

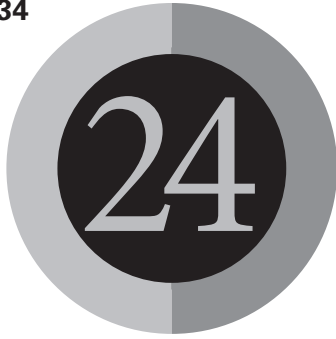
24

SESSION

Shoplifting

What's Wrong With It?

Overview of Lesson	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
<p>Students examine the costs of shoplifting to teens, shop owners, and their community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The place of law in American society (NSCG III.D.1) • Economic rights (NSCG V.B.3) 	<p>Conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. (ELA 7)</p>	<p>None</p>



SESSION

SHOPLIFTING

WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?

Session 24 examines shoplifting. Teens will define shoplifting, consider the reasons that people commit the crime, and examine the impact that shoplifting has on teens and their communities. Teens will also begin to explore how store owners might perceive their behavior and to express how they feel when store owners treat them with suspicion.

TEENS WILL LEARN

- How to define shoplifting
- Who shoplifts and why
- How much shoplifting costs teens and their community

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The following teaching strategies are used in this session:

- Expression and Reflection
- Each One Teach One
- Journal Writing

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pens or pencils for each teen
- Handout 1: *Who Shoplifts and Why?*
- Handout 2: *The Costs of Shoplifting*
- Journal for Session 24



Invite the owner of a store that is popular with teens to serve as a resource person for this session. He or she can answer questions and explain shoplifting from a store owner's point of view, and can also help advise and debrief teens in the negotiation role-play. See the Introduction in Volume One for information on how to contact, meet, and work with a resource person.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

PART 1

Step A. Warm-up

Step B. What Do You Think?



40 Minutes

PART 2

Step C. Why and How Is Shoplifting a Problem?

Step D. Reflection



50 Minutes

BEFORE THE SESSION

Note: Session 25: *Suspensions, Stereotypes, and Solutions: A Negotiation Between Teens and Store Owners* is an excellent follow-up to this session.

1. Read the session plan.
2. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, or readers. For more information about facilitating teen involvement, consult the Introduction in Volume One.
3. Cut paper into strips big enough for teens to write two or three sentences. Make two or three strips for each teen.
4. Make two copies of Handout 1: *Who Shoplifts and Why?* Cut one into strips for the Each One Teach One activity and keep one to use yourself.
5. Make one copy of Handout 2: *The Costs of Shoplifting* and cut it into four sections (A, B, C, and D) to distribute to four groups in Step C.

Note: If more than 20 teens are participating, make more than one copy of this handout so that the groups will not be too large.

6. Make copies of the journal for all teens.
7. Post the teen-created guidelines (from Session 1) in the room.
8. Gather the materials you will need.

P A R T

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.
 - Ask the group members to update newcomers and those who missed earlier sessions. Assign this task to teens on a rotating basis. Explain that it helps build 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 develop leadership skills to help others and their communities become safer.
 - Return their journals with your comments from the last session.
2. Explain the purpose of this session.
 - Tell teens that in this session they will take a close look at shoplifting. They will define shoplifting, consider what makes people do it, and examine its impact on teens and their communities.
3. Remind teens of the guidelines they developed for these sessions. Be sure their list is posted on the wall.
 - One way to increase 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 additional time for this activity.)

STEP B**TEACHING STRATEGY**

- Expression and Reflection



30 MINUTES

What Do You Think?

1. Ask teens to complete this sentence: “As a teen, it really bothers me when store owners _____.”
 - Give teens pencils and the paper you cut into strips for them to write on.
 - Have them label their strips “Teen POV” (Point of View), but tell them not to sign their names.
 - Collect their comments, read each aloud, and use tape to post them under the heading “Teen Point of View” on newsprint.
2. Ask teens to put themselves in the position of store owners and complete this sentence: “As a store owner, it really bothers me when teens _____.”
 - Give teens more of the paper you cut into strips.
 - Have them label their strips “Store Owner POV” (Point of View), but tell them not to sign their names.
 - Collect their comments, read each aloud, and use tape to post them under the heading “Store Owner Point of View” on newsprint.
 - If a store owner is visiting as a resource person, ask if teens’ comments are accurate from his or her perspective.
 - Point out that what teens see as “hanging out” or “just looking” could be seen by store owners as noisy or threatening behavior.

Wrap-up for Part 1

Ask the group to develop five questions that they could ask the police in order to find out about shoplifting in their community. As you gather more information about the problem, a service-learning project idea may begin to emerge. Some questions to help you get started include the following: What is the extent of the shoplifting problem in our community? What is the estimated cost of shoplifting in our community? What age group is most frequently charged with shoplifting? Are there any prevention programs that deal with shoplifting in our community?

