



SECTION

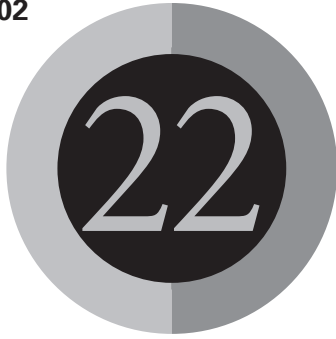
**Property Crimes**



# Property Crimes

## What You Can Do

Overview of Lesson	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
Students learn what property crimes are and how they can be prevented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The place of law in American society (NSCG III.D.1)</li> <li>• Economic rights (NSCG V.B.3)</li> </ul>	None	Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health. (NHES 7)



## SESSION

### PROPERTY CRIMES

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

In this session, teens focus on a variety of property crimes, learn what they are, and look at their impact on individuals and communities. Teens see that young people are often victims as well as perpetrators of these crimes. They also learn how to help protect themselves and others from property crimes.

#### TEENS WILL LEARN

- Legal definitions of a variety of property crimes
- The impact of these crimes on individuals and communities
- Methods to prevent property crimes

### TEACHING STRATEGIES

The following teaching strategies are used in this session:

- Whole-group Discussion
- Small-group Discussion
- Poster
- Brainstorming
- Journal Writing

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Newsprint and markers
- Pens or pencils for teens to use in groups
- Handout 1: *Property Crimes Defined*
- Handout 2: *How To Prevent Property Crimes*
- Do-it-yourself poster: *Property Crimes*
- Construction paper
- Masking tape for attaching newsprint posters to wall
- Prizes appropriate for teens on the winning team (enough for all in case of a tie)
- Journal for Session 22

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Sites that have good information in this area include

- [www.LawForKids.org](http://www.LawForKids.org)
- [www.idtheft.org](http://www.idtheft.org)



Invite a police officer to speak to the group about property crime in your community. He or she should bring local statistics and be prepared to discuss the following: What kinds of property crime occur most often in your community? Are certain neighborhoods more affected than others? What can people do to protect themselves? What are the penalties for committing property crimes in your state?

### SUMMARY OF STEPS

#### PART 1

Step A. Warm-up

Step B. What Do You Think?

Step C. What Exactly Are These Crimes?



55 Minutes

#### PART 2

Step D. How Can We Be Part of the Solution?

Step E. Reflection



50 Minutes



### Service-learning Project Idea

The teens in your group may initiate a project at your school or community, such as leading an assembly to educate their peers about documenting and registering their belongings in order to protect themselves from property crime.

## BEFORE THE SESSION

1. Read the session plan.
2. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, readers, or poster designers. For more information about facilitating teen involvement, consult the Introduction in Volume One.
3. Make two copies of Handout 1: *Property Crimes Defined*. Cut each copy into strips with one definition on each strip. Keep the two sets of definitions separate and paste these strips on construction paper.
4. Make and hang up the *Property Crimes* do-it-yourself poster. To involve teens, ask for a volunteer to make the poster for you before the session begins.
5. Using a colored marker (red), write the nine types of property crimes (listed on the *Property Crimes* do-it-yourself poster) on paper and cut them into pieces. Do this again with a different colored marker (blue) for a total of 18 pieces. Be sure to keep the two sets separate.
6. Make copies for each teen of Handout 2: *How To Prevent Property Crimes*.
7. Make copies for all teens of the journal for this session.
8. Write the word “home” twice and the words “school,” “car,” and “out and about” once on small pieces of paper. Put these pieces of paper in a bag.
9. Step C, #3 includes some interesting statistics about property crime. Consider writing these facts down on slips of paper for teen volunteers to read to the group.
10. Post teen-created guidelines from Session 1 in the room.
11. Gather the materials you will need.

## PART

# 1

### STEP A

#### TEACHING STRATEGY

##### ■ Icebreaker



10 MINUTES

#### Warm-up

1. Review the purpose of *Community Works*.
  - Have teens think for a minute about the purpose of *Community Works*. Ask teens to tell what they remember.
  - Have the teens update newcomers and those who missed earlier sessions. Assign this task to teens on a rotating basis. Tell them it helps build their public-speaking skills.

