

## What is Deviance Activity

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Prepared by Prof. Ann Meier

1. Who here has ever been deviant (show of hands)? We all have in some form.
2. Take 2-3 minutes to write down acts (playing baseball) or attributes (being a teacher) that you consider to be “deviant”. Try to think of personal examples (e.g., about you or someone you know). Keep them short.
3. Ask students to choose one from their list. Ask each student (or 20-25) to state their act or attribute and I will write them on the board (numbered).
4. Have each student rate each item using the following scale – overhead (write the number next to the item):

Not deviant at all = 1  
Not so deviant = 2  
Neutral = 3  
Somewhat deviant = 4  
Very deviant = 5

After each item is rated, ask the students to choose the most deviant and least deviant acts or attribute on the list. (Place a star by each item on the board. Notice variation.)

5. General Questions: What criteria did you use to make your decision? How do we know when an act or attribute is deviant?

Move into identifying sanctions (Positive and Negative; Informal and Formal) associated with each act/attribute listed. Mechanisms of social control.

Variation by time and place

Offer additional examples from the “What is Deviance?” handout.

### *Concepts to consider*

Conformity  
Social Control  
Norms – Folkways and Mores  
Crime  
Secret Deviants  
Theories of Deviance

**Rate each item using the following scale:**

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**Not so deviant = 2**

**Neutral = 3**

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**Very deviant = 5**