

Interview and Interrogation

Getting a suspect or witness to talk about crime is not always as simple as asking the right questions. Modern law enforcement is skilled in the art of interrogation, an interviewing process that succeeds through a study of human psychology. Most people are familiar with the good cop/bad cop routine. The idea is that interviewees are more likely to talk to someone they perceive as their protector, the "good cop." Maximization is another interrogation technique. With maximization, fear is used to elicit a response. The law enforcement officer details all the bad things that will happen to the interviewee if this case is brought to court.

Further Discussion Detectives will often begin an interrogation with informal talk. They do this to put the interviewee at ease and to observe behavior. It is believed that when people remember something (tell the truth) their eyes move to the right. But when they are thinking about a question (making up an answer) their eyes move to the left. If you were questioned about a crime, do you think your eyes would give you away?

Activity: Role Playing Divide the class into pairs. Students who play the suspects should think of something they did or did not do, and write that "crime" on a slip of paper. It is the job of the student interrogators to assess whether the suspect is guilty of the crime based on eye movement and other cues in response to questions. Interrogators may want to soften interviewees by first asking a series of unrelated questions.