

CITYYOUTH UNIT: CRIME PREVENTION

Unit Overview

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that there are a variety of law-enforcement agencies with different jurisdictions.
- Give examples of the role modern technology plays in crime prevention.
- Use critical-thinking skills to analyze evidence and reach a conclusion.
- Recognize the roles and responsibilities of citizens in reducing and preventing crime.
- Plan and complete a CityYouth action project to address issues of crime and safety in their own community.

Lesson Sequence

Lesson 1: Social Studies

Lesson 2: Science

Lessons 3–4: Social Studies or Science

Lesson 5: All (Suggested activities include data collection and surveys with math applications.)

This CityYouth unit focuses on issues of crime and safety with an emphasis on crime prevention. When asked to name the top 10 problems youth are concerned about, middle-school students repeatedly identify crime as one of their primary concerns. Adolescents are the victims of crime and are themselves at risk of participating in illegal activities. Moreover, they often feel powerless to do anything about crime. According to a national study sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency:

Junior high and high school students show ambivalence in their beliefs about their own abilities to contribute to the safety of their communities. Fewer than three in ten students (28%) believe there is something they can personally do to help prevent crime in their neighborhoods, four in ten do not think there is anything they can do (41%), and three in ten (31%) say they don't know if there is anything they can personally do to prevent crime in their neighborhoods.

—*Between Hope and Fear: Teens Speak Out on Crime and the Community*, National Crime Prevention Council and the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law

This unit is designed to help young people recognize the many resources for solving and preventing crime and to understand the need for citizen involvement in crime prevention. First, students explore crime prevention techniques used by law enforcement, past and present. Then students take part in a simulated investigation to solve a kidnapping case. Finally, students participate in a service-learning project to address issues of crime and safety in their own school and community.

Fighting Crime in the Old West

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- **The Pinkerton Detectives** (Handout 1A)—1 per student
- Teachers may want to visit the web sites listed on CRF's CityYouth U.S. History Links for more in-depth information about Allan Pinkerton, specifically, his experiences during the Civil War. The Pinkertons' espionage activities during the war and involvement in breaking up the Molly Maguires caused controversy in public opinion about the agents, especially among those who fought for the South.

Overview

This lesson begins a new CityYouth unit focusing on crime prevention. In this unit, students explore methods used by law enforcement to solve and prevent crime and then participate in a service-learning project addressing issues of crime and safety in their own school or community.

In this lesson, students take a historical look at crime-fighting methods of the Old West as they join the Pinkerton detectives in pursuit of Jesse James.

In the next series of lessons, students explore the role of technology in modern-day crime fighting and have a chance to solve a hypothetical kidnapping case using clues from the crime scene.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Describe three methods used in fighting crime during the 1800s.
- Compare crime fighting, past and present.
- Explain the difference between local, state, and national law enforcement agencies.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

SS: Historical interpretation. Explains the central issues and problems of the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.

SS: U.S. History: Analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction. List the original aims of Reconstruction and describe its effects on the political and social structures of different regions.

LA: Reading informational texts. Seeks peer help to understand information. Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts.

Procedure

I. Focus Activity—Introduction to Unit

- A. Ask students to think about some of the police shows they have seen on television. Lead a brief discussion using the following questions:
- What types of equipment and technology do detectives and police officers use to solve crimes? What resources do you think they rely on most?
 - What do you suppose it was like to try to fight crime before computers, phones, and cars were invented?
- B. Explain that today they are going to begin a new CityYouth unit focusing on crime prevention. Ask students to “vote” on the following statements. If they strongly agree, have them hold up 1 finger; unsure, 2 fingers; and disagree, 3 fingers.
1. Crime is a serious problem in our society.
 2. The crime problem has gotten worse over time.
 3. Crime has forced me or people I know to change our lives in some way.

II. Reading and Discussion—The Pinkerton Detectives

- A. Explain to students that crime is not a new problem in our country. During the 1800s in America, many counties and towns organized sheriff and police departments to bring law and order to the West. Tell students that today they are going to take a look at some of the ways lawmen of the Old West tried to fight crime.
- B. Distribute **The Pinkerton Detectives** (Handout 1A) to the class. When students have completed the reading, ask them to work in pairs to answer the discussion questions on the handout.
- C. Lead a class discussion using the following questions:
- What were three methods the Pinkertons used to solve crimes and catch outlaws?
 - Are any of these methods still used today? Give examples.
 - Why did the James gang move from state to state?
 - Why were the Pinkerton agents able to track Jesse and Frank James in different states?
 - How did some citizens make it more difficult to catch the James gang? Why did some people not want to help the Pinkertons?
 - Do you think citizens today are helpful to law enforcement? Why or why not?
 - What jobs in law enforcement were mentioned in the reading? (police, private detectives, sheriffs)