- Remind teens that these sessions will help them get information and develop skills to avoid being the victims of crime, and to help them develop skills to help others and their communities become safer.
- Return journals with your comments from the previous session.

2. Explain the purpose of this session.

Tell teens that in this session, they will focus on a variety of property crimes. They will learn what property crimes are and look at their impact on individuals and communities. They will see that teens not only can be victims of property crime and people who commit these crimes but also can help prevent property crimes.

3. Remind teens of the guidelines they developed for these sessions. Be sure their list is posted on the wall.

One way to increase the teens' involvement and give them ownership of the session is to have them volunteer to go over the group guidelines at the start and recap the activities from the last session.

4. To warm up the group, choose an icebreaker (optional) from the Introduction in Volume One. (Allow for additional time.)

## STEP B

### TEACHING STRATEGY

- Whole-group Discussion



15 MINUTES

### What Do You Think?

1. Begin by asking teens: “Do you know anyone whose house has been burglarized, whose bike has been stolen, or who has had a prized possession taken?”
  - The point here is to get teens thinking about these crimes in personal rather than abstract terms.
  - Ask teens what impact these or other property crimes had on the victims. (Examples include emotional impact such as anger and fear; financial impact such as the cost of replacement, repair, or clean-up; and changes in behavior such as avoiding places they used to go.)
  - Tell teens that although property crime is declining, it still makes up more than three-quarters of all crimes committed (77.5 percent of the 24 million crimes reported in the 2004 National Crime Victimization Survey). Theft (59 percent of all reported property crimes) is the most common type of property crime. **Theft is defined as**—Completed or attempted theft of property or cash without personal contact. Incidents involving theft of property from within the sample household would classify as theft if the offender has a legal right to be in the house (such as a maid, delivery person, or guest). If the offender has no legal right to be in the house, the incident would classify as a burglary.
  - Tell teens that they will be discussing ways to help prevent property crime.
2. Remind teens of the definition of property crimes, as distinct from violent crimes, provided in Session 2: *What Is Crime?*

*Property crimes are acts that involve taking property illegally but that do not involve the use or threat of force against an individual.* Note that property crime also includes acts in which property is unlawfully damaged or destroyed, such as vandalism or arson. Penalties for committing property crimes vary from state to state, but crimes such as larceny can range from two years probation to three years in jail, along with fines.

## STEP C

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Small-group Discussion
- Poster



30 MINUTES

### What Exactly Are These Crimes?

1. Use the *Property Crimes* do-it-yourself poster to introduce the nine property crimes to teens. (This is a good review because nearly all these definitions were part of Session 2.)
  - Read each of the nine terms aloud to teens and explain that their task will be to match the definitions with the correct terms on the poster.
2. Create two teams. Each group will read the definitions and match them with the correct term.
  - Give each team one set of the nine definitions in large print (which you previously attached to construction paper). Have the teams spread them out on the floor or a table.
  - Give one team a set of the nine terms written in red marker, and the other team a set of nine terms written in blue marker.
  - Give teens about ten minutes to match terms and definitions.
  - Use the list below to correct (if necessary) the terms and definitions.
  - Give prizes to the team with the most terms correctly matched. If the teams are tied, give prizes to both teams.
3. Attach the correct definitions to the *Property Crimes* poster as you read each aloud, and expand on the importance and impact of these crimes.

*Larceny: taking or attempting to take property (except motor vehicles) from someone else without permission (also known as theft). Picking someone's pocket, stealing a bicycle or bicycle parts, stealing items from cars, and shoplifting are examples.*

*Burglary: the unlawful entry into any fixed structure or vehicle used for residential, industrial, or business purposes (with or without force) with the intent to commit a crime.*

*Joyriding/motor vehicle theft: taking or attempting to take the vehicle of another person without permission. In the case of joyriding, both driver and passenger are considered thieves.*

*Identity theft: a criminal offense that occurs when a person knowingly transfers or uses, without lawful authority, a means of identification (such as a driver's license) of another person with the intent to commit or to aid or abet any unlawful activity that constitutes a violation of federal law or that constitutes a felony under any applicable state or local law.*

*Embezzlement: the intentional taking of property for personal benefit by someone to whom it was entrusted. Examples include a store clerk's taking money from a cash drawer or taking merchandise without paying. A stockbroker who takes money that should have been invested for someone else is also committing this crime.*

*Receiving stolen property: intentionally accepting property that you know or have reason to believe is stolen. Knowledge that the property is stolen can be implied by the situation. This crime is usually a felony if the property received is valued at more than a certain amount (for example, \$100). This amount depends on state law. Receiving stolen property of lesser value is a misdemeanor.*

**Tip**

To facilitate greater teen involvement, you may want to have teens take turns reading the following statistics aloud or make it into a game.

