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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics



Teenage Victims

A National Crime Survey Report

128129^{cs}

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(Revised April 1991)

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Teenage Victims

A National Crime Survey Report

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Availability of data sets

Data utilized in this report are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, 800-999-0960. The data sets are archived as the National Crime Survey: national sample, 1973-1983 (complete sample) (ICPSR 7635); national sample, 1973-1983 (incident-level file) (ICPSR 7635); and national sample, 1979-1988 (revised questionnaire) (ICPSR 8608).

Foreword

In updating the 1986 edition of this report, the Bureau of Justice Statistics acknowledges the Nation's concern for the risk of criminal victimization faced by our youth. The National Crime Survey (NCS) twice a year interviews every household member age 12 or older in a national sample of about 50,000 households. The interviews from 1985 through 1988 accounted for an estimated 1.9 million violent victimizations sustained by 28.1 million teenagers during each year.

This edition makes clear that teenagers are more vulnerable than adults to both violent and property crime. The characteristics that are identified with greater or less risk among adults — factors like the victims' sex, race, and location of residence — have similar associations for teenagers. Readers can gain a better understanding of how crimes experienced by teenagers are reported to law enforcement authorities and other persons, such as school officials. The data on injuries, weapons, and the characteristics of the offenders shed light on the nature of violent crimes that youth experience.

We anticipate that criminal justice practitioners, policymakers, and all others interested in the important issue of crimes against juveniles will find this analysis to be of lasting value.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D.
Director

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Introduction

From 1985 to 1988, persons age 12 to 19 were victims of 1.9 million violent crimes and 3.3 million crimes of theft annually. Teenagers were much more likely than adults to be victims of crimes of violence. On average, every 1,000 teenagers experienced 67 violent crimes each year, compared to 26 for every 1,000 adults age 20 or older.

- Teenagers were twice as likely as adults to experience crimes of theft. For crimes of theft, the teenage rate was 118 per 1,000; the adult rate, 62.

- Older teenagers, who this report considers as those age 16 to 19, had higher victimization rates than did younger teens (age 12 to 15) for crimes of violence and theft. Persons in the two age groups, however, were equally likely to be victims of robbery and simple assault.

- As did the adult population, certain groups of teenagers had a higher risk of crimes of violence and theft than did others. Teenage males had higher violent crime victimization rates than teenage females, and teenagers living in central cities were more likely to experience a violent crime than were their counterparts in the suburbs or nonmetropolitan areas.

- Black teens were 3 to 5 times more likely than white teens to be murder victims. They were also more likely than white teens to be victims of robbery or aggravated assault.

- Although young teenage victims were less likely than adult victims to experience violent crimes with serious characteristics or outcomes, violent crimes against older teens and those against adults tended to be similar in severity. Similar proportions of older teenage and adult victims faced armed offenders, but victims age 12 to 15 were less likely than adults to be victimized by an armed offender.

- Violent crimes against teenagers were more likely than crimes against adults to involve victims and offenders of the same sex, race, or age. Younger and older teenage victims were more likely than adult victims to report that the offender was a casual acquaintance.

- Crimes of violence and theft against younger teenagers were much less likely than crimes against adults to be reported to the police. Many of these crimes not made known to the police were reported to other authority figures.

- About half of all violent crimes against teenagers age 12 to 19 occurred in school buildings, on school property, or on the street. Street crimes were 3 times more likely than crimes in school buildings to have been committed by an offender with a weapon (37% versus 12%). In other respects, however, street crimes and crimes in school were similar in severity.

- This report presents information on crimes of violence and theft collected by the National Crime Survey (NCS) for 1985 to 1988. The NCS obtains information about crimes, including those not reported to the police, from individuals age 12 or older in a nationally representative sample of households. This report contains

data on personal crimes of violence and theft. Violent crimes measured by the NCS are rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Personal thefts include larcenies with contact (purse snatching and pocket picking) and larcenies without direct contact between victim and offender. Data on homicides were obtained from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), collected by the FBI.

Victimization rates

- Both younger and older teenagers were much more likely to be violent crime victims than were adults (table 1). From 1985 through 1988, older teenagers were almost 3 times more likely than adults to experience a violent crime, and younger adolescents were more than twice as likely as were adults. For every 1,000 adolescents age 12 to 15, there were 62 violent crimes annually, compared to 72 violent crimes for every 1,000 teens age 16 to 19 and 26 for every 1,000 adults.

