

ENGAGING SOCIOLOGY

Who Is Deviant?

Please jot down your answers to the following self-test questions. There is no need to share your responses with others.

Have you ever engaged in any of the following acts?

- ☐ stolen anything, even if its value was under \$10
- ☐ used an illegal drug
- ☐ misused a prescription drug
- ☐ used tobacco prior to age 18
- ☐ drank alcohol prior to age 21
- ☐ engaged in a fistfight
- ☐ carried a concealed knife or gun without a permit
- ☐ used a car without the owner's permission
- ☐ driven a car after drinking alcohol beyond the legal limit
- ☐ forced someone to have sexual relations against her or his will
- ☐ offered sex for money
- ☐ damaged property worth more than \$10
- ☐ been truant from school
- ☐ arrived home after your curfew

- ☐ accepted or transported property that you had reason to believe might be stolen
- ☐ taken a towel from a hotel room after renting the room for a night

All of these are delinquent acts (violations of legal standards), and most young people are guilty of at least one infraction. However, few teenagers are given the label of *delinquent*. If you answered yes to any of the preceding questions, you committed a crime in many states. Your penalty or sanction for the infraction could range from a stiff fine to several years in prison—if you got caught!

* * * * *

Engaging With Sociology

1. Do you think of yourself as deviant? Why, or why not?
2. Are deviants only those who get caught? For instance, if someone steals your car but avoids being caught, is he or she a deviant?
3. Who is considered deviant—and by whom?