs to be the suggestion that a crime has happened. This could be a small crime (like shoplifting) or something much more serious (like murder). Whatever type of crime it is, there's always a perpetrator and usually a victim. Often there is also a witness who has seen or heard the crime. If the police catch the perpetrator, they can't simply send him/her to jail. In most countries, everybody has the right to a fair trial.

A trial is an event which takes place in a court. The possible perpetrator is now called the defendant and is represented by a lawyer. A judge looks at the evidence and decides if it is sufficient to incriminate the defendant. If so, the judge decides that the defendant is guilty and decides the correct punishment.

Some trials are very long and complicated, and sometimes the judge decides to adjourn the trial for a day or a week so that everybody can have some time to prepare their ideas. A trial needs to be very well-organised and follow the law. If there is any error, the trial becomes known as a mistrial and the whole procedure needs to start again with a different judge.

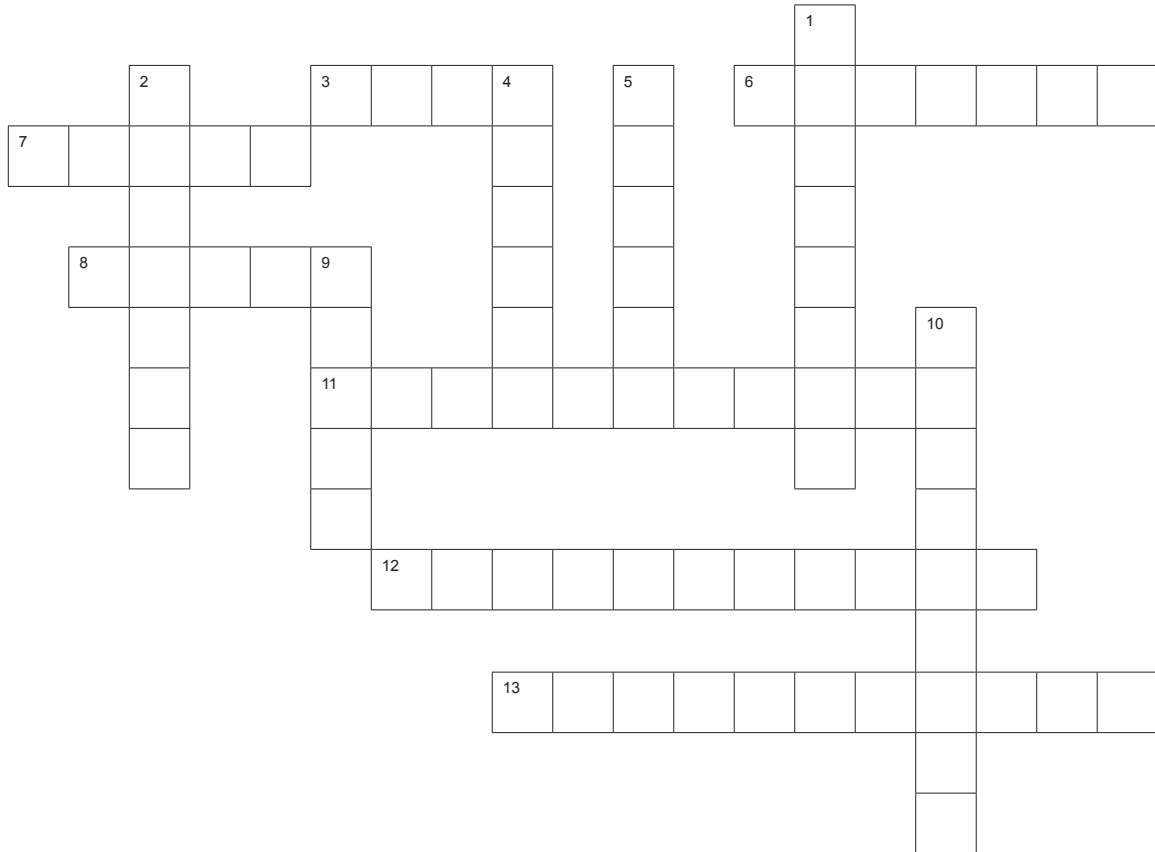


Film and TV

TV / Crime series

Worksheet

Remember, all the answers are words from the previous text.



Across

- 3. (noun) another name for 'prison'
- 6. (noun) the person who sees or hears a crime but is not directly affected
- 7. (noun) a professional who officially decides if a person is guilty or innocent
- 8. (noun) the building/room where a trial takes place
- 11. (verb) when some evidence shows that a person is connected to a crime
- 12. (verb) the crime of stealing items from a shop
- 13. (noun) the person who commits a crime

Down

- 1. (noun) a trial which is not valid because it had some mistakes
- 2. (verb) to stop a trial for a certain period of time
- 4. (noun) a professional who represents people with relation to the law
- 5. (noun) the person who suffers a crime
- 9. (noun) a formal event with the objective of deciding if a person is guilty or innocent
- 10. (noun) the person who has been accused of a crime



Film and TV TV / Crime series

Worksheet

5. Listen and speak

You are going to watch a video from the series *The Good Wife* (CBS). The lawyer in the video refers to the Fifth Amendment. Before you watch, read the information below about this right.

The Fifth Amendment is a part of the Constitution of the United States. It says that in court, a person has no obligation to answer a question if the answer could have a negative effect for this person. So if a witness doesn't want to answer a question, they can simply say 'I plead the Fifth'.

