

Crime & the law

1 Match the words and phrases in the box with their correct definition 1 – 10.

barrister break the law defendant judge jury law-abiding
offender solicitor victim witness

1. A person appointed to make legal decisions in a court of law.
2. A group of 12 citizens who are sworn to decide whether someone is guilty or innocent on the basis of evidence given in a court of law.
3. A person who sees something happen or is present when something happens.
4. A person who appears in a court of law accused of doing something illegal.
5. A person who is attacked or who is in an accident.
6. A qualified lawyer who gives advice to members of the public and acts for them in legal matters.
7. A person who commits an offence against the law.
8. A lawyer who can present a case in court.
9. An expression used to describe someone who obeys the law.
10. To do something that is illegal.

2 The following groups of sentences describe the legal process which follows a crime. However, with the exception of the first sentence, the sentences in each group are in the wrong order. Put them into the correct order, using the key words and phrases in bold to help you. Some of these words appear in Task A.

Part 1

- A. One night, Jim Smith **committed** a serious crime. = Sentence 1
- B. Jim asked the officer for a **solicitor** to help him.
- C. At the same time, the police arranged for a **barrister** to **prosecute** him.
- D. They took him to the police station and formally **charged** him with the crime.
- E. When the **trial** began and he appeared in **court** for the first time, he **pleaded** his **innocence**.
- F. The next morning the police **arrested** him.

Part 2

- A. His barrister also said he was **innocent** and asked the court to **acquit** him. = Sentence 1
- B. While he was in prison, he applied for **parole**.
- C. As a result, the judge **sentenced** him to two years in prison.
- D. He was **released** after 18 months.
- E. However, there were several **witnesses**, and the **evidence** against him was overwhelming.
- F. Having all the **proof** they needed, the **jury** returned a **guilty verdict**.

Part 3

- A. Unfortunately, prison failed to **rehabilitate** him and after his **release** he continued with his **misdeeds**, attacking an old woman in the street. = Sentence 1
- B. Jim promised to **reform** and the pensioner withdrew her call for more severe **retribution**.

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- C. With this in mind, instead of passing a *custodial sentence*, he *fined* him a lot of money and ordered him to do *community service*.
- D. He was *re-arrested* and returned to court.
- E. His new *victim*, a pensioner, thought that the judge was being too *lenient* on Jim and called for the reinstatement of *corporal punishment* and *capital punishment*!
- F. At his second trial the judge agreed that prison was not a *deterrent* for Jim.

3. Now look at this extract from a politician's speech and complete the gaps with one of the words or phrases from Exercises 1 and 2. In some cases, more than one answer may be possible.

Are you worried about crime? I am. We read it every day in the papers. A terrible crime has been 1....., the police have 2..... someone, he has appeared in front of a jury in a 3..... of law, he has 4..... his innocence but has been found 5..... of his crime and he has been 6..... to 10 years in prison. We are all very relieved that the criminal is being punished for his 7....., and 8..... citizens like you and me can sleep more safely at night.

But what happens next? We all hope, don't we, that the prisoner will benefit from society's 9....., that a spell in prison will 10..... him and make him a better person. We all hope that he will 11..... and become like us. We all hope that when he is eventually 12..... and let loose on the streets, he will be a good character, the threat of another spell in jail being a suitable 13..... which will stop him from breaking the law again. Oh yes.

But let's face it. The reality is usually very different. The prisoner may be released on 14....., before the end of his sentence. He will try to re-enter society. But then he often becomes a 15..... himself, unable to find work and rejected by society. It isn't long before he's back in prison again.

So what alternatives are there, I hear you say. What can we do to the 16..... to make sure he doesn't commit another crime? There are alternatives to prison, of course, such as 17..... in which he will provide a service to those around him. Or he can pay a large 18..... . Alternatively, we could establish a more severe system of punishment, including 19..... and 20....., but we like to consider ourselves civilised, and the idea of beating or executing someone is repellent to us. Oh yes.

The answer, of course, is far simpler. We need to be tough not on the criminal, but on the cause of the crime. We should spend less of the taxpayer's money funding the 21..... and 22..... and all the other people who work for the legal system, and put the money instead into supporting deprived areas which are the breeding grounds for crime. We in the ConLab Party believe that everybody needs a good chance in life, and this is a good step forward. Vote for us now!