Table 1. Average annual victimization rates and number of victimizations, by age of victim and type of crime, 1985-88

Type of crime	Age of victim		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Victimization rate			
Crimes of violence	61.6	72.4	26.0
Rape	.9	2.3	.6
Robbery	9.2	10.0	4.8
Aggravated assault	13.1	22.2	7.2
Simple assault	38.3	37.9	13.4
Crimes of theft	113.6	122.5	62.4
Personal larceny			
With contact	3.3	3.0	2.6
Without contact	110.3	119.5	59.8
Number of victimizations			
Crimes of violence*	834,623	1,056,961	4,383,799
Rape	11,800	32,884	101,501
Robbery	125,159	146,622	802,978
Aggravated assault	177,916	324,344	1,217,205
Simple assault	519,748	553,111	2,262,116
Crimes of theft	1,540,112	1,788,546	10,522,143
Personal larceny			
With contact	44,516	44,500	433,951
Without contact	1,495,597	1,744,046	10,088,192
Number of persons in age group	13,554,626	14,594,898	168,699,541

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. The victimization rate is the annual average of the number of victimizations for 1985-88 per 1,000 persons in each age group.

*Annual average for 1985-88.

- The risks of experiencing specific types of violent crime were much higher for teenagers than for adults. Younger and older teenagers were twice as likely as adults to experience a robbery (9.2 and 10.0 versus 4.8 per 1,000). Older teenagers were 3 times as likely as adults to be a victim of an aggravated or a simple assault. Although younger teenagers were less likely than older ones to experience an aggravated assault, they were still twice as likely as adults to fall victim to this crime and 3 times as likely as adults to experience a simple assault.

- Teenagers in both age groups were about twice as likely as adults to experience personal larcenies (thefts) without contact. Larceny victimization rates were 110 per 1,000 younger adolescents, 119 per 1,000 older teenagers, and 60 per 1,000 adults. Teenagers and adults had similar rates for personal larceny with contact.

- The percentage of crimes against teenagers is much higher than the proportion of adolescents in the population, reflecting their greater risk of crime. Teenagers age 12 to 19 experienced 1.9 million violent crimes and 3.3 million crimes of theft annually from 1985 to 1988. These totals represented 30% of all violent crimes and 24% of all crimes of theft, even though teenagers constituted only 14% of the population age 12 or older. Thirty-two percent of all simple assaults, 31% of all rapes, 29% of all aggravated assaults, and 25% of all robberies were committed against teenagers.

- Older teens were more likely than younger ones to be victims of rape, aggravated assault, and personal larceny without contact. The two groups of teenagers had similar victimization rates for robbery, simple assault, and personal larceny with contact.

- The NCS has shown that certain groups — specifically males, blacks, and central city residents — have higher victimization rates than others. Adolescents in these risk groups were generally more likely than other teenagers to be violent crime victims.

- For both younger and older teenagers, males had higher rates of violent crime than females (table 2). Among younger teenagers, these differences between males and females were especially pronounced for robbery; the robbery rate for males age 12 to 15 was about 4 times higher than the rate for females. Older teenage males were more than twice as likely as females age 16 to 19 to be victims of an aggravated assault.

- Black teenagers were more likely to be victims of robbery or aggravated assault than white teenagers. Younger black and younger white adolescents age 12 to 15 had similar simple assault rates; older black teens were less likely than the whites age 16 to 19 to experience this crime.

- Teenagers who lived in central cities had a higher risk of violent crime than teenagers in suburban and nonmetropolitan areas. Younger and older teenagers

In central cities were about 3 times more likely to be robbed than their counterparts in nonmetropolitan areas. For both age groups, aggravated assault rates were highest for those in central cities.

- Although Hispanics age 12 to 15 were less likely to be violent crime victims than non-Hispanic adolescents, Hispanic and non-Hispanic teenagers age 16 to 19 had similar violent crime victimization rates. For both age groups, Hispanics were as likely as non-Hispanics to experience a robbery.

- Within specific risk groups, older teenagers were generally more likely than younger ones to be violent crime victims. Some exceptions were found for robbery. Younger teenagers were as likely as older ones to fall victim to robbery if they —
 - were male,
 - lived in central cities, or
 - lived in nonmetropolitan areas.

Table 2. Victimization rates, by age and selected characteristics of victim, 1985-88

Victim characteristic	Type of crime and age of victim							
	Crimes of violence*		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19
Sex								
Male	78.2	93.4	14.4	12.9	18.1	32.3	45.5	48.0
Female	44.1	51.2	3.9	7.2	7.9	12.1	30.8	27.7
Race								
White	60.5	72.0	8.2	9.2	11.9	20.7	39.8	40.1
Black	69.2	74.8	13.8	14.8	18.9	30.5	34.3	26.2
Other	53.5	70.4	13.3	10.4	16.5	23.6	22.5	36.5
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	47.2	60.2	10.4	12.7	7.9	16.9	28.0	30.2
Non-Hispanic	63.0	73.5	9.1	9.8	13.6	22.7	39.4	38.6
Location of residence								
Metropolitan								
Central city	79.7	89.2	17.7	15.6	18.3	29.5	42.5	41.1
Suburbs	56.7	68.1	6.7	9.7	11.0	19.8	38.2	36.8
Nonmetropolitan	51.8	61.3	5.1	4.6	11.5	18.4	34.5	36.2

Note: Rates are average annual rates for 1985-88 per 1,000 persons.