*Copyright violation: the reproduction by any means of substantial portions of the work of another person or group that is protected under copyright laws. (This includes photocopying, taping CDs or cassettes, and copying videotapes.)*

*Vandalism: the willful destruction or defacing of property; sometimes referred to as “malicious mischief”*

*Arson: the intentional destruction of property by means of fire or explosion with or without the consent of the owner*

- Ask teens if any information is new to them and, if so, what. (Teens might not be aware that some of these acts are crimes.)
  - If you will be leading Sessions 23 and 24, tell teens that Session 23 will focus on vandalism and Session 24 will look at shoplifting (one kind of larceny).
  - Following are some statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics that your teens may find useful. (See [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict\\_c.htm#property](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_c.htm#property).)
    - Property crime has been declining over the last three decades.
    - About 5 percent of households were vandalized at least once during 2004.
    - Property crime makes up about three-quarters of all crime in the United States.
    - Overall, in about 85 percent of all burglaries, the offender gained entry into the victim’s residence or other building on the property.
    - In about 77% of all motor vehicle thefts, the vehicle was stolen.
    - Of the 14 million completed thefts of property in 2004, there were 4.1 million property thefts of less than \$50, 4.9 million between \$50 and \$249, and 3.3 million of \$250 or more.
    - Property crime, regardless of the type, occurred more often to those living in rented property.
    - Households living in rented property had more than twice the rate of motor vehicle theft than those in owned property.
    - In 2005, the FTC received 686,683 complaints of fraud and identity theft. from consumers, up from 542,656 in 2003. Of these, 255,565 (37 percent) were identity theft reports. Stolen identity information is used for credit card fraud (26 percent), phone and utilities fraud (18 percent), bank fraud (17 percent), employment-related fraud (12 percent), government documents and benefits fraud (9 percent), loan fraud (5 percent), and other types of fraud (18 percent). Nearly 20 percent of all identity fraud victims experienced more than one type of identity theft. (*National and State Trends in Fraud and Identify Theft, January to December 2005*, available at [http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/pdf/clearinghouse\\_2005.pdf](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/pdf/clearinghouse_2005.pdf))
4. Have teens focus on property crimes in their community.
- Ask teens which of these crimes they think are problems in their community. Ask teens to recall whether any of these property crimes were mentioned in Session 5: *Where Are We Safe and Unsafe?* Burglaries and auto thefts were mentioned in the statistics-gathering activity.



- Ask teens what effect these property crimes might have on their community—on families, schools, and businesses. (Possible answers include emotional impact on people creating anger and fear; more money spent on security by families, schools, and businesses that could otherwise be spent on other necessities; a change in environment making places in their community look like war zones; and businesses moving out of the community.)

### Wrap-up for Part 1

Ask the group to develop five questions that they could ask their peers to collect student opinions about property crime. Surveys are a great way to figure out the issues that people care about. Once the group has identified local opinions, discussions can focus on how the issue can evolve into a service-learning project. Additional questions that you might want to find answers for include

- What is the extent of property crime in your community?
- What is the estimated cost of property crime to your community?
- What age group is most frequently charged with property crime?
- What programs in your community are aimed at preventing property crime?

Part 2 of Session 22 will continue discussions about property crime. The group will also consider some service-learning project ideas that might address property crime issues in the community.

PART



### REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin Part 2 by reviewing Part 1. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives for these sessions and give them an overview of what will be accomplished during this session. (Hint: Use the objectives set out at the beginning of this session.)

#### STEP D

#### TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Brainstorming
- Poster



40 MINUTES

#### How Can We Be Part of the Solution?

1. Young people can be part of the community solution to property crimes. Explain that they can learn how to protect themselves and others from property crimes.
2. Divide a piece of newsprint into four parts. Label the parts as follows:
  - Home
  - School
  - Car
  - Out and about
3. Ask teens to brainstorm about what works to prevent property crimes in these four locations.