Now watch the video and answer the questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMY9IVs5cKk>

- Why does the witness refuse to answer the question?
- Why does the judge think that the witness doesn't want to answer?
- What does the lawyer say she will do if the judge continues with his question?
- What is the judge's conclusion?

Discuss with your classmate:

- Talk about a famous trial in your country. (If you can't think of any, explain anything that you know about these famous trials: OJ Simpson, Lindsay Lohan, Oscar Pistorius, Charlie Sheen.)
- 'The law is the same for everybody.' Do you think this idea is true for your country? Explain.
- What type of personality do you need to work as a lawyer?
- Could you work as a lawyer? Explain.

6. Role-play

You are going to have a trial in the classroom. Everybody has a different role.

Step 1: Read about the crime.

On 17th April, Ray Flint (27 years old) was having dinner with friends in a restaurant in central London. At 9.15pm, a woman with a gun came into the restaurant. She put a bag over Ray's head and took him outside to a car. She then drove him to a house outside the city where he was kept in captivity for a week. When Ray's billionaire father paid a ransom of £1 million, the kidnapper drove Ray to central London and he was set free in a park. He was not hurt in any way. The police now think that they know who committed the crime. Her name is Scarlett Hart.



Film and TV TV / Crime series

Worksheet

Step 2: Your teacher will tell you what your role is and give you a short text to explain your role. Read the text but don't show it to the other students.

Step 3: You have five minutes to prepare the trial. In this time, you should prepare in the following groups.

The defence team + The defendant + Second witness (father) + Third witness (sister)

The prosecuting team + The victim + First witness (police officer)

The judge + The jury

Step 4: Do the trial. At the end, the jury should discuss the evidence and vote for the result.

Step 5: Explain the full details of your role to the class. Did the jury make the right decision?

Film and TV TV / Crime series

Role cards

The defendant

Your name is Scarlett Hart. You didn't kidnap Ray Flint. On the night of 17th April, you were at home alone watching *The Good Wife*. However, you have no witnesses to prove this. By day you work as a hairdresser. By night you secretly work for the mafia. The police don't know that you robbed a bank in March. At the end of April, you decided to spend some of your new money by buying a new Ferrari.

The victim

Your name is Ray Flint. You hate your billionaire father because of his obsession with money. You think that he should donate most of his money to poor people. Your sister Jess agrees with you, but your father thinks the idea is crazy. In April, you thought of a plan. You organised for Jess to come to the restaurant and 'kidnap' you. She drove you to a country house where you stayed for a week. As a ransom, your father paid £1 million. Jess then donated the money to a charity. It was the perfect plan. But now the police want to send this innocent woman (Scarlett) to prison. What can you do?

First witness

You are a police officer. You think that the defendant is guilty. The police have been watching her for a long time. You know that she has a gun in her house, but you can't prove it. You think she could be connected to the mafia. The security cameras in the restaurant showed that the kidnapper looked like her. You also know that two weeks after the kidnapping, she bought a new Ferrari.

Second witness

Your name is Steve Flint. You are the victim's father. You feel angry that you lost £1 million. You think that the defendant is guilty. You want her to go to prison for a long time and to return your money. You argue a lot with your son (Ray) and daughter (Jess). They think that you should donate your millions to charity, but you don't agree. Recently the two of them have been angrier than usual with you and there has been a lot of tension in the house. You don't want to mention this in court.



Film and TV

TV / Crime series

Role cards

Third witness

Your name is Jess Flint. You are the victim's sister. You don't know why they have asked you to come to court today. You hate your billionaire father because of his obsession with money. You think that he should donate most of his money to poor people. Your brother Ray agrees with you, but your father thinks the idea is crazy. In April, you thought of a plan. You agreed with Ray that you would go to a restaurant and 'kidnap' him. You then drove him to a country house where he stayed for a week while you returned to London. As a ransom, your father paid £1 million. You donated the money to a charity. It was the perfect plan. But now the police want to send this innocent woman (Scarlett) to prison. What can you do?

The judge

You want the trial to be fair and balanced. You want everybody to have an opportunity to speak. You don't know if the defendant is guilty – that's a decision for the jury. You need to remind the jury that their decision needs to be based on the evidence that they hear during the trial, not on emotional arguments.

The defence team (2–3 members)

You think that the defendant is innocent. You need to prepare the questions which you will ask the defendant, the victim and the three witnesses (the police officer, the victim's father and the victim's sister). The defendant has told you that she was at home alone on the night of the kidnapping. She seems very honest so you believe her. There seems to be something strange about the victim and his family. The victim (Ray) and his sister (Jess) have a lot of arguments with their father. You want to discover the origin of these arguments so you have asked the victim's father and sister to come to court today. Perhaps they are connected to the crime.

The prosecuting team (2–3 members)

You think that the defendant is guilty. You want her to go to prison for a life sentence and to return the £1 million to the victim's father. You need to prepare the questions which you will ask the defendant, the victim and the three witnesses (the police officer, the victim's father and the victim's sister). You know that the police officer has some evidence so you want him/her to explain this. You also think that the defendant (Scarlett) is guilty of other crimes and is perhaps connected to the mafia.

The jury (the rest of the class)

You need to listen to the arguments during the trial. You can't ask questions during the trial, but it is important for you to take notes. At the end of the trial, you will need to discuss the evidence. You will need to vote whether the defendant is innocent or guilty. If you decide that she is guilty, you will need to decide the correct punishment for her.