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

- Teenagers who lived in households headed by a single parent were more likely to be violent crime victims than teenagers who lived in households headed by a married couple (table 3). Violent crime victimization rates for teenagers who lived in households headed by a single mother and those headed by a single father generally did not differ.

Trends in personal crime

- In recent years the risk of violent crime has increased somewhat for teenagers but not for adults (table 4). Violent crime rates for teenagers age 12 to 15 did not show a consistent trend although the rates were higher in 1987 and 1988 than in 1980.¹ For teenagers age 16 to 19, the rate of violent crime increased from a low of 65.7 per 1,000 in 1986 to 78.9 in 1988, but the rates of violent crime for adults remained relatively stable after 1985.

- For both teenagers and adults, the likelihood of experiencing personal theft decreased during this period. In 1979, victimization rates for crimes of theft were 147.4 per 1,000 for younger teens, 148.3 for older teens, and 82.5 for adults. In 1988 the rates were 117.5, 123.0, and 64.2, respectively.

Severity of crimes against younger teens

- The severity of violent crime incidents can be measured in part by the proportion of physical attacks against victims, the weapons used to attack or threaten victims, and the extent of victim injuries. NCS data suggest that crimes against younger teenagers were less serious than those against adults but that violent crimes against older teenagers and adults tended to be similar in severity.

- Violent crimes against younger teens age 12 to 15 were more serious than crimes against older victims in one respect. Younger teen victims were more likely than older teen and adult victims to have been physically attacked by the offender (table 5).²

¹ Some of this increase may result from July 1986 changes in procedures for interviewing persons age 12 or 13; see *Methodology*.

² Violent crimes, as defined in the NCS, include incidents where an offender threatened as well as those where the offender physically attacked.

Table 3. Violent crime rates, by household composition and age of victim, 1985-87

Household composition	Annual rate of crime per 1,000 persons							
	Crimes of violence ^a		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19
Household headed by:								
Married couple with children	48.3	51.5	7.2	5.8	8.6	14.8	31.7	30.0
Children only	48.0	53.8	7.2	5.1	8.4	16.0	31.7	32.0
Children and others	49.7	48.0	7.0	6.9	9.5	12.9	31.8	26.8
Single father with children	84.4	95.0	19.5	21.3	9.2*	30.8	52.0	37.1
Children only	76.3	109.9	6.7*	31.1	11.3*	30.6	54.6	45.0
Children and others	95.2	82.4	36.3	13.1*	6.5*	31.0	48.6	30.4
Single mother with children	91.3	90.3	15.2	13.8	21.9	33.0	53.3	40.7
Children only	102.8	94.7	15.2	14.2	24.2	34.3	62.7	42.3
Children and others	61.2	85.0	15.1	13.4	15.7	31.5	28.5	38.9

Note: Rates are average annual rates for 1985-87 per 1,000 persons.

* Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases;

see *Methodology*.

* Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

Table 4. Trends in annual victimization rates, by age of victim, 1979-88

Year	Type of crime and age of victim					
	Crimes of violence			Crimes of theft		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
1979	59.2	77.4	32.2	147.4	148.3	82.5
1980	53.5	73.9	31.1	122.8	126.9	76.7
1981	64.8	74.6	33.1	133.5	135.3	77.7
1982	56.2	76.2	32.8	132.9	130.2	75.1
1983	55.9	70.9	29.3	130.8	121.1	69.9
1984	57.4	71.4	28.6	124.3	122.4	64.2
1985	59.3	71.3	26.6	112.7	123.9	62.5
1986	59.7	65.7	25.6	112.4	119.4	60.8
1987	64.4	73.8	25.6	112.1	123.9	61.9
1988	62.3	78.9	26.1	117.5	123.0	64.2

Note: The victimization rate is the number of victimizations per 1,000 persons in each age group.

Table 5. Physical attacks in violent crimes, by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime	Percentage of crimes with physical attacks, by age of victim		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*	60%	53%	46%
Robbery	58	53	55
Aggravated assault	59	46	42
Simple assault	60	54	44

* Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

• Other crime characteristics suggest that crimes against younger teens were less serious than those against older teens and adults:

• Younger teen violent crime victims were less likely than older teen and adult victims to have been attacked or threatened by an offender armed with a weapon (table 6). Older teenage and adult victims were twice as likely as younger teens to face a violent offender armed with a gun (12% and 13% versus 5%).

• Younger teenage victims who were physically attacked and therefore at risk of sustaining injury were less likely to be injured than comparable adults (table 7).

• Crimes against younger teens were as serious as crimes against adults in these ways:

— Similar proportions of younger teen and adult robbery victims were physically attacked.

— The proportion of injuries among younger teenagers and adults who were physically attacked during an assault did not differ.

