

IELTS Topic Vocabulary: Crime

Useful crime and punishment chunks for Speaking and Writing Task 2. Learn collocations, not isolated words.

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Tip: highlight 8-12 items this week, practise them in a timed mock, then unlock Pro for fuller banks and AI feedback.

Types of crime

Common offences and how to describe them.

Word / chunk	Note or example
petty crime	petty crime such as pickpocketing is common in cities
violent crime	violent crime has fallen in recent years
white-collar crime	white-collar crime includes fraud and bribery
juvenile delinquency	juvenile delinquency is linked to boredom
organised crime	police target organised crime networks
cybercrime	cybercrime is hard to trace across borders
shoplifting	shoplifting costs retailers millions
drug trafficking	drug trafficking fuels violence

Causes of crime

Why people turn to crime.

Word / chunk	Note or example
poverty and unemployment	poverty and unemployment push people to steal
lack of education	lack of education limits job options
peer influence	peer influence draws teenagers into gangs
broken families	children from broken families may need support
social inequality	social inequality breeds resentment
drug addiction	drug addiction drives repeat offences
lack of opportunities	lack of opportunities in poor areas
turn to crime	some young people turn to crime out of desperation

Law enforcement

Police, courts and prevention.

Word / chunk	Note or example
law enforcement	law enforcement needs better funding
police presence	increase police presence in busy areas
CCTV cameras	CCTV cameras deter street crime
crime prevention	invest in crime prevention programmes
neighbourhood watch	join a neighbourhood watch scheme
bring to justice	bring offenders to justice quickly
fair trial	everyone has the right to a fair trial

reduce crime rates

measures to reduce crime rates

Punishment and sentencing

Prison, fines and alternatives.

Word / chunk	Note or example
prison sentence	a long prison sentence for serious offences
community service	community service suits minor offenders
death penalty	the death penalty remains controversial
heavy fines	impose heavy fines on polluting firms
a deterrent	harsh penalties act as a deterrent
life imprisonment	life imprisonment for the worst crimes
suspended sentence	a suspended sentence for first-time offenders
tougher penalties	call for tougher penalties on repeat offenders

Rehabilitation and reform

Helping offenders return to society.

Word / chunk	Note or example
rehabilitation programme	a rehabilitation programme teaches job skills
reoffend	prisoners are less likely to reoffend with training
reintegrate into society	help ex-offenders reintegrate into society
vocational training	offer vocational training in prisons
second chance	everyone deserves a second chance
overcrowded prisons	overcrowded prisons worsen conditions
counselling	counselling helps address anger issues
criminal record	a criminal record makes finding work hard

Victims, society and fear

Impact and public attitudes.

Word / chunk	Note or example
victim of crime	become a victim of crime in a public place
feel unsafe	many residents feel unsafe at night
law-abiding citizens	protect law-abiding citizens
public safety	public safety should be a priority
rising crime rate	a rising crime rate worries parents
moral values	teach moral values at home and school
social order	laws maintain social order
sense of community	a strong sense of community reduces crime

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