- D. Remind the class that there are many people whose jobs are to enforce the law and reduce and solve crimes. (There are more than 40,000 independent law enforcement agencies in the United States.) Ask students to think of all of the crime fighting jobs they can and list them on the board. The list might include:

Police (City/Municipal)

Sheriff/Deputy (County)

Highway Patrol/State Troopers (State)

FBI (Federal)

School Police/Security (Varies)

Private Detectives/Investigators (Private)

Security Guards (Private)

Point out that they have listed several different levels of law enforcement and assist students in classifying city, county, state, federal, and private agencies. Tell students that in the next CityYouth lesson they are going to explore some modern-day methods of solving crimes.

Portfolio Enrichment

Have students research and write biographical sketches about:

Alan Pinkerton

Jesse and Frank James

The Younger brothers

William Quantrill and Confederate Guerillas

The Pinkerton Detectives

In 1842, a Scottish immigrant arrived in Chicago to make a new life for himself and his wife. The man, Allan Pinkerton, was a barrel-maker by trade, but a detective at heart. One day, while collecting wood to make barrels, Pinkerton stumbled upon a band of counterfeiters hiding out. He caught the criminals and handed them over to the police. Later, he joined the Chicago Police Force and became its first official detective.

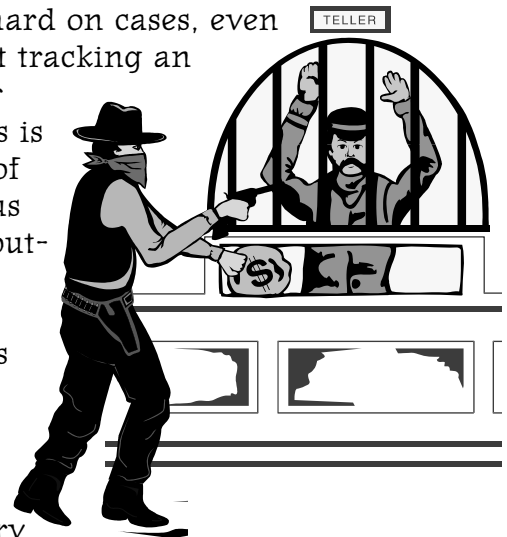
In 1850 Pinkerton decided to open his own private "police detective agency" in Chicago. Banks, railroads, and stagecoach companies hired Pinkerton and his agents to guard their property, watch employees, and investigate crimes. Pinkerton agents were supposed to identify suspects, collect evidence against them, and then arrest and turn them over to the local police.

While working on a railroad case, Pinkerton learned about a plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln. Pinkerton and his men rescheduled train stops and cut telegraph lines to confuse the assassins. Wearing another passenger's shawl, the disguised Lincoln arrived safely in Washington, D.C., to take the oath of office as president.

During the Civil War, Pinkerton and his agents worked for Union General George McClellan collecting intelligence about the Confederate army. In 1862, Lincoln dismissed McClellan, and Pinkerton spent the rest of the war as a clerk. But he still continued to build his detective agency. By the close of the Civil War, Pinkerton's National Detective Agency was known for its motto, "We never sleep" and its logo, a single open eye, nicknamed "the Eye" by criminals and lawmen. Some say this is where the term

"private eye" came from. Others say the term refers to the letter "i" in "private investigator."

Pinkerton made rules about how his agents should behave. "The profession of the Detective is a high and honorable calling," he wrote. "He is an officer of justice and must himself be pure and above reproach." Though his agents did not always live up to the rules, Pinkerton himself tried to. He was known for not accepting bribes and for working hard on cases, even if it meant tracking an outlaw for years. This is the story of one famous group of outlaws that kept the Pinkertons busy for nearly 10 years.



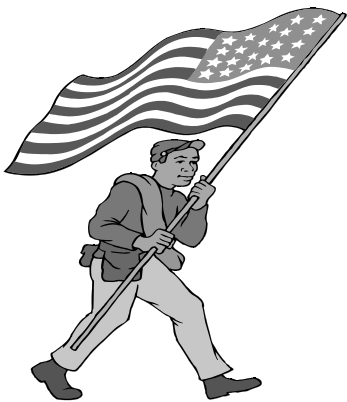
In February 1866, a bank robbery was committed in Liberty, Missouri. The outlaws came into town on horseback and left with about \$60,000. As they bolted down the dirt streets to get away, a 19-year-old bystander was killed. Over the next 18 months, there were three more robberies and three more deaths. With the identity of the robbers unknown, frightened bankers called in the Pinkertons.