• Of violent crime victims who sustained injuries, younger teenagers were less likely than adults and somewhat less likely than older teenagers to receive medical care (table 8). The differences between younger teenagers and adults were especially pronounced for robbery. Of victims injured during a robbery, about 1 in 4 younger teenage victims, but about 1 in 2 adults, obtained medical care (23% versus 57%).

Table 6. Percentage of weapons in violent crimes, by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of weapon	Type of crime and age of victim								
	Crimes of violence*			Robbery			Aggravated assault		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	69	57	55	62	43	36	4	5	6
Weapon	25	36	36	29	48	52	96	94	94
Gun	5	12	13	6	16	21	16	31	33
Knife	7	10	9	9	17	17	26	23	21
Other	12	14	12	12	14	12	47	37	36
Type not ascertained	2	1	2	2*	1*	2	7	3	4
Unknown	6	7	9	9	9	13	--*	--*	1

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. If the offender had more than one weapon, the crime is classified by the most serious weapon present.
—Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

*Includes data on rape and on simple assaults, which by definition cannot be committed by an armed offender.

Table 7. Injuries in violent crimes, by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime	Injuries as a percent of:					
	All victimizations			All physical attacks		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*	34%	32%	30%	56%	61%	64%
Robbery	27	30	35	47	56	64
Aggravated assault	41	36	31	69	79	75
Simple assault	33	30	26	54	55	59

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

Table 8. Medical care in violent crimes, by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime	Medical care received by victim as a percent of:					
	All crimes			Crimes with injuries		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*	13%	15%	15%	39%	47%	52%
Robbery	6	13	20	23	45	57
Aggravated assault	23	21	22	58	58	69
Simple assault	12	12	10	35	40	38

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

- Teenagers age 12 to 15 were less likely than older teens or adults to state that the offenders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs during a violent crime (table 9). Younger teen victims were much less likely than older ones to indicate that the offenders were under the influence of alcohol (6% versus 24%).

Severity of crime against older teens

- In general, crimes against older teenagers age 16 to 19 were as serious as those against adults:

- Older teen and adult victims of robbery and aggravated assault were equally likely to be physically attacked (table 5).

- About 36% of older teenage and adult victims faced an armed offender during a violent crime (table 6). Similar proportions of older teens and adults were victimized by offenders with guns or knives.

- Older teenagers and adults were equally likely to sustain injuries during violent attacks (table 7).

- In two respects, crimes of violence against older teens were less serious than those against adults:

- Older teen victims of robberies were somewhat less likely than adults to sustain injuries.

- Older teenagers injured during a robbery or aggravated assault were somewhat less likely than injured adult victims to obtain medical care.

- The proportions of older teen and adult victims who felt that the offenders were under the influence of drugs or alcohol were not measurably different (table 9).

Offender characteristics

- Crimes against teenagers were more likely than crimes against adults to involve victims and offenders of the same sex, race, and age (table 10).

- Male teenage victims were more likely than male adult victims to be victimized by male offenders. The proportion of violent crimes committed against women by female offenders was highest for those age 12 to 15 and lowest for adults.

Table 9. Offenders under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as perceived by the victim, by age of victim, 1987-88

Victims' perception of offender	Percent of violent crime		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%
Offender under influence	14	37	40
Alcohol only	6	24	22
Drugs only	5	7	7
Alcohol and drugs	2	5	9
Not sure which substance	1*	2	2
Offender not under influence	38	23	18
Did not know if offender under influence	48	41	42

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. For crimes committed by multiple offenders, victims indicated if at least one offender was

under the influence.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Table 10. Sex of offender(s), by sex and age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime and sex of offender(s)	Sex and age of victim					
	Male			Female		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*						
All male	94%	93%	88%	38%	63%	77%
All female	2	1	5	54	31	16
Male and female	2	3	4	7	4	4
Sex unknown	2	3	4	2	2	3
Robbery						
All male	94%	94%	88%	60%	71%	74%
All female	—*	2*	4	26	19	8
Male and female	3*	3*	5	13*	4*	5
Sex unknown	3*	2*	3	—*	6*	3
Aggravated assault						
All male	93%	89%	87%	54%	64%	74%
All female	3*	2*	6	35	28	15
Male and female	2*	5	3	8*	6	6
Sex unknown	3*	5	5	3*	2*	4
Simple assault						
All male	94%	96%	89%	27%	55%	75%
All female	2	1*	4	64	40	20
Male and female	1	2	4	6	4	4
Sex unknown	2	2	3	2*	1*	2

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

—Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases;

see *Methodology*.

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

• The differences in the extent of crimes committed by women were especially pronounced for simple assault. About 64% of the simple assaults against younger female teenagers were committed by female offenders, compared with 40% of the simple assaults against females age 16 to 19 and 20% of those against adult women.

• Younger white teenage victims were more likely than white adults to experience a violent crime committed by a white offender (table 11). For black teenagers and black adults, about 4 out of every 5 violent crimes were committed by a black offender.

