Chapter 2
Topic 1 Functionalist, strain and subcultural theories
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Activity: Research
The positive functions of crime

Learning objectives
At the end of this activity you should be able to:
- Identify the positive functions of crime and deviance according to functionalists.
- Use examples of crimes to illustrate these functions.
- Evaluate the usefulness of functionalist views of the positive functions of crime.

Work in groups of four.

Your task is to analyse some media crime reports in order to identify the positive functions of these crimes as reported.

1. Read pages 71-72 of your textbook on the positive functions of crime and summarise the five positive functions: boundary maintenance, adaptation and change, safety valve, warning, licensed deviance.

2. Using newspapers, the Internet or TV news, collect a range of media crime and/or deviance stories that could show each of the positive functions of crime and deviance.

3. For each story, explain how it shows one or more positive functions of crime and/or deviance.

4. Share with the rest of the class one of the stories you have found and your analysis of its functions.

5. Write a paragraph to evaluate the usefulness of the functionalist view of the positive functions of crime using your class examples to illustrate your argument.