



CRITICAL THINKING

Programs like the STEP program (Self-Taught Empowerment and Pride) which includes marching drills, drug counseling and training, have reduced the rate of return to prison. Some 94 percent of those involved in the first year of STEP never returned to prison.

9-11-2013

Prison can be a place where you learn job skill, or where you can go to school. Prison can also be a place where you sit in a cell, or a small plain room with bars, twenty-three out of twenty-four hours a day only one hour for walking around in the yard outside! However, all prisons are alike in some ways.

In all prisons, nothing you do is private. Everything you do has a rule and all rules must be obeyed. For example, if breakfast is served at five o'clock in the morning, everyone must go to breakfast at exactly that time. Supper may be served at three o'clock in the afternoon. It does not matter whether you are hungry or not at that time. Also, there is no more food to eat until breakfast. Have you ever been hungry? Can you imagine what that would be like?

Prison can be a place that is both dangerous and overcrowded. There really are no rights, no life that is anything like life outside of prison. This means that prisoners have to know how to protect themselves physically. Prisoners have the right to stay safe. Visitors often can only visit by talking through a screen.

DID YOU KNOW? During the last decade, the number of women in prison tripled.

Prisoners might not be allowed to watch television, listen to a radio, or even have anything to read. They might not be allowed to get phone calls from their families. They might also not be able to have more than a few visitors.

Prison can be a place that is very boring. Prison life has the same routine every day, week after week, month after month, year after year. Sometimes, prisoners get so bored they break the rules. If a person breaks the rules, there are special punishment cells. Extra time may also be added to the present sentence. However, if a person follows the rules, the sentence could be made shorter for good behavior.

What is it like to visit someone in prison? If you have a relative or friend in prison, you may want to visit. Usually, there is a long ride to get to the prison. You should learn the rules for a visit before you go so that you will not be upset or afraid when you are there. When you arrive, you will have to be checked by a guard. This may make you feel like a criminal. However, the guards have to do their job. They need to be sure you are not bringing in a knife, a gun, or drugs that could cause more violence and trouble. The best thing to do is to cooperate and obey the rules.

The person you are visiting might be so happy to see you that he or she will show a lot of feelings. You may feel emotional, too. Also, if the person is allowed to get packages, you can bring some gifts — food, soap, or books. But the packages will also be searched.

Preparing to Leave Prison and Go Home: The number of people behind bars in the United States is very high compared with other countries. So many people are shut away and, as a result, cannot help society. No other country has as many people behind bars. This is a national tragedy.

Many people want criminals locked up for longer and longer sentences.



EYE OPENER: One out of four prisoners carries the HIV virus. One out of five prisoners carries the TB virus. Although prisoners have the right to stay safe, because of overcrowding and violence behind bars, prisons can be more dangerous than the streets!

As a result, prisons are more crowded than ever. This is one of the reasons the people who run the prisons want to get people out sooner, not later. But they need to feel that the prisoners who do get out will not be violent.

There are programs for nonviolent prisoners who have almost finished their sentences. Sometimes, such people are sent to halfway houses. Halfway houses are half like a prison and half like a home and usually found in a city, unlike prisons. But they also have rules, and the prisoners have to stay there at night. Prisoners can spend time learning and practicing what to do in the outside world. For example, prisoners might go to hunt for a job or take classes in school.

Sometimes, prisoners are allowed to work at a job and return to prison at night. Some prisons allow prisoners to go home on weekends. These programs try to help prisoners get ready for the time when they return to society.

Often, prisoners are let out of prison on **parole**. This means that they get out before their sentence is over. They have to report to a parole officer every week. If they commit a crime or break the rules of parole, they can be sent right back to prison. For example, if a person misses even one visit, he can be sent back.

After Leaving Prison

It can be hard to go back to your old neighborhood after being in prison. If you were convicted of a felony, you will have a hard time finding a job. Many places do not want to hire people who have been in prison even for a short time.

When you see your old friends again, you may find that they still want you to do the same illegal things that sent you to prison. Watch out! People like this are not your friends!

You might have a hard time getting to know your family again. Your children will have grown up. They may not know you anymore.

If you have a relative who is coming home from prison, you may not be sure how to talk to that person. You may feel embarrassed. You can think about ways to help the person keep from being sad or discouraged. Help the person stay busy and make new friends.

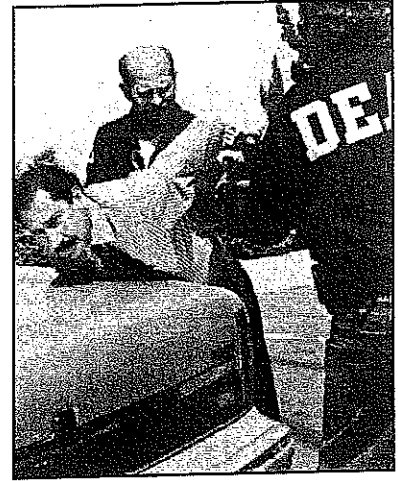
It is hard to survive in prison. It is sometimes even harder to stay out of prison once you have been released.

Understanding Chapter 5


1. Why are there prisons?
2. What are the different types of prisons?
3. How can programs help a person prepare to go back to life in society?

Turn the page to see an overview of the criminal justice system.

CRITICAL THINKING
The Uniform Crime Reporting Program of the FBI tells us that some 35 percent of prisoners were under the influence of a serious illegal drug at the time of the crime. Which of these statements is true: Drugs cause crime, or people commit crimes in order to get drugs?



DID YOU KNOW? Three out of every four adult criminals committed their first crime when they were young. Also, the overall ratio of men to women behind bars is about 18:1.

 *Workbook*
Self-Check p. 12
Reality-Check p.13

Chapter 5. Cont.

1. Prisons can be a place where you learn what? _____
2. Describe what you might do 23 out of 24 hours a day. _____

3. Give an example from the lesson how all prisons are alike: _____

4. What do prisoners need to know what to do? _____
5. What are two things prisoners might not be able to do? _____

6. Describe prison life week to week. _____
7. What may happen if a prisoner follows the rules? _____
8. What should you learn before visiting someone in prison? _____
9. What will happen to packages you might bring a prisoner? _____
10. Explain what is meant in the lesson "This is a national tragedy". _____

11. Why do people that run prisons want to get people out sooner? _____

12. What are halfway houses used to hold? _____
13. What can prisoners in halfway houses do during the day? _____

14. What does parole mean? _____
15. What can happen to someone on parole if they break the rules? _____
16. What difficulty do people convicted of a felony have when they get out of prison? _____

17. Old friends of prisoners might want them to do what? _____
18. What problem might a released prisoner have with his family? _____

19. What should a person do if a relative is coming home from prison? _____

20. What can be harder than surviving in prison? _____

Critical Thinking

(pages: 26&27)

1. What is your opinion of a drug treatment program that would include marching drills, drug counseling and job training?
2. Why have the number of women in prison tripled in recent years?
3. Why do you think that a prison could be a place that is very boring?
4. What is it like to visit someone in prison?