Table 11. Race of offender(s), by race and age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime and race of offender(s)	Race and age of victim					
	White			Black		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence^a						
White	76%	74%	71%	9%	9%	11%
Black	13	15	18	81	82	79
Other	4	5	4	4	2*	3
Offenders of different races	3	3	2	2*	4	2
Race unknown or not ascertained	4	3	4	4	4	5
Robbery						
White	50%	52%	46%	4%	6%	6%
Black	34	29	40	81	83	81
Other	6	7	6	5*	2*	4
Offenders of different races	5	7	4	3*	9*	2
Race unknown or not ascertained	6	5	4	5*	—*	6
Aggravated assault						
White	78%	73%	71%	11%	9%	8%
Black	9	14	17	80	80	82
Other	6	6	4	1*	1*	1
Offenders of different races	2*	3	2	2*	3*	2
Race unknown or not ascertained	5	4	6	5*	7	6
Simple assault						
White	81%	80%	78%	9%	12%	17%
Black	11	12	13	83	83	76
Other	4	5	4	4*	2*	3
Offenders of different races	2	2	1	2*	1*	1*
Race unknown or not ascertained	3	2	3	3*	2*	3

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.
 —Less than 0.5%.
 *Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.
 *Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

• Younger teenage violent crime victims were more likely than older ones to report that the offenders were under age 18 (table 12). Violent crimes against older teenagers were more likely than those

against younger teens or adults to have been committed by persons age 18 to 20. Adult victims were more likely than teenagers to indicate that violent offenders were age 21 or older.

• Some exceptions to the general findings for victim and offender characteristics were found for assault. The following proportions were not measurably different:

- aggravated assaults committed by men against older male teenagers and those against adult men
- simple assaults committed by black offenders against white teenagers and those against white adults
- simple assaults by offenders who were estimated to be from age 15 to 17 against younger teenagers and those against older teenagers.

Victim-offender relationship

• Violent crime victims age 12 to 15 were much more likely than adults to indicate that the offender was well known or a casual acquaintance (table 13). Robberies and assaults against younger teens were about twice as likely as those against adults to have been committed by a casual acquaintance.

• The proportions of crimes committed by persons who were well known did not differ for older teenage and adult violent crime victims.

• About 2% of teenage victims of violent crime indicated that the offender was a parent; an additional 2% said that another relative committed the crime. These figures may underestimate the extent of family violence against teenagers.

Table 12. Age of offender(s), by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime and age of offender(s)	Age of victim		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*			
Under 21	81%	55%	16%
Under 12	2	1*	1*
12-14	31	1	1
15-17	30	21	4
18-20	7	24	9
Mixed ages, under 21	11	9	2
21-29	5	21	36
30 or over	7	9	33
Other mixed ages	4	8	8
Age unknown or not ascertained	4	6	7
Robbery			
Under 21	84%	52%	22%
Under 12	2*	—*	—*
12-14	24	1*	1
15-17	31	17	5
18-20	9	19	12
Mixed, under 21	18	15	4
21-29	4	22	36
30 or over	2*	5	20
Other mixed ages	6	13	12
Age unknown or not ascertained	4	8	11
Aggravated assault			
Under 21	75%	48%	16%
Under 12	3	—*	—*
12-14	24	1*	1
15-17	31	16	3
18-20	5	22	9
Mixed, under 21	12	9	2
21-29	6	19	34
30 or over	10	12	33
Other mixed ages	4	12	8
Age unknown or not ascertained	6	9	9
Simple assault			
Under 21	83%	62%	14%
Under 12	2	—*	—*
12-14	36	2	1
15-17	30	26	4
18-20	6	27	8
Mixed, under 21	8	8	1
21-29	5	22	37
30 or over	6	8	37
Other mixed ages	3	5	6
Age unknown or not ascertained	4	3	5

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

—Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

Table 13. Victim-offender relationship, by age of victim, 1987-88

Type of crime and victim-offender relationship	Age of victim		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Crimes of violence*			
Spouse, ex-spouse	—*	1%	7%
Parent	1	2	—*
Other relative	2	2	3
Well known	23	19	18
Casual acquaintance	26	19	13
Stranger	44	52	53
Unknown or not ascertained	4	5	5
Robbery			
Spouse, ex-spouse	—*	2%	4%
Parent	1*	1*	—*
Other relative	—*	1*	2
Well known	16	15	10
Casual acquaintance	12	13	5
Stranger	68	62	73
Unknown or not ascertained	3	7	7
Aggravated assault			
Spouse, ex-spouse	—*	—*	6%
Parent	2*	2*	1*
Other relative	1*	2*	3
Well known	18	18	15
Casual acquaintance	25	14	13
Stranger	48	56	55
Unknown or not ascertained	7	8	7
Simple assault			
Spouse, ex-spouse	—*	1%	9%
Parent	1*	2	—*
Other relative	3	2	4
Well known	26	21	22
Casual acquaintance	29	24	15
Stranger	37	49	46
Unknown or not ascertained	4	2	4

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Multiple-offender victimizations are classified by the most intimate relationship between the victim and one of the offenders.

—Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

*Includes data on rape, not displayed as a separate category.

NCS data about family violence and sexual abuse

Survey findings may underreport the extent of family violence committed against teenagers, as well as against adults, for reasons such as the following:

- Many victims of family violence do not perceive their experiences as crimes.
- Because of the shame that they may feel about abuse, many victims are reluctant to speak of their experiences.
- Although NCS field representatives are encouraged to interview each respondent privately if possible, there may be other family members present during the survey interview. If the offender is present, the victim will probably not feel free to describe the victimization.

The NCS obtains data on crimes from interviews with household members age 12 or older. Because of this, information on child abuse is not available. See *Family Violence*, NCJ-93449, April 1984, for further discussion.

Place of occurrence

• The likelihood of experiencing a crime in a particular location is influenced by the amount of time spent in that location relative to other places. Because teenagers spend a high proportion of their time in school, they are much more likely than adults to experience a violent crime or personal theft in school buildings or on school property (table 14).

• About half of all violent crimes and 63% of crimes of theft against teens age 12 to 19 took place on the street, in a school building, or on school property, such as a playground, parking lot, or school bus.

• Adolescents age 12 to 15 were about twice as likely as older teens to experience crimes in a school building or on school property. About 37% of violent crimes and 81% of crimes of theft against younger teenagers occurred at school,

compared with 17% of the violent crimes and 39% of the crimes of theft against older teens. About 1 in 4 violent crimes against teenagers in both age groups occurred on the street.

• Younger teens were more likely than older ones to be robbed or assaulted at school, but the two age groups had similar proportions of robberies and assaults that occurred on the street (table 15).

School crime versus street crime

• Violent crimes against teenagers that took place in school or on school property were much less likely than street crimes to have been committed by an armed offender (table 16). Violent street crimes against teens were 3 times as likely as crimes in school buildings to have been committed by an offender with a weapon (37% versus 12%).

• Other characteristics suggest that school crimes and street crimes against teens were similar in severity. Similar proportions of victims of violent crimes in school buildings and on the street were

Table 14. Place of occurrence of personal crimes, by age of victim, 1985-88

Place of occurrence	Type of crime and age of victim					
	Crimes of violence			Crimes of theft ^a		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
At school	37	17	2	81	39	6
In building	20	9	1	74	30	3
On property	17	8	1	7	9	3
Street	25	26	22	2	6	12
Near victim's home	11	7	13			
At victim's home	4	8	18			
Home of friend, relative, or neighbor	8	11	9	3	11	9
Park, field, or playground ^b	5	5	2	2	2	2
Public transportation, parking lot	5	13	11	3	21	39
Restaurant, commercial building	2	8	15	4	12	19
Other place	3	5	8	5	8	13

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

^aExcludes personal larcenies with contact occurring at or near home. Personal larcenies without contact,

which comprise most crimes of theft, cannot by definition occur at or near home.

^bExcludes school playgrounds, which are classified as on school property.

Table 15. Place of occurrence of robberies and assaults against teenagers, 1985-88

Place of occurrence	Type of crime and age of victim					
	Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19	12-15	16-19
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
At school	32	9	23	9	43	24
In building	19	4	9	4	24	13
On property	13	5	14	5	19	11
Street	35	38	28	27	21	22
Near victim's home	9	6	13	9	11	7
At victim's home	4	10	5	7	4	7
Home of friend, relative, or neighbor	4	9	12	11	7	11
Park, field, or playground ^a	5	5	6	8	5	4
Public transportation, parking lot	5	15	7	15	4	12
Restaurant, commercial building	4	5	1	9	3	9
Other place	2	4	5	5	2	5

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

^aExcludes school playgrounds, which are classified as on school property.

Table 16. Characteristics of violent crimes against teenagers, by place of occurrence, 1985-88

Crime characteristic	Crimes against teenagers age 12-19		
	In school	On school property	Street
Weapon present			
Yes	12%	21%	37%
No	82	73	53
Unknown or not ascertained	6	6	9
Victim attacked			
Yes	56	61	53
No	44	39	47
Victim injured			
Yes	26	31	32
No	74	69	68
Reported to the police			
Yes	9	22	37
No	90	77	62
Unknown or not ascertained	1*	2*	1*
Average annual number of crimes	258,569	225,195	476,365

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

physically attacked. Teen victims of school crimes and street crimes were equally likely to sustain injuries. Although violent crimes on school property were somewhat more likely than those on the street to involve physical attacks, the proportions of victims who were injured did not vary (31% versus 32%).

