

## Research and Discussion: 1

### Quick Quiz

This is a quick quiz with short answers. It serves as a first approach to the topic of Criminal damage.

For your information we have mapped this quiz to the English, PSHEE and Citizenship Curriculums.

English	Speaking and Listening	Group discussion and interaction (3): 9c
PSHEE	Knowledge, skills and understanding	4c, g
Citizenship	Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens	1a
	Developing skills of enquiry and communication	2a, b

We would recommend that this is carried out as a whole class or group activity. After you've explained to your group that you are going to explore the issue of Criminal damage run through these questions and answers with them. Don't discuss the topic very much with them beforehand, just enough to serve as an introduction to the quiz. If you are running the quiz in an informal setting, or you would like to relax the classroom situation, let your students work in pairs.

Running through the answers gives an opportunity for some general discussion about the topic of criminal damage. There is a general point here about responsible behaviour, or being responsible for your own behaviour.

The answers below are as accurate as possible but it's not possible to be 100% cut and dried in every case. The law says that reckless or deliberate damage to property are crimes. But it's up to officers, prosecutors, magistrates and judges to interpret the law in each and every individual case. Some of the answers below will give a flavour of this.

### Questions and Answers

#### Which of these do you think is Criminal damage?

##### 1. Throwing a snowball at a car.

If the snowball does no permanent damage, it would be unlikely to be classed as criminal damage.

**2. Tagging.**

If you don't have permission, it's criminal damage.

**3. Spraying a graffiti picture on wall you own.**

It's not illegal to create a piece of graffiti if you have permission from the owner of the property.

**4. Keying a car.**

Clearly, this is criminal damage.

**5. Smashing windows on an abandoned car.**

And so is this, even if the car is already a wreck – unless it belongs to you.

**6. Writing messages in lipstick on a wedding car.**

Not criminal damage, because it can be easily removed, and you have no bad intent.

**7. Emptying a tin of baked beans on a car.**

No, this isn't criminal damage – the baked beans can be easily removed. However you would certainly get into trouble.

**8. Deliberately ripping a bus seat.**

Deliberately damaging public property is criminal damage.

**9. Drawing in chalk on a pavement.**

Chalk on a pavement isn't criminal damage, because it isn't permanent. But it might be considered criminal damage if it were offensive, and you kept renewing it.

**10. Smashing a lock to get into a house to steal.**

Yes, this is criminal damage. However, you would be charged with the more serious offence of burglary.

**11. Setting fire to a rubbish bin.**

Arson (setting fires) comes under the Criminal Damage Act 1971.

**12. Spraying graffiti in or on a derelict factory.**

It doesn't matter how wrecked the factory is, this is still criminal damage. You should stress here, too, that clambering about on roofs of buildings or in and around derelict buildings is dangerous - young people have died as a result of accidents doing this. A quick Internet search will find examples.

**13. Scratching your name on a school desk.**

Damage to a school is still criminal damage, and the police could be involved.

**14. Wrecking a display in a school.**

Damage to a display is also considered criminal damage.

**15. Breaking a fence to get in somewhere.**

Breaking a fence, or even breaking it some more when it's already broken, can be criminal damage.

**16. Denting a teacher's car which is parked in the school playground by accidentally kicking a ball against it.**

This would depend of the circumstances. If it were truly an unforeseen accident then it's unlikely to be seen as criminal damage. However, if the footballers had been repeatedly told not to play in that particular area, or if the area were designated as an area for teachers' cars and therefore no ball games or not a pupils' recreation area, then the footballers' behaviour could well be deemed reckless and the resulting dent in the car criminal damage.

**17. Telling an old man, who has told you off for making too much noise, that you'll smash his car up.**

You can be prosecuted for threatening to cause criminal damage, and for going equipped to cause it.

**18. Winding up little children's swings in a playground so they can't reach them.**

This may be a nasty thing to do, but it's not criminal damage. If you do this and the swings break, though, it could well be criminal damage – it's damage to public property.

**19. Skateboarding with your mates and crashing into someone's parked car and scratching the paint.**

You can be prosecuted for causing criminal damage, if it can be proved that you were doing something reckless that led to the damage. Skateboarding in an area where you are likely to damage property would be considered reckless.

**20. Playing on a seesaw meant for little children and it breaks.**

Although you didn't mean to break the seesaw your behaviour would be likely to be considered reckless because the seesaw is not designed for someone of your age and size; this means this is likely to be a case of criminal damage.

**21. Painting an anti-war slogan on a tank during a demonstration.**

It doesn't matter if you cause criminal damage for what you think is a good cause: you can still be prosecuted for breaking the law.

**22. Breaking branches off a tree in a park.**

This is criminal damage – it's irrelevant that the tree will grow another branch. Another similar type of behaviour (and quite common) is when young, newly planted trees are broken down completely so they won't grow. You could discuss this aspect with your group.

**23. Writing and leaving messages on bus or train windows.**

If there is any significant cost involved in removing the writing or message this is definitely criminal damage.

**24. Throwing eggs at a building on Halloween.**

This is criminal damage because the egg stains (it's also an unpleasant thing to do). The fact that it's Halloween makes no difference at all.

**25. Painting out letters on street names, or changing street names.**

This is certainly criminal damage - whatever your motivation, serious or jokey.