

VANDALISM

OUTCOMES

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

- Define vandalism
- Consider what makes people commit acts of vandalism
- Examine the impact on the community
- Discuss strategies to prevent vandalism

MATERIALS

- Chalkboard/flip chart
- Chalk/markers

HANDOUT

Solutions to Vandalism

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 handouts and prepare all materials.
- Using the chalkboard, flipchart or transparency, write up the definition of vandalism. Keep it covered, if possible.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE

Invite an official from your local school, your city or a neighborhood association where property has been damaged who can discuss the costs of vandalism. The discussion could include what the school or city is unable to purchase because of the costs of vandalism (the issue of opportunity cost). Send a copy of the lesson when you confirm the date, time 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 to time the lesson period 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 DO YOU THINK? (20 minutes)



Write the following phrase on the chalkboard or flip chart: "How would you feel if someone ..."

Ask students to think about their responses to the following situations without answering the questions aloud. (Note: Pause for a moment of quiet thought between each scenario.)

- Broke the basketball backstop at the playground where you shoot hoops?
- Kicked your portable radio and broke it?
- Slashed the tires of your bicycle or your new car?
- Spray-painted obscenities on your house?
- Tore up your plat in the community garden?
- Tore up your mother's favorite rose bush?
- ... and then said it was a joke?

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Get as many volunteers as possible to share their feelings on the scenarios. Ask a student to volunteer to record student comments on the chalkboard or flip chart. The goal is to get students thinking and talking about vandalism in personal - not abstract - terms.

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Tell students that vandalism is sometimes called a victimless crime. A victimless crime is an illegal act that does not specifically harm an individual.

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Ask students:

- Do you think there are victims in these crimes?
- How does someone who is touched by vandalism feel?



Tell students:

The idea that vandalism is a victimless crime ignores the anger, fear and outrage that people feel when their property is deliberately destroyed for no apparent reason. It also ignores the enormous costs involved in repair, clean up and replacement of vandalized property, which is estimated to cost millions of dollars each year.

Ask students:

Who pays for the damage done by vandals?

(Property owners, insurance companies, who then might have to raise rates, taxpayers who have to pay for damage done to public property.)



Ask students to come up with a definition of vandalism. Record the definition on the chalkboard or flip chart for use in the next section.

Vandalism is the deliberate destruction of property belonging to another person.

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

PART TWO: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? (10 minutes)



Ask: Have you ever doodled in a meeting, class, etc? Why did you do it? Do you think the same thing motivates people to vandalize? Why or why not?

Have students work in small groups of three to five to brainstorm why they think so many young people are sometimes involved in vandalism.

Possible answers might include: for fun, on a dare, out of boredom, as an outlet for creativity, to put your identity where people will see it and notice you, to rebel against those you don' think like you or care about you, etc.



Have each group report their list to the large group.





Ask students to report on some examples of vandalism that they have witnessed personally or that they have seen around their school or community. After hearing reports of examples of vandalism from students, ask:

- How did you feel when you saw these things?
- How might the victims have felt when they saw them?
- Do you think the people doing the acts thought about the victims? Why or why not?
- Is vandalism a problem in your school or community?

PART THREE: LET'S FIND A SOLUTION (25 minutes)



Have students return to their small groups. Tell them that they have been asked to serve as special advisors. They must brainstorm a variety of solutions to the problem of vandalism in their community and then evaluate which solutions will be most effective.

NOTE: If a group of students is having particular difficulty thinking of responses, you may want to give them "**Handout 1: Solutions to Vandalism**" which can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

If you do this, ask the students to discuss each proposal and then decide which strategies would be most effective.

Give groups ten to 15 minutes to work. After they have finished, give each group a chance to report their ideas and explanations.



Give groups ten to fifteen minutes to work. After they have finished, give each group a chance to report their ideas. Compile a list of all of the best solutions.

PART FOUR: SUMMARY (5 minutes)



Ask students:



- How can we work to implement these solutions that we have come up with?
- Will they work to reduce the incidence of vandalism in our community?
- Who else would be interested in working with us on the problem of vandalism?

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Thank students and the Community Resource Person for their participation.



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HANDOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO VANDALISM

✓	Don t destroy	or deface	someone	else's	property	or publ	ic places.

- ✓ Report any acts of vandalism that you see.
- ✓ Volunteer to help clean up a park, vacant lot, or school campus. Plant trees, bushes, and flowers.
- ✓ Clean graffiti off the walls in schools, libraries, or other public facilities. Make it a group project.
- ✓ Work with police and school officials to start a hotline to report vandalism.
- ✓ Work with your local "Neighborhood Watch" group to start a program.
- ✓ When graffiti writers are caught, they should be sentenced to remove it.
- ✓ Involve young street artists in city beautification projects.
- ✓ Give street artists a place to publicly display their (appropriate) work.

✓	Our group's ideas:	



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