



CRITICAL THINKING
Can better police training in how people of different backgrounds think, feel, and solve problems help reduce crime? How?



breaking up a family fight or chasing a mugger.

The police have to enforce the law. This means they need to stop someone who is driving above the speed limit. They need to issue a summons for throwing garbage on the street. They need to break up groups of people who are standing around or loitering. But there are so many laws that the police can never enforce all of them at all times. Often, they must decide quickly which ones they think are most important at the moment.

Enforcing the laws also means that police must spend much time filling out reports in an office. If someone has been arrested, an officer might have to spend a whole day taking the suspect to court. Much of what police officers do is **routine**, or everyday work. All of it is important to the criminal justice system.

Who Are the Police?

For a long time, most police officers were white and male. Today, police work is being done by men and women of all backgrounds who want to help protect society. Often, a police officer chooses this job to follow in the footsteps of other family members. Police officers are usually persons who have the ability to lead. People who go into police work know that it offers a good living with a bright future.

In doing police work, officers see the worst kinds of human behavior. They see people who commit horrible crimes for no reason. They see a lot of pain and suffering. Officers have to learn to keep strong emotionally. They can do a better job if they do not become too upset about what they see everyday.

Can anyone become a police officer? Police officers have to be in good health and be physically fit. If you wanted to be on the force, this means that you would have to pass some physical tests. There would also be tests of what you know about reading, math, and other important subjects. Police work is not only about physically taking the right action; it is also about thinking carefully in every kind of crime situation.

A lie detector tests your honesty. If you have a felony conviction, you cannot be a police officer. However, if you have committed some illegal acts that are not very serious, you might be able to become a police officer. If you pass all the tests you can then attend a police **academy** to be trained for police work.

What are the dangers of police work? A police officer can work for twenty years and never have to shoot a gun. However, there is always a chance of physical danger. More police are injured when they try to break up family fights than when they try to stop a more serious crime.

How do police handle stress? Another danger of police work is emotional stress. This means being emotionally upset and emotionally tired. Why is there so much stress? The police do a lot of important work for society and often do not receive thanks. Yet, they are expected to be on the constant lookout for danger. They see horrible things most people cannot even imagine. Officers sometimes need to talk to counselors to



DID YOU KNOW?

1. The Chief of Police in Houston, TX, is Chief Sam Nuchia
2. The Chief of Police in Sacramento, CA, is Chief Arturo Venegas, Jr.
3. The Chief of Police in Detroit, MI, is Chief Isaiah McKinnon

EYE OPENER There are 250 crime laboratories in the country. This is where investigators can study evidence from murder, robbery and other serious crime scenes given to them by officers.

help them relax or to feel better again. Some officers might decide to spend more time in the office from time to time.

When the police use too much force: When anyone uses too much physical force, it is wrong. When police use too much force in doing their job, it is wrong, too. Because police must always expect danger in a crime situation, they can sometimes make an honest mistake. Police are people, too.

For example, an officer might think a suspect is reaching for a gun when she is reaching for something else. The officer might take the next step too soon and injure the suspect. But police officers are trained to be as fair as they can be without taking the risk of losing their own life.

When the police stop someone who seems to be breaking the law, they can never be certain how dangerous that person could be to his own safety. They can never be certain what he will do next. In minutes or even seconds, they need to decide what necessary physical steps to take. This is not easy to do.

The police need to make sure of two things: (1) that the suspect is treated fairly at all times, yet, (2) that the officers are not in danger of being injured or killed while doing their job. Most of the time, the officers will do the right thing. Sometimes, they are forced to guess, and it turns out that more force is used than was necessary. But this can only be decided or known after those few quick seconds have gone by.

Police in the Future

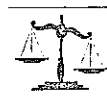
Most Americans are very afraid of crime. This is so even if they have not been victims of crime. Everyone wants the police to protect him. As long as a person obeys the law, he can be sure that the police are his best friend, in any emergency.

But, there is less money to pay for police these days. As a result, many police departments have fewer police than they had ten years ago; many more are needed. This means police will have to try to work more closely with people in their communities to stop crime. There needs to be much more cooperation in the future.

There will also be more women and people of all backgrounds on the force. People who have more education will go into police work more often. Officers will resemble, more closely, the populations and neighborhoods they serve.

Policing used to be about officers merely reacting to crime and violence after it happened. In the 1970s, police worked more in teams. In the 1980s, the goal was crime prevention. Today and tomorrow, police will continue to expand their teamwork into a growing partnership with communities.

Finally, as a result of computer technology, police from around the country and around the world will be able to work more closely with each other. For example, if police in Pennsylvania arrest someone, they can send a picture of the suspect's fingerprints to a central national computer. The computer record will show whether the person has a police record



CRITICAL THINKING

Some people wonder if female officers can do all that male officers do especially in times of physical danger. But there are many ways in which police officers can help each other. What are some of them?

DID YOU KNOW? Interpol is a law-enforcement

organization with members from more than 40 countries. It solves crimes on a worldwide level, such crimes as huge drug operations. Begun in 1946, its main office is located in Paris, France.

EYE OPENER

In 1991, there were roughly half a million law-enforcement officers in the country.



CRITICAL THINKING
 A federal crime bill has been proposed which would increase funding for community policing across the country. What effect do you think this will have on the crime rate?

or not. This sharing of information will help keep society safer by helping to convict criminals more quickly. The more efficiently the police can do their job, the more efficiently the courts can carry out the next steps in the criminal justice system.



Workbook
 Self-Check p. 8
 Reality-Check p.9



TO LEARN MORE
The Peoples Guide to Government:
Judicial Branch, p. 32

Understanding Chapter 3
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the three levels of police in the United States? 2. Describe what police officers do. 3. Explain some of the dangers of police work.

1. When there are many laws being broken at the same time, what must police decide quickly?

2. Filling out reports is considered everyday work or what? _____
3. Police work is being done by those that want to help do what? _____
4. What do police officers usually have the ability to do? _____
5. Why do officers have to learn to keep strong emotionally? _____

6. Describe what you need to be to be a police officer. _____

7. What would prevent you from becoming a police officer? _____
8. Where does training take place to become a police officer? _____
9. What causes most injuries to police? _____
10. Why is there so much stress for police? _____

11. Where do investigators study evidence from serious crime scenes? _____
12. Why do police sometimes make honest mistakes? _____
13. Police are trained to be fair without risking what? _____
14. When police stop someone what can they never be sure of? _____

15. When more force is used than necessary the police are forced to do what? _____
16. How can you be sure the police are your best friend? _____
17. Why are there fewer police today than ten years ago? _____
18. Police are expanding their teamwork into what? _____
19. What allows police to work more closely around the country? _____
20. What will help keep society safer by helping convict criminals more quickly? _____

Critical Thinking

(pages: 12,13 & 14)

1. If police had training in how people of different backgrounds think and feel about problems, could this help with the way people think about the role of police? How?
2. Why do police have to enforce laws that they think are most important at the time of an incident?
3. When laws are enforced what must a police officer spend much time doing? What kind of work is this called?
4. Can anyone become a police officer? Why not?
5. What are the dangers of police work?