- Get as many teens as possible to contribute ideas.
  - Write their ideas under each location.
  - Compliment teens on their ideas.
4. Tell teens they will use their ideas to create posters to help others prevent property crimes.
- Distribute a copy to each teen of Handout 2: *How To Prevent Property Crimes*.
  - Divide teens into five groups (of three to five teens), and have each group send a representative to you to pick their location (which you wrote on a piece of paper and put in a bag before the session began). Note that two groups are assigned to “Home.”
    - Once each group has its location, direct groups to decide who their *target audiences* will be for their property crime prevention posters. Ask them to think about what group of people they want to benefit from this information. For example, will they direct their tips to other teens? Younger children? Adults in their community? Ask teens how their message and drawings might differ for each of these groups.
 

**Note:** The concept of choosing a target audience and directing one’s message or project to that audience is a key piece of a successful service-learning plan.
    - Distribute newspaper, markers, and pencils to teens and have them illustrate the property crime prevention tips they have chosen. Note that they can decide which tips to use in their poster and how to express these tips.
    - While teens are working in their groups, circulate to provide assistance.
    - Make sure teens understand the tips on the handout.
    - Have each group label their poster with the location (home, car, etc.) and target audience.
    - Remind teens of the time remaining.
    - Encourage them to be creative!
5. Bring teens back together and have each group present its poster to the other teens.
- As teens present their posters, tape them to the wall.
  - Try to leave time for comments and questions.
  - Be sure to tell teens that an important way to stop property crime is to report these crimes to the police. (See Session 28 for more details.)
6. For the last few minutes of this step, have teens focus on solutions that community members can implement to prevent theft.
- Note that both individual *and* community solutions are important parts of a good overall plan.
  - Explain what organized neighborhood groups do. Involve teens who have been part of these efforts in their communities to help you explain.
  - Tell teens that the groups, which work with local law enforcement officials, try to build safer communities by watching out for criminal activity or suspicious behavior, reporting crime, and building closer neighborhood relationships.

- These groups have been very successful in their efforts to reduce property crime. Activities they get involved in include
    - Home security education
    - Property marking
    - Neighborhood Watch
    - Neighborhood problem solving
7. Tell teens about some community success stories.
- An Atlanta, GA, block association was concerned about crime, abandoned homes and cars, poor street lighting, and vacant lots, so it brought residents together to address these issues. The residents turned a vacant lot into a community events site and organized block parties. Because of their efforts, crime and fear of crime have been reduced, and more people are out and about in the neighborhood.
  - In Richmond, VA, a neighborhood experienced three murders, two rapes, and 134 burglaries. A community volunteer organized and educated residents on crime prevention issues so well that in the following year there were no murders, no rapes, and only 20 burglaries in the neighborhood.
  - Ask your teens if they know of any local success stories.

## STEP E

### TEACHING STRATEGY

- Journal Writing



10 MINUTES

### Reflection

1. Relate the session to teens' lives.
  - Ask teens what groups of people they think should learn about the problem of property crime.
  - Which two property crimes have the most impact on young people in our community?
2. Turn learning into action.
  - To get teens thinking about possible service-learning projects related to this session, ask what they think would be the most effective ways to share this information. Possible suggestions include using or improving their posters and exhibiting these posters where they'll be seen by the target groups, holding a panel discussion, and writing and distributing a brochure about property crime. Your group might research local property crime statistics and find creative ways to depict the information.
  - Consult Sessions 9 to 11 for more information about service-learning projects.
  - If this session has sparked special interest with your teens and they are interested in doing a short service-learning project (approximately two hours or less) related to this session, consult the Introduction in Volume One for "Easy Steps to a Service-learning Project."
  - Ask for volunteers for the next session's tasks such as making posters, contacting community resource people, and setting up the room.
3. Distribute the journal for Session 22.

- Explain, remind, or ask teens the purpose of the journal. Be sure they know it is to help them reflect on what they learned and for you to read and respond to what they write. Be clear that you will not be correcting what they write, just reading and responding.
- Ask teens to write their answers to the journal questions.
- Ask teens if they are willing to share their thoughts with the group.
- Collect their journals to review them after the session and write short comments. Tell them you will return their journals with your comments at the next session. This gives the teens something tangible and provides them with a connection to previous sessions.



