



World Words

Double Cross

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Student's Activities

Pre-listening Activity 1

A.

UK is knife crime capital

Another teenage schoolboy was stabbed to death this weekend as Britain was named as one of the knife crime blackspots of the developed world.

A 14-year-old from Leytonstone, east London, was killed in a fight involving 12 to 15 youths. He is the sixth teenager to die in a knife attack within the last month.

The tragedy occurred as a new study of 28 countries found 13% of violent crime victims in England and Wales had been stabbed or threatened with a knife. Scotland came close behind. Only Spain and Portugal had worse figures, while countries such as Italy, the United States, Estonia and Mexico all had less knife crime.

About 2,000 people aged 16 and over in each of 28 countries in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand were asked about their experience of violent crime over the past five years in the study by John van Kesteren, a law professor at Tilburg University in Holland.



Knife crime getting worse in UK

Knife crime among young people is a growing problem in the UK according to a special BBC programme on Sunday.

In the last year more than 20 teenagers have died as a result of knife attacks in the UK - that's almost one teenager every two weeks.

Recently, a 14-year-old died after he was stabbed by another pupil at a school in Lincolnshire.

It's illegal to have knives at school and it's important to remember that deaths like this are very rare.

But according to police more and more of young people are carrying knives - sometimes with terrible consequences.

Another teenager, from Scotland was involved in a fight with a friend and ended up being slashed with a knife. She told us she was cut on the cheek and forehead and needed to have 93 stitches.

She is one of a growing number of children who are victims of knife crime - often for the most trivial reasons.

It's a problem affecting the whole country, in cities and in the countryside, and many feel it's getting worse.

1. Why do (young) people carry knives with them?
2. Why do you think the problem is increasing?
3. Carrying a knife is illegal. What other illegal activities might cause someone to carry a knife?

B. Have a look at the following quotations from the story. Which, in your opinion, were said by someone in favour of carrying a knife and which by someone who was against carrying a knife?

'D'you want some protection'

What's with all the armour?

Are you off your nut?

The streets aren't safe.

Tossers like you can't set foot outside your house without tooling up.

Carry one of these and no one will mess with you

No frickin' way

I have knives for every occasion

Add lines of your own and rearrange the above to make a dialogue (you can miss out a maximum of two lines!). When you have created the dialogue, imagine the scene: what had happened before and what is going to happen next.

Pre-listening Activity 2

1. You will hear the author talking about the extract and some students discussing their reaction to it. Read through the following comments which are made in the broadcast and decide first who was speaking - the author or the students - and then decide if they were discussing the **influence** of people of the same age, what special **language** is used, who the **characters** are or are they discussing **weapons**? Then listen to the broadcast to check your answers.

- a. "When I write....I try to use teenage-speak, not too much because I don't want it to get dated."
- b. "In our country we don't have really strong gangs. I think that in developed countries there are more gangs and a higher crime rate."
- c. "I can describe Dan as a naughty boy, wearing dirty clothes - maybe just a gangster!"
- d. "When the guy refuses to take one of the knives he says he's got something better or stronger, which obviously should be a gun."
- e. "When I lived in inner city London I came across people like them who were into dodgy deals and, of course, things I've seen on TV or read in newspapers - they all inspired me as well."
- f. "I do try to make the dialogue authentic to the character who is speaking."
- g. "Dan sees himself as a survivor. He does what he needs to do to survive and make a living- And because he doesn't have Toby's intelligence he can't get a regular job so the only way he can make a lining is to do things that are a bit dodgy."
- h. "I could tell you what is in (that second box), but I'm not going to. You're going to have to read the book, I'm afraid!"
- i. "...he's got his jeans hanging down, his sneakers, he's got a lot of jewellery, obviously robbed from an old lady or a rich man ...he's got a tattoo on his arm."
- j. "In this particular book I did want to discuss knife crime and gang culture and that fact that when you become a teenager, peer pressure is always going to be stronger than the pressure you get from your parents."

	influence	language	characters	weapons
The author				
The students				



After Listening

A. At the end of the extract you have just heard and read, Tobey, the narrator, says

Walk away. Walk away now, I told myself.

The answer? Not without my money. I was already thinking of it as *my* money.

In small groups discuss if the inner voice or the money won. Did he walk away or did he stay? Think about both options and what might have happened in either case.

Think about the title of the story: '*Double Cross*'. Speculate on the story line after the event described in the extract.

B. Language work

Much of the extract is in direct speech (that is, it is a dialogue). Why is this?

Change this short passage from direct to indirect speech. What happens to the effect that the piece has on the reader.

'Dan, are you off your nut?' I asked.

'I have to arm myself. The streets aren't safe,' he told me.

'Yeah, 'cause tossers like you can't set foot outside your house without tooling up,' I replied. 'Godsake! Why d'you need so many knives? You've only got two hands.'

'Carry one of these and no one will mess with you. D'you want one or not?' asked Dan, peeved at my lack of appreciation for his hardware.

C Discussion

If you were Toby, wanting money to buy something for your girlfriends birthday, what do you think your options would be?