

SHOPLIFTING

OUTCOMES

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define shoplifting
- List some consequences of shoplifting to young people, storeowners and the community

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chalkboard/flip chart
- Chalk/markers
- Shoplifting Facts Teacher's Edition (one copy of this cut into different strips so that each "fact" is a different slip of paper.)

HANDOUT

Shoplifting: Who Shoplifts and Why?

PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON

- Write up the lesson objectives. Do not post them until the lesson calls for it. (If you have to write them on a chalkboard, cover them with a pull-down map or something else.)
- Copy the handout and prepare all materials.
- Take one copy of "Handout 1: Shoplifting Facts - Teacher's Edition" and cut it into different strips so that each "fact" is a different slip of paper.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE

A Community Resource Person would add credibility and interest to this lesson. Invite the owner of a store where teens are regular customers to be a resource person for this class. He or she can answer questions and explain shoplifting from a store owner's point of view. Send a copy of the lesson when confirming the date and location of the class. After he or she has received the lesson, discuss how you will work together to teach it.

SUMMARY

At the end of each lesson is a summary section. It is very important that the lesson

period be timed to allow sufficient time to complete the debrief (summary) with the students.

During this reflection time the students can discuss the information learned, clarify any concerns and analyze the skills that they have practiced. This is a critical step in the learning process and must not be neglected.

PART ONE: WHAT IS SHOPLIFTING? (30 minutes)

1

Divide students into groups of three to five people. Tell students that each group will be assigned a role. They should answer the question that they are given based upon the role that their group is assigned.

Half of the groups should be given the role of “store owner.” Give the group of “Store Owners” a sheet of flipchart paper and a marker. Ask them to label it “Store Owner’s Point of View” and then to list as many responses as they can come up with to the phrase: “As a store owner, it really bothers me when teens...”

The other half of the group should be given the role of “Teens.” Give the group of “Teens” a sheet of flipchart paper and a marker. Ask them to label it “Teen’s Point of View” and then to list as many responses as they can come up with to the phrase: “As a teen, it really bothers me when storeowners...”

2

Give the groups 5-10 minutes to discuss, brainstorm, and record their responses. Write the ending time on the board. While the students are working, circulate around the room to observe their discussions.

3

Have the groups post their Point of View pages and report on their discussion.

4

After all of the groups’ lists have been exhausted, explain to students that this lesson will focus on shoplifting.

5

Post the objectives and review them with the students. If a Community Resource Person has joined you for this lesson, introduce him or her now.

Ask students to come up with a definition of shoplifting.

Shoplifting is a form of larceny or theft. It is the crime of taking goods from a store without payment or intent to pay.

Ask students if they think it is shoplifting if a store worker takes something.

Employee theft is a form of theft related to shoplifting in which employees take things for themselves, allow their friends to take things, do not charge for an item, charge a customer an improperly reduced price, or abuse an employee discount.

6

Distribute one fact strip to each student. (The fact strips are cut from the “Teacher Edition: Shoplifting Facts” that can be found at the end of this lesson plan.)

If there are leftover fact strips, you may distribute more than one to each student. Tell students that the fact strips are to help them with the next activity.

Students should spend a few minutes reading the information on their fact strips. Then tell the students they have eight minutes to circulate around the room and teach their fact to one person at a time, until they have spoken to every person. The object is to share a fact and learn one from every other student. Write the ending time on the board. Give students a two-minute time warning.

When the students have finished circulating around the room, distribute “**Handout 1: Shoplifting - Who Shoplifts and Why**” that can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Ask students to take four minutes to complete as much of Handout 1 as possible. After four minutes, ask volunteers to share their answers.

PART TWO: THE COSTS OF SHOPLIFTING (40 minutes)

1

Tell students that they are going to work in groups to discuss some of the costs and consequences of shoplifting. They will brainstorm a list of the costs and consequences of shoplifting for their particular group and then write a story that illustrates these costs and consequences.

Divide students into four groups.

NOTE: If you have more than 20 students in the class, you should make more groups. Try to avoid groups with more than five students. If you need more than four groups, assign two groups to do the same assignment. (So, you may have two groups working on #1, two groups working on #2, etc.)

The group assignments are:

- Group 1 should focus on the costs of shoplifting to the individual who gets caught shoplifting.
- Group 2 should focus on the costs of shoplifting for young people in general.
- Group 3 should focus on the costs of shoplifting for the storeowners.
- Group 4 should focus on the costs of shoplifting for the community.

Tell students that they will present their stories to the rest of the class. Encourage students to be creative in their presentations.

Tell students they have 15 minutes to complete their two tasks, (brainstorming a list of costs and consequences and writing a story). Write the ending time on the chalkboard.

2

Circulate while students are working to answer questions. If a storeowner or merchant is assisting you teach this lesson, he or she should help group 3.

Below are sample lists of some possible costs and consequences. If any group is having trouble brainstorming, you may help them out with some suggestions from this list.

- Group 1 (the costs of shoplifting to the individual who gets caught shoplifting)

Examples: when salespeople or security officers catch shoplifter, they often call the police, who then arrest the suspects and take them to the police station; the case may be referred to juvenile court; everyone may find out about the arrest because investigators often interview the shoplifter's parents, neighbors, and teachers; even though juvenile court and police records are supposed to be confidential, often the information gets out.

