

# **Thematic Unit**

## **Learners' Lives as Curriculum©**

### **Crime in our Community**

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**Thematic Unit**  
**Learner's Lives as Curriculum**  
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# Important Issues in Our Lives

## Peng's Story

When I watch T.V. and read the newspaper, there are some reports of crime. I am nervous when I hear about or read about them. In real life, I don't feel in danger or threatened except outside at night.

## Fei's Story

I knew a girl who was in the same ESL class as me. One day, a man broke into her apartment during the day. The man did not expect that someone would be home and he drew out his gun. He shot once, missed and ran away. My friend was so lucky that he ran.

We have a friend who was a PH D student at University of Pennsylvania. One night on his way back to his apartment, he was mugged by two men with a gun. They took everything from him and hit him over the head with the handle of their guns. A lot of people think he was lucky. Isn't it ridiculous?

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Our ESL Class



## Abou's Story

Before I came to the United States, the image I had is this: The "strong man" can do all he wants to the "weak man". Also I thought that many people are killed on every corner because there is no control about purchasing firearms. I also had the impression that the government did not help anyone. Now that I am here, I realize those ideas I had were formed by movie and television.

# ① Learning About Each Other



- A. Read the stories.
- B. Ask your partner about a time in their lives where they had a similar experience as the person in the story. They can also share about any crime or problems they see in their community.
- C. Challenge: As you listen to your partner's story Write down notes to present to the class.

Notes from your partner's story:

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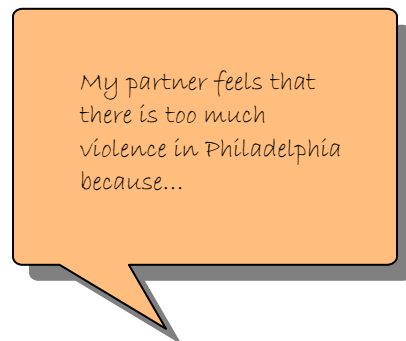
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- D. Present your partner's story to the class.



## ② Learning New Vocabulary

A. As a class and with your teacher, brainstorm vocabulary words and idioms that are associated with crime and feeling unsafe.

Words Related to:

<b>Crime</b>	<b>Justice</b>	<b>Feeling Unsafe</b>	<b>Idioms</b>
Violence	Gun Control	Upset	Partners in crime
Mugging	Security	Alarmed	Under Oath
Aggravated Assault	Attorney	Threatened	Behind Bars
Shooting	Trial	Perception	Face the music
Kidnapping	Legal/Illegal	Reality	Hung jury
Robbery	Judge		
Murder/Homicide	Court		
Break- in (breaking into)	Jury		
<b>Add More Words:</b>	<b>Add More Words:</b>	<b>Add More Words:</b>	<b>Add More Idioms:</b>

B. New words I learned today:

Word/Idiom

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Definition

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C. For the words you do not know, look them up in the dictionary and write the definition in your own words.



D. Match the word or idiom with the definition.

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Violence___            | a. to be in jail   |
| 2. Attorney___            | b. to display physical force to injure or abuse  |
| 3. Trial___               | c. conforming to or permitted by law or established rules/ not conforming to laws  |
| 4. Legal/Illegal___       | d. a public official authorized to decide questions brought before a court   |
| 5. Judge___               | e. A sudden fear caused by recognizing danger  |
| 6. Alarmed___             | f. two people who have done something bad together   |
| 7. Partners in crime___   | g. an assault combined with an intent to commit a crime  |
| 8. Under Oath___          | h. the action or process of trying or putting to the proof   |
| 9. Behind Bars___         | i. a practitioner in a court of law who is legally qualified to prosecute and defend actions in a court on behalf of clients |
| 10. Face the music___     | j. to accept responsibility for something you have done  |
| 11. Mugging___            | k. when people have done something bad together  |
| 12. Aggravated Assault___ | l. to declare or promise to tell the truth in a court of law   |

**Challenge:** Once you are finished, with a partner create a dialogue using 3 idioms and 4 new words.

### ③ What Do You Think?

#### A. Fact vs. Opinion

Look at the picture below. Then read the following statements.