Part 2 of Session 24 will continue discussions about shoplifting. The group will also work together to understand who shoplifts and why.

PART

2

REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin Part 2 by reviewing Part 1. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives of 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 C

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Each One Teach One
- Small-group Discussion
- Storytelling



40 MINUTES

Why and How Is Shoplifting a Problem?

1. Ask teen volunteers to define shoplifting.
 - Refer to Session 22: *Property Crimes* for a definition of “larceny.”
 - Write their working definition on newsprint or chalkboard and supplement it, if necessary, with the following:

Shoplifting is a form of larceny or theft. It is the crime of taking goods from a store without payment or the intent to pay.
 - Point out that *employee theft* is a form of theft related to shoplifting *in which employees take things themselves, allow their friends to take things, do not charge for an item, charge a customer an improperly reduced price, or abuse an employee discount.*
 - Add *employee theft* to the definition of shoplifting.
2. Use the strategy of Each One Teach One for teens to share information about shoplifting.
 - Give each teen one fact strip from Handout 1: *Who Shoplifts and Why?* (or give more than one fact to each teen if you have fewer teens than facts).
 - Teens should spend a few minutes reading the information on their fact strips. Circulate and check to see that they understand the information they received.
 - Tell teens to circulate around the room and teach their fact to one person at a time until they have spoken to every person. The object is to share a fact and learn one from the other teen.
 - When they have completed the activity, ask volunteers to tell you something they learned from another teen.
 - Write their information on newsprint under the heading “Who Shoplifts and Why?”
3. Use key messages to help teens make sense of the information on shoplifting. Make sure these main ideas appear on the newsprint:
 - The FBI’s *Crime in the U.S. 2004* report estimated that there were nearly seven million shoplifting offenses costing an estimated \$5.1 billion in losses that year.
 - Amateurs are the largest group of people who shoplift.
 - According to the FBI’s report, arrests of juveniles accounted for about 20 percent of all shoplifting arrests in 2004.
 - Shoplifters are caught far more often than employees who steal.
 - Many people who shoplift want to see if they can get away with it.

4. To help teens recognize the costs of shoplifting, have them create their own stories using Handout 2: *The Costs of Shoplifting*.
 - Tell teens that each of them will contribute one or two lines to create a story to show how shoplifting hurts both teens and their communities.
 - Have teens divide into four groups (or more if necessary). Give each group one of the four sections of the handout (labeled A, B, C, or D).
 - After teens read and discuss their section of the handout, have them spend 10 to 15 minutes creating a story based on the information they have been provided. Encourage your teens to be creative and to think of people or situations that they are familiar with as they create their stories. (Remember not to use the real names of anyone in the scenarios.)
 - If necessary, the following examples may help your teens get started:
 - Group A:** *Cost of shoplifting for the individual teen*
 “My friend Chris got caught shoplifting last week. The security guard saw him putting a pack of baseball cards in his pocket and called the police. . . .”
 - Group B:** *Cost of shoplifting for teenagers in general*
 “My older sister Tanya, who is 17, has been trying to get a job downtown at one of the big department stores. She will be graduating from high school and needs to earn some extra money to buy new clothes for job interviews. Clothes keep getting more and more expensive because of all the shoplifting going on. It isn’t easy to find a job these days and Tanya has heard that some stores aren’t even hiring teenagers because. . . .”
 - Group C:** *Cost of shoplifting for the store owner*
 “Ms. Olson, the owner of the big department store downtown, says that her customers are complaining that her prices are too high. Some are threatening not to shop there at all anymore. Ms. Olson agrees that her prices are getting higher but says that she has a reason for it. Increases in shoplifting have meant that she has more expenses. . . .”
 - Group D:** *Cost of shoplifting for the community*
 “Ken’s dad lost his job last week because the shop he worked at was losing money. In the last year there has been a lot of shoplifting at the shop and it may even have to shut down. . . .”
 - Circulate as teens work together to answer questions.
 - Once all the groups are finished, have group members read or act out their stories. Have them start by reading their section from the handout. To build outward from the individual to the whole community, have the groups report in the following sequence:
 - A. Individual teen who shoplifts
 - B. Teenagers in general
 - C. Store owner
 - D. Community

STEP D

TEACHING STRATEGY

■ Journal Writing



10 MINUTES

Reflection

1. Relate the session to teens' lives.

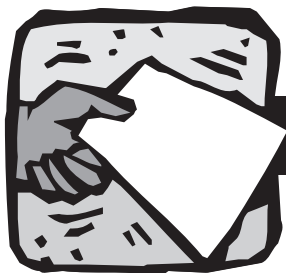
Have you ever seen anyone shoplift? How should you handle it if you and your friends see someone shoplift? How has your understanding of shoplifting changed because of the information learned in this session?

