19 AGAINST THE LAW

VOCABULARY Crime and criminals

1 **Complete the table with the words and phrases in the box. Some can go in more than one column.**

burgle burglar burglary charge commit a crime
court deny the charge hacker investigate judge
jury make an arrest prisoner release sentence
statement suspect theft victim witness

Noun (person)	Noun (crime/ other)	Verb	Phrase
		burgle	

2 **Match words and phrases from Exercise 1 to the definitions.**

1 someone who has suffered the effects of violence, illness or bad luck _____
2 get into a building illegally and steal things _____
3 decide and say officially the punishment for someone who has committed a crime _____
4 the place where a judge decides whether someone is guilty of a crime _____
5 the action or crime of stealing something _____
6 do something that is illegal _____
7 officially accuse someone of a crime _____
8 something that someone says or writes officially _____
9 say that you haven't done anything wrong _____
10 a person who sees an event happening, especially a crime or an accident _____
11 a group of people who listen to all the facts in a trial and decide whether a person is guilty or not guilty _____
12 think that someone may have committed a crime or done something bad _____
13 try to discover all the facts about something, especially a crime or an accident _____
14 a person who accesses other people's or organisations' computers illegally _____

3 **Complete the sentences with the correct form of words from Exercise 1.**

1 The police have _____ one man with the _____ of a number of bicycles from the local school.
2 Our house was _____ last night – it's the first time we've been _____ of a crime.
3 The bank robber was _____ to eight years in prison.
4 Fortunately, several _____ saw the accident and said that it wasn't my fault.
5 We are _____ the case at the moment, but haven't made an _____ yet.
6 When the case was heard in _____ yesterday, the _____ of 12 people decided the burglar was guilty, and the _____ ordered him to pay a fine.
7 Our TV, smart speaker and laptops were all stolen in the _____.
8 Over 50% of prisoners go on to _____ more crimes after they have been _____ from prison.
9 I was shocked when I was accused of being a computer _____ – I'm useless with computers!
10 The police had reasons _____ that the man was the _____ of several other houses in the street.

READING

1 **Quickly read the article on page 77. Which of the crimes below do you think would not be tried in a teen court?**

dropping litter ___
hacking into government computers ___
shoplifting ___
burglary ___
writing graffiti ___

2 **Find a word in the article which means 'the person in a court who is accused of a crime'.**

_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 **Read the article again. Are the sentences *T* (True), *F* (False) or *NM* (Not Mentioned)? Correct the false sentences. Underline the parts of the text which tell you the answer.**

1 The people who run the teen courts are teenagers.

2 Defendants in teen courts usually deny the charges.

3 In teen courts, a jury is used to decide the sentence for serious offences.

4 A guilty offender is not allowed to take part in future court cases.

5 Victims help to decide how to punish the offenders.

6 Teen courts are successful because they help offenders understand the consequences of their actions.

7 In comparison with adult courts, teen courts tend to have a worse reoffending rate.

4 **Match the highlighted words in the text to the definitions.**

1 information that is stored for the future _____
2 suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion _____
3 an official plan or system _____
4 has an influence on someone or something _____
5 help or do something positive _____

TEEN COURTS

Teen courts are a unique and successful way of dealing with teenage criminals. Popular in the US, they provide an alternative to the traditional adult courts. Young people from the ages of 10 to 18 have their cases heard, and are sentenced at these courts – as long as their crime is not very serious.

Teen courts are run and staffed by young volunteers, who are trained in their roles by adult experts. These volunteers usually come from local high schools or youth organisations. The judge in a teen court does not usually have to decide if someone is guilty or not guilty, because most of the defendants do not deny the charges against them. The role of the teen court is simply to decide on an appropriate sentence for the crime. Sometimes the sentence is decided by a jury.

Sentences often involve the defendant being ordered to do something to help the person or people harmed by their crime. This can include writing formal apologies to the victim or doing some work to help repair damage. Another common sentence is known as 'community service', in which the offender must perform tasks which benefit the community, such as picking up litter, or helping in a care home. Often the offenders are also required to serve on a teen court jury themselves.

The whole process, from charging to sentencing, helps to bring young offenders to an understanding of their offence, and how it affects other people. They are frequently faced with the victim of their crime – an act that brings them face-to-face with the reality of what they have done. Offenders are made to feel responsible for their actions. Furthermore, by serving on a teen court jury, the offender is brought back into the system as an active member.

Simon Baxter, 16, who has been a teen court judge for two years, speaks about the success of the scheme: 'It's not about guilt or innocence or even punishment,' he says. 'It's about teenage offenders being shown the harm they've done by people their own age. It's much more powerful when people of your own age and background tell you that you did wrong, rather than adults – although the scheme does take some training to work well.'

And it does work. Evidence suggests that fewer than 5% of offenders whose cases are heard in teen courts go on to commit another crime. This compares to a 20% reoffending rate among those who go to adult courts. Not only that, teen courts also focus more on making things better for the victim, and the guilty offender does not end up with a criminal record – so everybody ends up better off in the long run.

LIVEWORKSHEETS