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Activity: Research

The Innocence Project

Learning objective

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- describe the work of Innocence projects and how they deal with miscarriages of justice.

- A. The clip gives information on an Innocence Project in America. The aim of the project is to help get justice for those who have suffered a miscarriage of justice.

Using the link, answer questions 1 to 9 below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPD3BhNdXFE>

1. Who is Barry Scheck?
2. Describe the case in 1988 where Scheck tried to use DNA testing to prove the defendant innocent.
3. What did Scheck learn from the scientist and adviser he worked with while he was investigating the possibility of using DNA evidence?
4. According to Scheck, why would DNA be transformative in the justice system?
5. How does the Innocence Project decide which cases to take up?
6. Briefly describe the following types of DNA testing:
 - a. Restriction fragment linked polymorphism tests
 - b. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)
 - c. Short tandem repeats
 - d. Y testing
 - e. Mitochondrial testing
7. What is the advantage of having a range of DNA tests available?
8. What is touch DNA?
9. How do all these techniques help the Innocence Project?

- B. An example of an innocence project in the UK is one run by Cardiff University. Use the article in the link to complete 1 to 10 below.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/09/dwaine-george-murder-conviction-overturned-cardiff-university-innocence-project>

1. What was Dwaine George jailed for?
2. How many years did he serve in prison?
3. What happened to the victim in this case?
4. What evidence did the prosecution use to prove George was involved in the killing?
5. What was the current appeal focused on?
6. What were the new guidelines introduced in 2006?

7. What would the judge have suggested if the new guidelines had been in place?
8. What is the hope of Professor Julie Price in relation to the criminal justice system?
9. What did the Innocence project contribute to the overturning of the verdict?
10. What has been the impact for Dwaine George?