

THE LANGUAGE OF LAW – 2

55 Crime

A Make sure you know the difference between the verbs: **steal** and **rob**. The object of the verb 'steal' is the thing which is taken away, e.g. they stole my bike, whereas the object of the verb 'rob' is the person or place from which things are stolen, e.g. I was robbed last night. A masked man robbed the bank. 'Steal' is irregular: steal, stole, stolen.

B The table below gives the names of some other types of crimes together with their associated verbs and the name of the person who commits the crimes.

<i>crime</i>	<i>definition</i>	<i>criminal</i>	<i>verb</i>
murder	killing someone	murderer	murder
shoplifting	stealing something from a shop	shoplifter	shoplift
burglary	stealing from someone's home	burglar	burgle
smuggling	taking something illegally into another country	smuggler	smuggle
arson	setting fire to something in a criminal way	arsonist	to set fire to
kidnapping	taking a person hostage in exchange for money or other favours, etc.	kidnapper	kidnap

All the verbs in the table above on the right are regular apart from set (set, set, set).

C Here are some more useful verbs connected with crime and law. Note that many of them have particular prepositions associated with them.

- to **commit** a crime or an offence: to do something illegal
- to **accuse** someone of a crime: to say someone is guilty
- to **charge** someone **with** (murder): to bring someone to court
- to **plead guilty** or **not guilty**: to swear in court that one is guilty or otherwise.
- to **defend/prosecute** someone in court: to argue for or against someone in a trial
- to **pass verdict on** an accused person: to decide whether they are guilty or not
- to **sentence** someone to a punishment: what the judge does after a verdict of guilty
- to **acquit** an accused person of a charge: to decide in court that someone is not guilty (the opposite of to **convict** someone)
- to **fine** someone a sum of money: to punish someone by making them pay
- to **send** someone to **prison**: to punish someone by putting them in prison
- to **release** someone **from prison/jail**: to set someone free after a prison sentence
- to **be tried**: to have a case judged in court.

D Here are some useful nouns.

- trial**: the legal process in court whereby an accused person is investigated, or tried, and then found guilty or not guilty
- case**: a crime that is being investigated
- evidence**: information used in a court of law to decide whether the accused is guilty or not
- proof**: evidence that shows conclusively whether something is a fact or not
- verdict**: the decision: guilty or not guilty
- judge**: the person who leads a trial and decides on the sentence
- jury**: group of twelve citizens who decide whether the accused is guilty or not

Exercises

55.1 Put the right form of either rob or steal in the sentences below.

- 1 Last night an armed gang the post office. They £2000.
- 2 My handbag at the theatre yesterday.
- 3 Every year large numbers of banks
- 4 Jane of the opportunity to stand for president.

55.2 Here are some more crimes. Complete a table like the one in B opposite.

<i>crime</i>	<i>criminal</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>definition</i>
terrorism
blackmail
drug-trafficking
forgery
assault	assault
pickpocketing
mugging

55.3 Fill the blanks in the paragraph below with one of the verbs from C opposite.

One of the two accused men (1) at yesterday's trial. Although his lawyer (2) him very well, he was still found guilty by the jury. The judge (3) him to two years in prison. He'll probably (4) after eighteen months. The other accused man was luckier. He (5) and left the courtroom smiling broadly.

55.4 Here are some words connected with law and crime. If necessary, use a dictionary to help you check that you understand what they all mean. Then divide them into three groups, in what seems to you to be the most logical way.

theft	member of a jury	judge	smuggling
witness	prison	fine	bribery
detective	hi-jacking	flogging	community service
probation	traffic warden	death penalty	rape
drunken driving	lawyer		

55.5 Look at all the crimes named in this unit. Look both at the left-hand page and at exercises 55.2 and 55.4. Which do you think are the three most serious and the three least serious?

55.6 Write a paragraph to fit this newspaper headline. Give some details about the crime and the court case, using as many words from this unit as is appropriate.

Local girl's evidence gets mugger two years prison

Follow up: If possible look at an English language newspaper. List all the words connected with crime and the law which you can find in it.