2. Turn learning into action.

- Ask teens what they think people should know about shoplifting.
- To get teens thinking about possible service-learning projects related to this session, ask them what they think would be the most effective way of sharing this information with the people who most need it. Possible suggestions include holding a panel discussion, writing and presenting skits, designing and exhibiting posters, and writing and distributing a brochure.
- Have teens think about who else in their community they might work with on this issue (e.g., the local business association).
- Consult Sessions 9–11 of *Community Works* for more assistance.
- 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 “Easy Steps to a Service-learning Project” in the Introduction in Volume One.
- 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 24.

- 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 and review them after the session, writing short comments. Tell them you will return the journals with your comments at the next session. This gives the teens something tangible and provides them with a connection back to previous sessions.



H A N D O U T 1

Who Shoplifts and Why?

1. Who shoplifts? Amateurs are the largest number. These are people who steal on impulse or because they see an item they greatly desire.
2. Who shoplifts? Amateurs who tend to believe they won't be caught or sent to jail
3. Who shoplifts? Most are nonprofessionals who steal frequently from places where they regularly shop.
4. Who shoplifts? Professionals who make their living stealing and selling goods, but this is a much smaller group than the amateurs
5. Who shoplifts? Drug addicts who steal to support their addiction
6. Who shoplifts? Desperate people who steal because they need food—a very small portion of shoplifters
7. Who shoplifts? Kleptomaniacs, a small minority of shoplifters who have a mental disorder that makes it difficult to overcome their urge to steal
8. In 2004, arrests of juveniles accounted for about 20 percent of all shoplifting arrests (*Crime in the U.S.*, FBI, 2004)
9. Why do people shoplift? Many want to see if they can get away with it.
10. Why do people shoplift? Their rationalizations (or excuses if caught) include: "I've spent plenty of money in this store. What's wrong with getting a little back?" Or, "This is a big store, they can afford it."
11. Why do people shoplift? Their rationalizations (or excuses if caught) include: "They'll never miss this." "Stores just write it off as a business expense."
12. Why do people shoplift? Their rationalizations (or excuses if caught) include: "I don't have enough money." "I just wanted to see if I could get away with it this once. I've never done it before."



HANDOUT 2

The Costs of Shoplifting

A. Costs to the *individual teen who shoplifts*:

- When salespeople or security officers catch shoplifters, they often call the police who arrest the suspects and take them to the police station.
- Children and teenagers may be released into their parents' custody if it's their first offense.
- The case may be referred to juvenile court.
- Everyone may find out about the arrest because police or court officers will often talk to the shoplifter's parents, neighbors, and school officials to make their report.
- If teens get caught shoplifting, their juvenile police records are supposed to be confidential and unavailable to future employers, but sometimes the information does get out.

→ Do you know anyone who has been caught shoplifting? If so, how does his or her experience compare with this information?

B. Costs to *teenagers in general*:

- They are affected by the higher prices caused by shoplifters.
- There may be fewer jobs available to teens if the owner loses money to shoplifters.
- Teens who shoplift may also cause problems for their friends and classmates who want to shop or get jobs. Because some store owners see teens as people who are likely to steal, they may not want teens in their stores.
- Teen shoplifting puts a strain on relationships among all other teens and store owners.
- Some people in the community may hold a negative opinion about teens in general due to incidents of teenage shoplifting.

→ Have you seen any of these problems in your community? If so, which ones?

C. Costs to the *store owner*:

- The store owner loses money every time an item is stolen.
- Store owners have to raise prices to compensate for the money they lose to shoplifters. This drives customers away.
- Store owners often have to spend additional money for special security measures such as guards and electronic monitoring.
- The more time and money store owners spend on security measures, the less time and money they have to devote to customer service and other things that improve their business.
- When a store owner prosecutes a shoplifter, legal fees may be involved.

→ Have you ever noticed these problems for store owners in your neighborhood?

D. Costs to the *community*:

- A store closes because the owner loses too much money to shoplifting. (Thirty percent of business failures in the United States are due to shoplifting and employee theft.)
- The store has to fire or lay off employees because revenue is very low.
- The store's customers may have to travel farther to shop after the store closes.
- If the store stays in business, the owner may raise prices to pay for extra security equipment or guards.

→ Have any stores in your neighborhood or in the mall near you gone out of business? If so, how did it affect your community?



JOURNAL

Session 24

NAME _____ DATE _____

The most interesting thing I learned about shoplifting is

Shoplifting affects my community in the following ways:

If I discovered that a friend was involved with shoplifting I would

Two things that I think everyone should know about shoplifting are
