

Chapter 3

Topic 7 Secondary sources

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Activity: Research

How do newspapers report crime?

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Apply the use of content analysis to the study of a sociological topic.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of using content analysis to analyse newspapers.

Working in small groups, carry out a content analysis of newspapers to find out how crime is portrayed.

1. First you need to devise some appropriate categories, such as types of crime, age and gender of defendants etc.
2. Obtain copies of several days' editions of the same newspaper. Each group should choose a different newspaper for the same days.
3. Now carry out your analysis following the three steps outlined by Gill in your textbook.
4. When you have completed your content analysis, answer the following questions:
 - a. Did all members of your group agree on the categories you should use and on where to place each crime, defendant etc?
 - b. Were there differences in how different papers portrayed crime? If so what were they?