

Discussion Questions

1. List five acts that were once considered deviant but are now considered acceptable or even courageous. Have you ever committed a deviant act because you believed it was the moral thing to do? If yes, please explain why. If not, in what sort of situation might you consider carrying out a deviant act?
2. Have you ever been labeled deviant? Why or why not? How does your social class, level of education, gender, race or ethnicity, and nation of origin impact the chances you will be considered deviant in your country?
3. Which of the following theories of deviance described in the chapter—rational choice, differential association, labeling theory, anomie and social disorganization, strain theory, and conflict theory—best explain the increase in cheating among college students? Why?
4. Why is occupational crime not given as much attention as violent crime? What are some examples of occupational crimes that hurt millions of Americans every day? What would you suggest policy makers do to curb these crimes?
5. How do conflict theorists explain the demographic makeup of prisoners in the U.S. prison system? Do you agree with their explanation? Why or why not?
6. How can social capital help keep people out of prison and help former prisoners avoid returning to prison? How will your social capital help you conform (or not) to the norms of society?