



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2007 Volume II: Across the Curriculum with Detective Fiction for Young People and Adults

Police Investigative Challenges: To Snitch or Not to Snitch, That is the Unanswered Question

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.02.09, published September 2007

by Christine Freeman Shaub

Police investigations are challenged without a cooperative witness. To snitch or not to snitch is a question the witness to a criminal offense must answer. This unit was devised so students could learn more about the challenges of solving crimes when there is an uncooperative witness. Those persons who do come forth may be "tagged" as a snitch. This is an ethical dilemma for students if ever faced with such a situation.

Through crime fiction, students will look at the meticulous work of crime detectives. When a witness withholds information, the detective must utilize clues from the crime scene, and beyond, to put together pieces of the puzzle. Using crime fiction to teach about witness intimidation will give the students an opportunity to walk in the shoes of the detective and better understand investigative challenges.

Students will create a mystery skit, a mock trial, a new courtroom design, and an informative witness brochure. Students will have a better understanding of police procedures in relation to solving crime, witness intimidation, witness protection, police corruption, as well as the social and cultural implications of the snitching phenomenon.

(Developed for Introduction to Criminal Justice and Legal Administrative Assistant Career Program, grades 9-12; recommended for grades 8-12)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use