#### Fact:

Stealing someone's car is illegal Philadelphia.

It is a crime to steal a car.

The number of auto thefts per year in Philadelphia is declining.

#### Opinion:

It is wrong to steal a car.

I think this man is bad for breaking into a car.

You should go to jail if you steal a car.

B. What is a fact? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is an opinion? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Look at the stories on page 2 again. In the spaces below write three statements from the stories that are facts and write three statements in the stories that are opinion.

Fact:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Opinion:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ④ Bringing the Outside In:

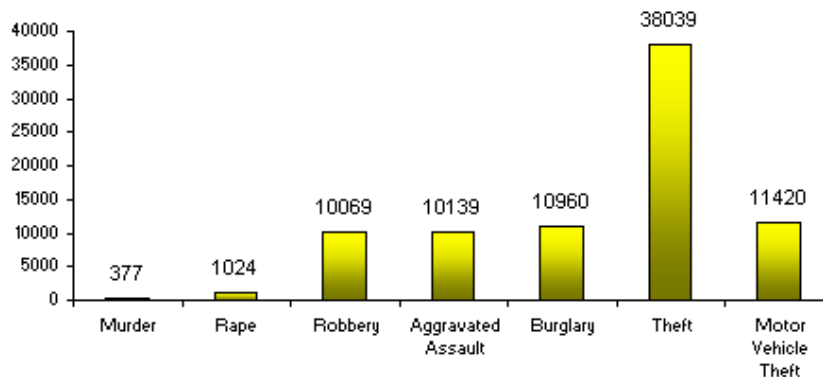
- A. Research on the Internet: Research and write down facts related to crime in Philadelphia.



### Examples of Some Crime Facts:

In 2005 there were 10,069 robberies committed in Philadelphia.  
In 2005 there were 377 murders committed in Philadelphia.

2005 Uniform Crime Report - Philadelphia, PA  
**Total Major Crimes by Type**



1. \*This chart is taken from the Philadelphia Police Department's Crime Website  
[http://www.ppdonline.org/hq\\_statistics.php](http://www.ppdonline.org/hq_statistics.php)

Fact 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fact 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fact 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fact 4 \_\_\_\_\_



- B. Using your head:

Work with a partner and ask each other the following questions:

1. What did you learn from the crime facts you researched?
2. What do you think are the causes of crime?
3. What surprised you?
4. What are the most common crimes committed in the area where you live?



## More Stories From Our Countries

### Fei's Story from China



When I was 12 years old, someone broke into my house one day. Fortunately, he only took some cash and tore several dresses. I guessed the reason why he tore the dresses was that he was angry that there was only a little bit of money for him to take.

When I grew up, I left my hometown for college. I was unfamiliar with the new city. One day while riding the bus, I was completely unaware that a thief was stealing from me. After the thief got off from the bus, a woman told me that he had searched my backpack for a long time; however she didn't dare warn me what was going on. I felt ashamed. I didn't know if I was ashamed of my oblivious behavior or something else.

From then on, I became more alert in public places. I even caught thieves attempting to steal my wallet several times. I had to let them go because every time there would be some guy coming up to me to "explain" that what had happened was a "misunderstanding" and that I should not report his "friend" to anyone. People around us just watched and kept silent.

Two men riding motorcycles attempted to steal my purse. They didn't succeed because I had learned that I should hold onto my bag tightly when I hear the sound of a motor

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## Araceli's Story from Mexico:



In Mexico, there is a big problem with the drug trafficking, although the police want to fix the problem, many police department heads are murdered to keep the police at bay.

In other words, there is corruption in Mexico with the police department. I think that the police system in Mexico is bad because officers are paid low salaries; there it's easy for them to be bribed and corrupt. In the USA, the policemen earn more money and they try to work better to improve their positions.

