



# Heritage crime spotting activity

## Spotting heritage crime

### Main learning points



- Heritage crime is any criminal activity which causes damage to what we call historic assets such as buildings and objects of historical significance. This includes theft.
- There are many types of heritage crime; some are more destructive than others.
- To reduce or stop heritage crime, there needs to be more awareness of its impact.

### Activities:



#### Identifying heritage crime

Participants examine the illustration and decide whether any crimes or heritage crimes are being committed, and if there are examples which aren't crimes but wouldn't be good at a historic site.

Groups could write or draw their answers on the illustration.



#### Impacts of heritage crime

Participants list any effects heritage crime can have on the sites and the public.

Group(s) rank the crimes in order of seriousness or impact to the historic environment from most to least, justifying their answers.

Groups could compare and debate their answers.



#### Protection against heritage crime

Participants discuss ideas for preventing heritage crime.

The **activity explanations** (p4-6) give follow up information and possible answers.

### Resources required



- Printed copy of the **fictional historical place illustration** (p2) for each group

#### Introduction: What is heritage crime?

Discuss the definition of heritage crime and examples of what heritage assets are.







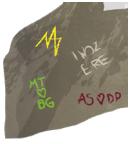



# Fictional historic place



## Activity: Spotting heritage crime

- 1 Look at the illustration of a fictional historic place (p2).
  - ? Are any **crimes** being committed?
  - ? If so, are any **heritage crimes**, which could cause damage or harm?
  - ? Are there any examples which are **not crimes**, but might negatively affect visitors or the historic place?
  
- 2 What effects or impacts do you think heritage crime can have on historic places or the public?
  
- 3 Discuss and decide which examples of heritage crimes would have the most serious impact. List them in order from most serious to least serious.
  - ? What are your reasons for your choices?
  
- 4 What do **you** think can be done to protect against heritage crime?

## Activity explanation: Identifying heritage crime

Example	Verdict:	Explanation
<p><b>Metal detection</b></p> 		<p>When metal detectorists find something, they dig to see what it is. However, digging holes can disturb evidence from the protected historic environment and is what we call a 'destructive process.' Valuable objects are also removed so can't be studied and shared.</p> <p><b>The person using the metal detector is outside the castle fence, but the land could still be protected by law. So it is highly likely that this is a heritage crime, unless permission has been given.</b></p>
<p><b>Lighting a fire</b></p> 		<p>Lighting a fire in protected areas is a heritage crime. Both historic sites and wildlife can suffer damage. Fires can quickly become out of control, especially if flammable substances are used.</p> <p><b>The people around the fire are not just damaging the castle and grounds but may be putting themselves in danger.</b></p>
<p><b>Pitching a tent</b></p> 		<p>Pitching a tent on a historic site involves driving objects like tent pegs into the ground. This potentially damages any archaeology underneath, so is illegal.</p> <p><b>The tent in the image has tent pegs, so a heritage crime is being committed.</b></p>
<p><b>Graffiti</b></p> 		<p>Graffiti is a crime. It can cause permanent damage to buildings and can be expensive and time-consuming to remove.</p> <p><b>The graffiti writing on the castle walls is also a heritage crime.</b></p>
<p><b>Theft</b></p> 		<p>Theft is a general crime, but stealing historic objects is also a heritage crime.</p> <p><b>The person removing the crown from the museum is committing a heritage crime.</b></p>

## Activity explanation continued

Example	Verdict:	Explanation
<p><b>Climbing on historic remains or scaffolding</b></p> 		<p>Accessing private property to climb on scaffolding would be a criminal offence, especially if damage was done.</p> <p>Climbing may also result in serious injury or death if the person fell or something fell on someone below.</p> <p>Scaffolding could be damaged, making it dangerous for those working on it. This costs time and money and disrupts work.</p> <p><b>The person climbing on the scaffolding has damaged the castle by causing the large corner stone above them to fall. This would be a heritage crime.</b></p>
<p><b>Vandalism</b></p> 		<p>Vandalism of the castle itself, or of a protected area around the sign, would be a heritage crime.</p> <p><b>The vandalism in the illustration is of the sign, therefore it is a crime.</b></p>
<p><b>Dog fouling</b></p> 		<p>It's a crime to not pick up your dog's waste.</p> <p><b>The person walking the dog in the image is committing a crime, but not a heritage-specific one.</b></p>
<p><b>Litter</b></p> 		<p>It is a crime to drop or leave litter. This is more of a general crime rather than a heritage specific one and doesn't usually damage sites.</p> <p><b>The people who left the litter were committing a crime.</b></p>
<p><b>Climbing trees</b></p> 		<p>Climbing trees is not usually a crime unless someone was trespassing on private property to reach them.</p> <p>However, the trees at historic sites may also be protected assets and any damage to them would be a heritage crime.</p> <p><b>The person climbing the tree might be committing a heritage crime.</b></p>

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