

A

Crimes and criminals

crime	definition	criminal	verb
murder	killing someone	murderer	murder
shoplifting	stealing something from a shop	shoplifter	shoplift
burglary	stealing something from someone's home	burglar	burgle
smuggling	taking something illegally into another country	smuggler	smuggle
kidnapping	taking a person hostage in exchange for money or other favours, etc.	kidnapper	kidnap
terrorism	violent action for political purposes	terrorist	(terrorise)
fraud	deceiving people in order to take money from them	fraudster	defraud
abduction	taking someone, especially a child, usually in order to harm them	abductor	abduct

All the verbs in the table above are regular. Note that the verb *terrorise* is mainly used in a general way, meaning to make others very frightened, rather than just relating to the crime.

B

Investigating crime

Ross **committed** a crime when he robbed a bank. Someone **witnessed** the crime and told the police. The police **arrested** Ross and **charged** him **with** bank **robbery**. They also **accused** his twin brother, Ben, of being his **accomplice**¹. The police investigated the **case**² and collected **evidence**³ at the **crime scene**. They found Ross's **fingerprints** and they also found **DNA evidence**⁴ that linked him to the crime, so they were confident they had **proof**⁵ that the two men were guilty.

¹ someone who helps someone commit a crime ² a crime that is being investigated ³ information used in a court of law to decide whether the accused is guilty or not
⁴ evidence from hair or skin that can be analysed scientifically and be shown to come from a particular person ⁵ evidence that shows conclusively whether something is a fact or not

C

Trial and punishment

The **case** came to **court**¹, and Ross and Ben **were tried**². The **trial**³ did not last very long. Ross and Ben both **pleaded not guilty**⁴ in court. Their lawyer did her best to **defend** them, but the **prosecuting** lawyer produced a very strong case against them. After brief **deliberations**⁵, the jury **passed verdict** on them. They decided that Ross was **guilty**, and he was **convicted of**⁶ robbery, but Ben was **innocent**⁷. The judge **acquitted** Ben **of** any involvement in the robbery, but **sentenced** Ross to three years in **prison/jail**. As well as a prison **sentence**, Ross also had to **pay** a large **fine**. Ross **served** two years in prison, but **was released from** prison a year early. He **got time off** for good behaviour.

¹ the place where a judge makes legal decisions ² were put through a legal process to decide whether they committed the crime or not ³ the legal process in court whereby an accused person is investigated and tried
⁴ said they did not commit the crime ⁵ discussions ⁶ found to be guilty of a crime ⁷ not guilty of a crime

D

People connected with crime and the legal process

offender: someone who commits an illegal act (an **offence**)

judge: the person who leads a trial and decides on the sentence, i.e. the punishment when someone is found guilty

jury: group of citizens (12 in the UK and, usually, the US) who decide on the verdict, i.e. whether the accused is guilty or not

victim: a person who suffers as the result of a crime

suspect: a person who is **suspected of** committing an offence

witness: a person who sees a crime being committed

Exercises

39.1 Which crime is each person accused of?

- 1 Zoe stole a chocolate bar from a shop. *Zoe is accused of shoplifting.*
- 2 Harry took a film star's son and said she could only have him back if she paid a large sum of money.
- 3 Ophelia shot her husband in the heart.
- 4 Noah tried to take a large amount of cigarettes into his country without paying the due tax.
- 5 Tom broke into someone's house and stole a TV and a computer.
- 6 Mike used a website to sell people holiday homes that didn't really exist.

39.2 Fill in the gaps in the newspaper article below with words from B opposite.

CRIME WATCH

A man has been ¹ by police and ² with burglary after a house in the city centre was broken into last night. Experts have searched the ³ and found several items which they have taken away to be used as ⁴ in court. The police believe the burglar may have had an ⁵, so they are calling for anyone who ⁶ the crime to come forward and help them catch the second burglar.

39.3 A preposition is missing in each of these sentences. Add it.

- 1 The judge sentenced the accused ^{to} ten years in prison.
- 2 Many prisoners end up getting time for good behaviour.
- 3 The police have charged the driver of the red sports car speeding.
- 4 The two girls are suspected taking sweets from the shop without paying.
- 5 Sam was found guilty today but the judge will decide his sentence tomorrow.
- 6 The jury passed a verdict of guilty the accused.

39.4 Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets.

- 1 The judge gave the accused six months in prison as punishment. (sentenced)
The judge sentenced the accused to six months in prison.
- 2 The police think Bert is guilty but they cannot show this to be true. (proof)
- 3 In court the accused said he did not commit the crime. (pleaded)
- 4 The murder case is still being looked into by the police. (investigation)
- 5 Anyone suffering because of a crime can join this support group. (victim)
- 6 The detective thought the jealous lover killed the woman. (suspected)
- 7 The bank robbers are currently being tried at a court in London. (trial)
- 8 Nathan is hoping to be let out of prison soon. (released)

39.5 Over to you

Find out about how criminals are caught and punished in your country. Answer the questions.

- 1 Who decides if someone is guilty or innocent?
- 2 Who decides on their sentence?
- 3 Can criminals get time off their sentence for good behaviour?
- 4 How are victims of crime helped?