**How do we know who breaks the law?**

**Official Statistics: The Crime Rate:**

The crime rate are the police’s figures of how many crimes have been reported to them. However, they may not be accurate:

**1. Some crimes go unnoticed**

* Some crimes are too small or insignificant to even notice sometimes.
* You may just think the £5 note got lost when in fact it was actually taken from you by a thief.

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Some crimes are not reported to the Police.**

* Petty crimes that involve small sums of money.
* Private crimes like domestic violence or the fight with your friend.
* The Police can’t or won’t do anything
* No loss to victim- insurance claims might actually mean your profit from a theft
* Dealt with by school or work- you steal some stationary and get caught.

**3. Some crimes are not recorded by Police.**

* Police may feel it’s not necessary.

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**4. Policing**

* Police may focus on certain crimes like speeding, bike theft or drink driving and this can make the figures invalid or unreliable.

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* **Valid statistics** = do they actually measure what they claim to measure? Do we really know how many crimes have taken place by looking at official statistics?
* **Reliable statistics** = if you repeat the study will you get the same results? If you ask the same people the same questions will they give the same answers? It’s like when you repeat science experiments.

**The Hidden/Dark figure of crime**

As we no know, many crimes go unnoticed, aren’t reported or aren’t recorded by Police.

The official statistics say that 330,000 mobiles were stolen last year, a recent study says that in reality 700,000 were actually stolen. The 370,000 that aren’t in the official statistic are know as the dark figure of crime.

**Self report studies**

* Sometimes self report studies are conducted to help gain a better picture of the crimes that are taking place in our society.
* Self report studies are confidential surveys that ask people to tick from a list of deviant and criminal acts the ones that they have done or been involved with. As they are confidential people do not risk being punished. They are usually given to teenagers about things like graffiti.

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| --- | --- |
| Advantages   * Get a more valid and reliable picture of crime * Get info on crimes that haven’t been detected, reported or recorded. | Disadvantages   * Unethical if asked to hardened criminals. * People may not cooperate. * People may not tell the truth. |

**Victim studies**

* Victim studies can also be used to gain a better picture of crime in Britain.
* Basically instead of asking people to tick which crimes or deviant behaviour they’ve committed, they ask people which crimes they have been victims of.

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| Advantages   * Get a more valid and reliable picture of crime * Get info on crimes that haven’t always been reported or recorded. | Disadvantages   * Could upset people * People may not cooperate. * People may not tell the truth or may exaggerate the crimes they have witnessed. |

**Advantages & Disadvantages**

**of Official Statistics**

**Official Statistics** tell us about the crimes that have been both reported by the victim to the Police and that the Police have kept an official record of.

**The Dark Figure of Crime** is the actual number of crimes that go either; unnoticed, unreported or unrecorded. E.g. many more mobiles are stolen than official figures show.

**Advantages of Official Statistics**

* Cheap.
* Easily accessible.
* Good source of quantitative data.
* Can be used to support primary data you collect yourself.

**Disadvantages of Official Statisics**

Not very reliable or valid because:

* + People don’t always notice crimes have been committed.
  + People don’t always report crimes.
  + Police don’t record all crimes that are reported.
  + Police sometimes focus or crackdown on certain crimes and this can

affect the figures.