### 5 Then and Now

- A. Read Fei's and Araceli's stories
- B. Answer the following questions:



Look and Listen  
For Idioms:  
What does it mean to  
"keep someone at bay"?



THEN (In your country)

NOW

How do you report a crime?

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Do you trust the police?

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What would you do if you were  
in Fei's situation?

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⑥ Listening In: 🦻

A. Your teacher will bring in a recorded news report and you will watch the news report on T.V.



B. Watch and listen to a local news report. Your teacher will ask your class the following questions:

1. What crime took place?

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2. Where did it take place?

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3. Who was involved?

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## 7. Doing It in English

### A. What do you do when a crime or emergency happens?



You **should** call 911. You **ought to** call 911.  
 You **could** call the police department.  
 You **might** call the fire department.  
 You **can** call your friend, but you **had better** call an ambulance.

**Modal auxiliaries: Helping verbs that express a wide range of meanings (ability, permission, possibility, necessity).**

#### Forms:

**Auxiliary + Simple Form of a Verb** [for can, should, had better, could, might]

**Auxiliary + to + Simple Form of a Verb** [for ought to]

Auxiliary Modal	Meaning	Example
Can	Expressing ability	She can report a crime.
Could	Expressing possibility Expressing present or future possibility	You could see a crime anywhere. You could begin to be scared of going out at night.
Might	Expressing possibility	She might call 911 if she feels threatened.
Should Ought to Had better	Expressing advice	He should call the police if there is an accident.

**B.** Your teacher will break your class into groups of 3 or 4 . You and your group will have 5 minutes to prepare a skit to present to the class about a crime or emergency that happened in your native country. Your teacher will give you a card with a situation to guide you. You must use 3 of the auxiliary modals shown above in your skit.

**C.** Example of a situation card:

*You and your friend are on the bus and see someone take money from someone's bag.. What should you do?*

## 8 Collaborations

- A. As a class and with your teacher, brainstorm reasons for crime in your community.
- B. Your teacher will write ideas on the board.
- C. As a class, think and talk about ways the government can help reduce crime in your neighborhood.



## 9 Ideas for Action: Writing a Formal Letter

### A. Formal vs. Informal

Your teacher will explain the difference between formal and informal letters.

December 15, 2006  
1900 Vine Street  
Philadelphia PA, 19103

Dear District Council Member,

There has been an increase of burglaries on our street. We feel that this is creating a problem in our neighborhood. We would appreciate if you attend to this problem by putting in more street lamps so that it is not so dark to prevent thieves.

Sincerely,  
Fred Smith

Dear Mom, 12/15/06

Sorry I couldn't write you earlier, I had to write a letter to a city official. There are so many houses that are being broken into in our neighborhood. I feel unsafe on my block. Hopefully they'll put more street lamps in. I'll write more soon.

Love you,  
Fred

- B. With a partner, write a formal letter to your state representative using the information you researched and your ideas about crime. In your letter, ask if something can be done about the crime in your neighborhood.

# 10 Checklist For Learning



## A. New Vocabulary Learned

In this unit, I learned the following words about crime:

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## B. What Can You Do in English?

- Talk about crime and share my story.
- Understand the difference between fact and opinion.
- Research crime on the internet.
- Interpret data.
- Use modal auxiliary verbs in a dialogue.
- Write a formal letter.

## C. Looking Back

I would like to know more about\_\_\_\_\_.

What I enjoyed most\_\_\_\_\_.

In this unit, I learned\_\_\_\_\_.

## ① Activities for the Future

### More activities associated with this theme:

- ❖ From this unit on crime, students will use ideas brainstormed about how to prevent crime in their communities and develop a booklet about safety for incoming students
- ❖ Students research the reasons for high gun ownership in the U.S.
- ❖ Students research the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment
- ❖ Debate: It is a good or bad for citizens to obtain guns easily?