More robberies and more deaths led the Pinkertons on many chases, but even after a year, they still did not know whom they were chasing. It took another year and a half and more bank robberies before the Pinkertons finally got a lucky break. While

robbing a bank and killing a cashier in Gallatin, Missouri, the outlaws lost a horse. It was identified as belonging to Frank and Jesse James.

The James brothers and their gang moved from county to county and state to state, always keeping a step ahead of the lawmen. When the sheriffs of one county would get too close, the gang would run across a state or county line and continue to rob banks, trains, and stagecoaches. Like today, the city police or county sheriffs could only make arrests in their own districts, or jurisdictions. The Pinkerton agents, however, were a private agency, so they could chase the James gang all over the country.

But the Pinkertons and their detectives weren't popular with many Missourians and Southerners, especially those with ties to the James gang. The Civil War had ended less than 10 years before. There were still tensions among citizens who had sided with the Union or the Confederacy. The James brothers had strong ties to the South and the Pinkertons to the North.



Though Missouri was a Union state, many Missourians were pro-slavery and fought for the Confederacy. They organized Confederate guerrilla bands. Both of the James brothers joined, Frank with William Quantrill's Raiders and Jesse with "Bloody" Bill Anderson's guerrilla band. While fighting with the Raiders, Frank met another set of brothers, the Youngers, who would become members of the James gang.

Another mark against the Pinkertons was their link to the railroads. After the Civil War, new railroad lines were laid across the country. The large railroad companies began charging higher prices to ship goods across the country, and this hurt small farmers. Many people, especially in rural areas, distrusted the railroad companies and thus also the Pinkertons.

In 1875, an event occurred that made the Pinkerton agents even less popular. Agents surrounded the James' house and threw an explosive through a window to force the brothers to come outside. In the explosion, Jesse and Frank's mother lost an arm and their 8-year-old brother was killed. But the outlaws were not at home. Many people thought it was wrong to bomb the house without knowing if the brothers were there. This, plus Pinkerton's link to the Union army and the railroad, did not sit well with the Jameses or many other people in Southern states.

The James brothers and their gang relied on family and friends for hide-outs. Those protecting the gang did not want to help the "Northerners" catch them. Many people viewed the James gang as heroes. They would not only help hide the gang, but would give lawmen wrong information to throw them off the path. Over the years, several Pinkerton detectives and many other lawmen lost their lives to the James gang. These men, and the friends and families of the James' victims, did not think of the gang as heroes.

The agency's constant chasing and harassing of the gang and their families eventually caused Jesse and Frank to take risks that led to Jesse's death. But it was not a Pinkerton agent who killed him. Bob Ford and his brother, Charlie, were members of the James gang. They double-crossed Jesse to collect a reward.

Working with the local sheriff, they set Jesse up. In April 1882, Bob Ford shot Jesse in his own house while he was straightening a picture on the wall. Several months later, Frank gave himself up.

The Pinkertons and their agents chased the James Gang, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, and many other well-known outlaws. Pinkerton agents, posing as outlaws, farm hands, rustlers, and businessmen, foiled many bank, train, and stagecoach robberies.

Compared to detectives today, the Pinkertons didn't have many resources. Photographs were few, and fingerprint records were almost unknown. Instead, Pinkerton and his agents had to make their own files, find eyewitnesses, and often use just their own wit and charm.

Pinkerton required agents to file regular reports with the head office in Chicago. These reports helped them gather clues to solve cases. They kept careful records of every suspect and convict they dealt with. They made lists of suspects' aliases (phony names), habits, friends, and places they were seen. The Pinkertons' files were probably the first national criminal "database."



Another method the Pinkerton detectives relied on for solving crimes was going undercover. Sometimes they posed as outlaws and joined gangs to catch criminals. One agent even disguised himself to look like a man an outlaw had killed. The agent frightened the killer by "haunting" him as the ghost of the dead man until he confessed.

Without computers, cars, telephones, or radios, Pinkerton agents of the Old West developed many crime-fighting methods still used today. The Pinkerton National Detective Agency served as a model for a future federal agency—the Federal Bureau of Investigation, better known as the FBI. Today, the Pinkerton Detective Agency is still providing private security, investigation, and surveillance in cities throughout the country.

Questions

1. How did Allan Pinkerton think detectives should behave?
2. In what ways did the aftermath of the Civil War affect the search for the James brothers and their gang?
3. What were three methods lawmen of the Old West used to solve crimes and catch outlaws?
4. Are any of these methods still used today? Give examples.