- Group 2 (the costs of shoplifting for young people in general)

Examples: shoplifting results in higher prices for everyone; there may be fewer jobs available if storeowners lose money to shoplifters; teen shoplifting puts a strain on the relationship between teens and storeowners because storeowners become suspicious of all young people; people in the

community may have a negative impression of young people in general because of the incidents of teen shoplifting that they hear about.

- Group 3 (the costs of shoplifting for the storeowners)

Examples: Storeowners lose money every time an item is stolen; storeowners have to raise prices to compensate for the money they lose to shoplifters; raising prices may drive customers away; storeowners may have to spend additional money for special security devices to prevent shoplifting; the more time and money storeowners have to spend on security, the less time and money they have to devote to customer service and to improving their business; when a storeowner prosecutes a shoplifter, there are legal fees involved.

- Group 4 (the costs of shoplifting for the community)

Examples: storeowners may close stores in the neighborhood if they lose too much money to shoplifting; there are less jobs available when storeowners have to lay off workers because revenue is very low; potential customers will have to travel further away to get the things they need if neighborhood stores close; customers will have to pay higher prices because storeowners must raise them to compensate for the stolen merchandise or for security equipment or guards; there is the potential for racial tension.

3

When all of the groups have finished working, have them make their presentations.

After the group 1 (representing individuals who get caught) presents their story, ask:

- Do you know someone who has been caught shoplifting? (Unless it was you, please do not identify that person.)
- If so, how does his or her experience compare with the information we just heard in this story?

After the group 2 (representing young people in general) presents their story, ask:

- Have you seen any of these problems? If so, which ones?
- Do you think you have ever been treated suspiciously because of actions of other teenaged shoplifters? If so, how do your experiences compare with the experience we just heard in this story?

After the group 3 (representing store owners) presents their story, ask:

- Have you ever noticed these problems for store owners where you and your family shops? If so, how do those store owner's experiences compare to those we just heard in this story?

If a store owner or merchant is helping to teach this lesson, ask him or her

to discuss the impact of shoplifting on business.

After group 4 (representing the community) presents their story, ask:

- Have any stores in your neighborhood gone out of business? If so, how did it affect your community?

PART TWO: SUMMARY (10 minutes)

1

If a resource person has joined you for this lesson, ask him or her:

- Is shoplifting a problem for local storeowners? How?
- What are some of the most common ways the storeowners deal with the problem of shoplifting?

2

Ask students to pick one partner to work with who is sitting next to them. You will ask the partners to discuss the following questions. After each question, give students a few minutes to discuss their answers with their partners. Then move on to the next question.

- Describe two ways shoplifting affects people.
- What would you say to a friend who was pressuring you to shoplift?
- What would you do if you saw someone shoplifting?
- List one thing you learned in class today that surprised you.

3

Thank students and the Community Resource Person for their participation.

TEACHER'S NOTES

SHOPLIFTING FACTS

1. Who shoplifts?
Amateurs make up the largest number of people who shoplift - not professional thieves. Amateurs are "everyday" people who steal on impulse - because they see something that they want or simply for a thrill.
2. Who shoplifts?
Amateurs who tend to believe that they won't be caught or sent to jail.
3. Who shoplifts?
Most are customers who steal frequently from places where they regularly shop.
4. Who shoplifts?
Some are professional thieves who make their living by stealing and then selling the goods (but this is a much smaller group than the amateurs).
5. Who shoplifts?
Drug addicts who steal to support their habit.
6. Who shoplifts?
Desperate people who steal because they need food - but this group makes up only a very small number of shoplifters.
7. Who shoplifts?
Kleptomaniacs are a tiny minority of shoplifters. These people have a mental illness that makes it difficult for them to overcome their urge to steal.
8. *About 24% of apprehended shoplifters are between the ages of 13 and 17, even though this age group accounts for less than 10% of the overall U.S. population.*
9. *Shoplifters are caught 13 times more often than employees who steal.*

TEACHER'S NOTES, continued

10. *Employers lose more money to employee theft than they do to shoplifting. Thirty percent of business failures in the United States are due to shoplifting and employee theft.*

11. Why do people shoplift?
Many people want to see if they can get away with it.

12. Why do people shoplift?
"I've spent plenty of money in this store. What's wrong with getting a little back?"

13. Why do people shoplift?
"This is a big store; they can afford it."

14. Why do people shoplift?
They'll never miss this."

15. Why do people shoplift?
"Stores just write it off as a business expense."

16. Why do people shoplift?
"I don't have enough money."

17. Why do people shoplift?
"I just wanted to see if I could get away with it this once. I've never done it before."

18. Why do people shoplift?
"My friend pressured me and I wasn't determined enough to say no. I have trouble making my own decisions sometimes."

HANDOUT

SHOPLIFTING - WHO SHOPLIFTS AND WHY?

Based on your research today, who shoplifts?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What percentage of shoplifters who are caught are between the ages of 13 and 17? _____

Based on your research today, name four reasons people are likely to give when they are caught for shoplifting:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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