

Crime and Punishment



1. What do you think of the legal system in your own country? Is it too strict? Or too lenient?
2. Is there anything that is illegal that you think should be legal, or vice versa?
3. Have you ever considered suing someone? Why, and what happened?
4. Do you know anyone who works in the legal system? Who are they, and what do they do?

 1. Read the descriptions of the crimes below. Use the words in the box to name the crime that was committed.

theft	burglary	possession with intent to sell
fraud	arson	homicide/murder
manslaughter	pickpocketing	assault

a) Jason Turnbull drank 4 beers at a bar and then drove home. On his way home he hit and killed a pedestrian on a dark street. Jason says he did not see the man crossing the road, but a security camera shows that he was also speeding a few minutes before the accident.

b) Ernie Smidoff convinced thousands of his investors that his company was making record profits, when it was actually losing money every year. He repeatedly lied as a way of attracting more investors. In the end thousands of people lost their life savings, and 5 medium sized companies went bankrupt as a result of his actions.

c) Caleb McDonald was a volunteer firefighter who wanted to fight fires. So he deliberately started a fire near his town. The fire got out of control, and 8 houses and a petrol station were burned down. Nobody was hurt.

d) Juan Morales got into an argument in a bar with a stranger. Juan picked up a beer glass and hit the other man with it. The man needed 8 stitches, and now has a scar on his face. Juan did not flee the scene of the crime, and appeared remorseful and apologetic.

e) Tessa Jones was a waitress at a café. She saw a customer leave her purse on the table, instead of telling the woman, Tessa picked up the purse and put it in her pocket without telling anyone. She was caught on security cameras, and later claimed that she was going to tell her boss, but forgot.

f) Ellie Jensen was arrested in a nightclub when a bouncer noticed her selling drugs from her backpack. Police found half a kilo of marijuana and 40 tablets of ecstasy in her backpack. She claims the drugs were for personal use.

g) James Donovan saw a woman with an open handbag on a crowded train. He reached into her handbag and took her phone. He was later caught because her phone had a tracking app installed. This is the third time he has been arrested for such a crime.

h) Jacinta Keys discovered her husband was cheating on her. Two weeks later she poisoned his dinner with cyanide and watched him die. She claims she was overcome with rage, and cannot be held accountable for her actions.

i) Alan Dupont knew his friend George was away on vacation, so he went to his house and broke the window. He was trying to steal his laptop when George's dog attacked him. A neighbour heard the noise and came and held Alan down until the police arrived. Alan needed 12 stitches due to the dog bite, and Alan is now suing George for his medical bills.



2. Read the different types of punishments below, and then with a partner decide on a punishment for each of the 9 cases above.

A fine	An amount of money paid as a punishment.
Community service	Helping the community by doing tasks such as cleaning up public areas or helping elderly people.
Probation	A period when the criminal must not commit crimes, because even a small crime could result in prison.
House arrest	A period of time where you cannot leave your house.
A sentence	A period of time to be spent in prison. A 5-year sentence means spending 5 years in prison.
Life sentence	The criminal must spend their life in prison.
Death sentence	The criminal is put to death by the government.

- Crime a)
- Crime b)
- Crime c)
- Crime d)
- Crime e)
- Crime f)
- Crime g)
- Crime h)
- Crime i)

Bernie Madoff was an American investor advisor and stockbroker. He was a chairman of the NASDAQ stock exchange, and the chairman of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities, a large investment company. For several decades the company appeared to be extremely profitable, one of the most successful investment firms in the world. However, it all came crashing down in 2008 when Madoff confessed that his whole business was one massive Ponzi scheme. Madoff had been taking money from new investors and paying the old investors with it, claiming the money was profit, when in fact his company had been losing money for decades. Madoff was quickly arrested and charged with fraud, and federal investigators soon discovered one of the biggest cases of fraud in history.

? **3. Before you watch the video, try to guess the following answers:**

- a) Madoff promised his investors returns of at least:
2-3% per year / 1-2% per month / 40% per year
- b) Over the course of 30 years, Madoff defrauded his investors of:
78 million dollars / 860 million dollars / 50 billion dollars
- c) In 2009 Madoff was found guilty and sentenced to:
30 years in prison / 150 years in prison / death

 **4. You are going to watch a video that contains the following phrases. Use the phrases to complete the sentences below**

charity	assets	scam
charge	baffled	estimate
suicide	confess	lifeguard

- a) The saved me from drowning!
- b) The company has 50 million dollars in
- c) You must to your crimes!
- d) Bill Gates donated \$45 billion to
- e) The police want to my boss with fraud.
- f) The stockbroker committed after the stock market crashed.
- g) James was completely by the new policy changes. They didn't make any sense!
- h) I got an email from a Nigerian Prince offering me millions, do you think it's
a?
- i) The policethat 50,000 people are victims of telephone scams every year.



5. Watch the video [“Infamous cases: Bernie Madoff’s Ponzi Scheme”¹](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbpgdl2oIvQ&ab_channel=A%26E) and answer the questions.

- a) Where did Bernie Madoff meet his wife?
- b) How did Madoff get the money to start his first business, “Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities”?
- c) Marcopolis sent a letter to the SEC about Madoff. What type of organisation do you think the SEC is?
- d) How much money did Madoff defraud?
- e) How many people were victims of Madoff’s fraud?
- f) How long was Madoff sentenced to prison for?
- g) In your own words, what is a “Ponzi Scheme”?
- h) If you were the judge, how long would you sentence Madoff for?
- i) What do you think of this case? Can you think of any other famous cases of fraud?

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbpgdl2oIvQ&ab_channel=A%26E