Table 17. Characteristics of offender(s) in violent crimes against teenagers, by place of occurrence, 1985-88

Offender characteristic	Crimes against teenagers age 12-19		
	In school	On school property	Street
Sex of offender(s)			
Male	68%	71%	84%
Female	29	24	10
Male and female	2*	3	3
Unknown or not ascertained	2	2	3
Race of offender(s)			
White	70%	64%	55%
Black	21	27	31
Other	4	4	5
Offenders of different races	3	1*	3
Unknown or not ascertained	2	3	5
Age of offender(s)			
Under 21	95%	90%	61%
Under 12	--*	1*	1*
12-14	35	32	9
15-17	45	38	21
18-20	8	10	18
Mixed ages, under 21	7	11	13
21-29	1*	2	17
30 or over	1*	1*	5
Other mixed ages	--*	3	8
Unknown or not ascertained	2	3	8
Relationship to victim^a			
Relative	--*	--*	1%
Well known	22	24	13
Casual acquaintance	38	32	13
Stranger	36	39	66
Unknown or not ascertained	3	4	7
Average annual number of crimes	258,569	225,195	476,365

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

--Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

^aBased on 1987-88 data with these average totals: 278,485 crimes in school; 220,923 crimes on school property; and 467,183 crimes on the street.

• Violent offenders committing crimes in school buildings were more likely than those committing crimes in the street to be —

- under age 21 (95%),
- white (70%),
- well known or casual acquaintances of the victim (60%), and
- female (29%) (table 17).

• Teen victims of violent street crime were more likely to face offenders who were—

- male (84%),
- strangers (66%),
- nonwhite (39%), and
- age 21 or older (30%).

Reporting crimes to the police

• Although teenagers were more likely than adults to be crime victims, crimes against adults were the most likely and crimes against teenagers age 12 to 15 were generally the least likely to be reported to law enforcement authorities (table 18).³ Violent crimes against adults were reported to the police at almost twice the rate of violent crimes against victims age 12 to 15 (54% versus 29%). The

³ The apparent differences in police reporting rates for rape were not statistically significant because of the relative low incidence of this crime. Police reporting rates for simple assaults against younger and older adolescents did not differ.

Table 18. Crimes reported to the police, by age of victim, 1985-88

Type of crime and age of victim	Reported to the police			
	Total	Yes	No	Unknown or not ascertained
Crimes of violence				
12-15	100%	29%	70%	1%
16-19	100	38	61	1
20 or older	100	54	45	1
Rape				
12-15	100	65	35*	--*
16-19	100	47	53	--*
20 or older	100	53	46	2
Robbery				
12-15	100	30	69	1*
16-19	100	42	57	1*
20 or older	100	62	37	1*
Aggravated assault				
12-15	100	39	60	1*
16-19	100	50	48	2
20 or older	100	62	37	1
Simple assault				
12-15	100	25	74	1
16-19	100	29	70	1*
20 or older	100	46	53	1
Crimes of theft				
12-15	100%	7%	91%	2%
16-19	100	19	79	2
20 or older	100	32	67	1
Personal larceny with contact				
12-15	100	7*	90	3*
16-19	100	22	76	3
20 or older	100	41	58	2
Personal larceny without contact				
12-15	100	7	91	2
16-19	100	19	79	2
20 or older	100	31	67	1

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

--Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

proportion of thefts reported to the police was 4 times higher for adult victims than for younger teens (32% versus 7%). Each year from 1985 through 1988, an average of 1.2 million violent crimes and 2.8 million crimes of theft against teens age 12 to 19 were not reported to the police.

- Police reporting rates for violent crimes against teenagers were much higher for incidents that occurred on the street than for those at school (table 16). About 37% of violent crimes that occurred on the street were reported to the police, compared with 9% of violent crimes that took place in school buildings and 22% of those on school property.

- Crimes against teenagers, especially younger adolescents, may not have been reported to the police because the victims told another authority figure, such as a parent or school official (table 19). Reporting the crime to someone else was mentioned as the most important reason for not calling the police in 23% of violent crimes against teens age 12 to 15, 9% of those against persons age 16 to 19, and 7% of crimes against adults.

- Teenage victims (age 12 to 19) of personal theft were more likely than adult victims to state that the police were not notified primarily because the incident had been reported to someone else. Younger teenage victims of thefts were about twice as likely as older teenagers and nearly 4 times more likely than adults to give this response (46% versus 22% and 12%).

- Many crimes taking place in school may not have been reported to the police because school officials had been notified and had resolved the incidents. In about 37% of the violent crimes in school buildings and 32% of those on school property, the police were not called primarily because the crime was reported to someone else, compared to 5% of violent street crimes.

