

Chapter 2

2.1 Critical Thinking

1. Are there any acts that are currently legal that you think should be illegal? If so, which ones?

Answers will vary. They may include the use of alcohol, tobacco, or strong psychoactive pharmaceutical drugs such as Valium. Also included may be white-collar misdeeds like nuclear testing in populated areas or toxic dumping. Do you think of white-collar misdeeds as crimes? You may wish to examine this issue more closely and decide for yourself if certain white-collar activities should be criminalized.

2. Do you think there should be other elements of crime besides the seven listed in this section?

If so, what other elements should there be?

Answers will vary. Some people feel that nothing needs to be added. Regardless of whatever answer you provide, be sure to also provide reasons to support your statements.

2.2 Critical Thinking

1. Of the various methods of measuring crime presented in this section, which one do you think is the most accurate? Why? Which one do you think is the least accurate? Why?

You should state that offenses known to the police are the most accurate because they are the most comprehensive. The least accurate methods are generally those that rely on statistics that are taken long after the initial commission of a crime, such as conviction or incarceration rates. This is because these rates cover only a small fraction of the total crimes committed.

2. Do you think there are ways to get more victims of crime to report criminal incidents? If so, what would you suggest?

Answers will vary, but should involve building the trust of victims and the pool from which victim responses may be culled. For instance, a toll-free number could be provided, and doctors or counselors could refer victims to it.

2.3 Critical Thinking:

1. What would you estimate is the annual cost of crimes that go unreported?

Answers will vary, but most people agree that it costs billions of dollars per year.

2. Why are the highest costs of crime the intangible costs?

These costs are the highest because they include the costs of pain, suffering, and reduced quality of life. These could involve years of physical or psychotherapy or other types of specialized care.

2.4 Critical Thinking:

1. What steps could be taken, if any, to reduce people's overall fear of crime?

Answers could include anything from taking steps to building a stronger and safer community to taking self-defense classes.

2. Why do you think there is no correlation between those who fear crime the most and the most likely victims of crime?

Some believe that those who fear crime the most are the same people who guard against it the most, perhaps by living in safer neighborhoods, having elaborate alarm systems, and guarding themselves and their property more carefully. Some say that those who fear crime the most are those who are least familiar with it, and thus are likely to have exaggerated anxiety regarding it. Other people feel that this is merely a coincidence.

3. What factors contribute to people's fear of crime?

Factors include gender, race, income level, age, and whether someone is at home at the time that they fear being victimized.

4. What are the costs, if any, of a fear of crime?

Fear of crime has many detrimental consequences, including the tendency to buy safety devices with money that could otherwise be used to improve a person's quality of life. It also contributes to neighborhood decline, which affects property values.

2.5 Critical Thinking: Why do you think that certain types of people are more likely to become crime victims than others are?

Introduction to Criminal Justice 3/e
CRITICAL THINKING ANSWER KEY

Most traits that make one more likely to commit crime also make one more likely to be victimized by it. Examples are being younger, male, or a minority.