## HANDOUT 1

### Property Crimes Defined

(To be cut into pieces and used for matching)

\_\_\_\_\_ : *taking or attempting to take property (except motor vehicles) from someone else without permission (also known as theft). Picking someone's pocket, stealing a bicycle or bicycle parts, stealing items from cars, and shoplifting are examples.*

\_\_\_\_\_ : *the unlawful entry into any fixed structure or vehicle used for residential, industrial, or business purposes (with or without force) with the intent to commit a crime*

\_\_\_\_\_ : *taking or attempting to take the vehicle of another person without permission. In the case of joyriding, both driver and passenger are considered thieves.*

\_\_\_\_\_ : *a criminal offense that occurs when a person knowingly transfers or uses, without lawful authority, a means of identification (such as a driver's license or social security card) of another person with the intent to commit or to aid or abet any unlawful activity that constitutes a violation of federal law or that constitutes a felony under any applicable state or local law*

\_\_\_\_\_ : *the intentional taking of property for personal benefit by someone to whom it was entrusted. Examples include a store clerk's taking money from a cash drawer or taking merchandise without paying. A stockbroker who takes money that should have been invested for someone else is also committing this crime.*

\_\_\_\_\_ : intentionally accepting property that you know or have reason to believe is stolen. Knowledge that the property is stolen can be implied by the situation. This crime is usually a felony if the property received is valued at more than a certain amount (for example, \$100). This amount depends on state law. Receiving stolen property of lesser value is a misdemeanor.

\_\_\_\_\_ : the reproduction by any means of substantial portions of the work of another person or group that is protected under copyright laws. (This includes photocopying, taping CDs or cassettes, and copying videotapes.)

\_\_\_\_\_ : the willful destruction or defacing of property; sometimes referred to as "malicious mischief"

\_\_\_\_\_ : the intentional destruction of property by means of fire or explosion with or without the consent of the owner.



## HANDOUT 2

# How To Prevent Property Crimes

### At Home

- Be sure outside doors have strong, deadbolt locks.
- Use good locks on all first floor windows.
- Illuminate or eliminate places an intruder might hide: space between trees or shrubbery, stairwells, alleys, hallways, and entryways.
- Keep a light on when you are not at home.
- Ask a neighbor to watch the house when you are on vacation.
- Mark valuables such as televisions, cameras, typewriters, and stereos with your state and driver's license number.
- Keep your bike and any sports equipment inside the house when not in use.
- Avoid confrontations with burglars.

### At School

- Keep your locker locked. Don't keep money or anything valuable in your locker, especially overnight, through the weekend, or over the holidays.
- Lock your bike with a hardened U-shaped lock. Don't leave your bike in an isolated area. Taking a wheel off helps discourage theft.
- Don't leave your backpack, purse, or other bag unattended.

### In Your Car

- Try to park in well-lighted areas.
- Never leave keys in the car.
- Always lock the car, even if it's in your own driveway.

- Never leave the motor running when no one's in the car.
- Mark car stereos, speakers, CD players, cell phones, and CB radios with your driver's license number. If they can be easily disconnected, lock them in your trunk when you leave the car.
- Never leave valuables in plain view when leaving your car, even if it's locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight. When possible, put them in the trunk before you arrive at your destination so no one sees you hiding your valuables.

### **Out and About**

- Don't leave your purse or wallet on the counter while you're looking at something in a store.
- Don't dangle or swing your purse or pack by the straps. Carry it close to you, especially in crowded stores and streets. If you put your wallet in your pants, keep it in a side or front (not back) pocket.
- Be wary of anybody who tries to sell you something at a price that sounds too good to be true.



**DO - IT - YOURSELF POSTER****Property Crimes**

Larceny

Burglary

Joyriding/motor vehicle theft

Identity theft

Embezzlement

Receiving stolen property

Copyright violation

Vandalism

Arson



**JOURNAL**

**Session 22**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

The thing that surprised me most about this session was

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One thing I can do to keep myself from becoming a victim of property crime is

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One way I can help others learn how to prevent property crime is

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One of the groups that can help us prevent property crime in our neighborhood is

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