

1 A Work in pairs and discuss. What crimes are the most common in your city/town?

B Work in pairs and complete the newspaper extracts with the crimes in the box.

kidnapping hacking stalking vandalism
identity theft bribery counterfeiting mugging
arson shoplifting

- 1 A teenager has been accused of _____ after he was seen setting fire to an empty factory.
- 2 He was jailed for five years for _____ into government computer systems.
- 3 There has been a reduction in _____ in stores after the introduction of more security guards.
- 4 A man has been found guilty of _____ film star Halle Berry. He followed her everywhere.
- 5 There have been several cases of _____ of foreign journalists. In the latest case, a demand was made for \$500,000.
- 6 _____ is a problem, with officials accepting money from companies that want to do business in the country.
- 7 There were no witnesses to the act of _____ in which a statue was damaged.
- 8 Police arrested three people for _____ dollars. More than a million fake \$50 bills were found.
- 9 Banks revealed that cases of _____ have doubled. Customers are warned to keep PIN numbers more secure.
- 10 The increase in CCTV cameras has cut cases of late-night _____ in town centres.



In ID parades, forty percent of witnesses identified the police's suspect. In forty percent of cases no identification was made. In twenty percent of cases they pointed to a volunteer.

Most of us have some recollection of the 2005 terrorist attacks in London. It could well be a mental image of a red double-decker bus in Tavistock Square with its roof ripped off by the force of the explosion. That's not surprising given the number of photographs of the damaged bus that were carried in newspapers in the days after the attack.

But what about CCTV footage? Do you remember seeing a video of the bus exploding? What can you see in that video?

Well, the truth is, you shouldn't be able to see anything in your mind's eye because such CCTV footage simply doesn't exist. But don't worry. If it only took a suggestion that you may have seen a video

of the explosion to create an image in your mind, you're not alone. In fact, in a study carried out by Dr James Ost at the University of Portsmouth, forty percent of people claimed to have seen this nonexistent footage. Some even went on to describe what happened in vivid detail.

Many of us think we have a good memory. After all, it's got us through the occasional exam. But what Ost's study clearly demonstrates is just how easily influenced our memories are. 'Facts' from the past can become confused in our minds. And it can simply be the fact that we've been asked about something, such as a nonexistent video clip, that can alter our memory.

In many cases, an unreliable memory is not a problem. It just means we forget to send a birthday card on time or a story we tell at a party is not one hundred percent accurate. But sometimes the contents of our memories can have huge consequences – putting people behind bars or even, in the USA, on Death Row.

In 1998, an American study calculated that in ninety-five percent of felony cases – the more serious crimes – witness evidence (in other words, people's memories) was the only evidence heard in court. In the UK, despite DNA and other forensic evidence being used more regularly, witness memories are still a vital part of court proceedings.

Even before a case gets to court, a few false memories can get an investigation off to a bad start. In the sniper attacks that took place in the Washington DC area in 2002, witnesses reported seeing a white van or truck fleeing several of the crime scenes. A white vehicle may have been seen near one of the first shootings and the media began repeating this. When they were caught, the sniper suspects were actually driving a blue car. It seems many witness memories had been altered by the media reports. ■

True

or

False

- 1 In court, evidence from a witness is not important if there are other kinds of evidence.
- 2 Forty percent of people in one study were able to give a full description of the film of the bus exploding in Tavistock Square.
- 3 A poor memory doesn't usually matter in day-to-day life, according to the article.
- 4 In 1998, in the USA, almost all major criminal cases depended entirely on witness evidence.
- 5 The rumour about the white van was started by one witness.
- 6 One in five witnesses makes a mistake in ID parades.