Place of occurrence	Percent reported to someone other than the police
In school	37%
On school property	32
On the street	5
Other place	6

Table 19. Most important reason for not reporting crimes to the police, by type of crime and age of victim, 1985-88

Most important reason for not reporting	Type of crime and age of victim					
	Crimes of violence			Crimes of theft		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Object recovered	17	17	13	18	23	22
Not important	15	11	7	12	12	10
Private matter	15	26	27	2	4	3
Reported to someone else	23	9	7	46	22	12
Did not realize it was a crime	— ^a	— ^a	— ^a	1	3	7
Property hard to recover	— ^a	— ^a	— ^a	2	5	7
Lack of proof	3	5	7	5	12	13
Not important to the police	6	6	6	3	5	6
Police inefficient	1	2	4	— ^a	1	2
Fear of reprisal	6	5	6	— ^a	— ^a	— ^a
Too inconvenient	1	3	3	1	2	3
Other ^b	13	15	19	8	10	13
Average annual number of crimes not reported to the police	581,163	647,143	1,985,023	1,398,786	1,406,971	7,034,101

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.
—Less than 0.5%.

^aEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

^bIncludes respondents who reported other reasons, those who said no one reason was most important, and those for whom the reason was not ascertained.

Teenagers and homicide

- Data on homicide, which is not measured by the NCS, can be obtained from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), which the FBI compiles from reports submitted by law enforcement agencies.⁴

- Law enforcement agencies provided information for about 93% of the 20,610 murders that occurred in 1986. The available data were adjusted to obtain estimates of the total number of teenage homicide victims. These adjusted counts show that in 1986 an estimated 337 murder victims were age 12 to 15 and 1,498 victims were age 16 to 19.

⁴Murder as defined in the UCR, includes nonnegligent manslaughter but excludes negligent manslaughter, suicide, and justifiable homicide.

- Adjusted homicide rates show that adolescents age 12 to 15 comprised an age group with low homicide rates. Those age 20 to 34 had the highest murder rates, followed by teenagers age 16 to 19 and adults age 35 to 49.

Age	Adjusted rate of homicide per 100,000
Total	8.5
1-11	2.1
12-15	2.4
16-19	10.1
20-24	17.0
25-34	15.4
35-49	10.3
50-64	5.8
65 or older	4.3

• Black teenagers had homicide rates that were 3 to 5 times higher than the rates for white teenagers; these differences were especially pronounced among male teenagers. Male teenagers generally had higher homicide rates than female teenagers; for whites age 12 to 15, however, homicide rates for males and females were virtually identical.

Race and sex	Adjusted homicide rate per 100,000 persons	
	12-15	16-19
White	1.8	6.1
Male	1.8	8.7
Female	1.7	3.4
Black	6.3	33.6
Male	9.2	54.3
Female	3.3	12.6

• Based on homicide data with supplemental information, analysis reveals that offenders used a firearm in 58% of the murders of adolescents age 12 to 15 and in 67% of the murders of teenagers age 16 to 19 (table 20). Offenders used a knife or cutting instrument in about 1 of 5 murders involving a teenage victim.

• Offenders were more likely to use a firearm in the murders of black teenage victims than in those of white teenage victims; a firearm was used in about 75% of the murders of blacks age 16 to 19, compared with 60% of the homicides of whites in that age group. For teenagers 12 to 15, 65% of the murders of blacks and 53% of the murders of whites involved a firearm.

• Data on homicide incidents involving a lone victim and lone offender show that like adult homicide victims, most teenage victims — both male and female — were murdered by men (table 21). For both white and black teenagers, about 9 in 10 were murdered by someone of the same race. About 6 in 10 homicide victims age 12 to 15 were murdered by offenders age 12 to 19, and 37% of homicide victims age 16 to 19 were killed by persons age 12 to 19 (table 22). About 8% of adult homicide victims were murdered by teenagers.

Table 20. Weapons used in homicides, by age and race of victim, 1986

Type of weapon	Age and race of homicide victim					
	12-15			16-19		
	Total*	White	Black	Total*	White	Black
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Firearm	58	53	65	67	60	75
Handgun	38	34	45	49	40	58
Rifle	6	7	4	6	7	4
Shotgun	9	9	10	7	8	7
Other gun	4	3	5	5	5	6
Knife or cutting instrument	20	20	20	20	23	17
Blunt object	7	8	6	4	5	3
Personal weapon	7	7	5	4	5	1
Other	9	11	5	5	7	3

Note: Percentages are calculated on unadjusted data. Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

*Includes data on "other races," not displayed separately.

Table 21. Characteristics of lone victims and lone offenders in homicides, by age of victim, 1986

Victim-offender characteristics	Age of victim	
	12-19	20 or older
White victims	100%	100%
White offenders	88	88
Black victims	11	11
Black offenders	1	1
Other race offenders	—	—
Unknown race	—	—
Black victims	100%	100%
White offenders	8	5
Black offenders	92	95
Other race offenders	0	—
Unknown race	—	—
Male victims	100%	100%
Male offenders	95	83
Female offenders	5	17
Unknown sex	0	—
Female victims	100%	100%
Male offenders	91	94
Female offenders	9	6
Unknown sex	0	0

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Excludes homicide victims belonging to other racial groups and victims whose race or gender was unknown.

—Less than 0.5%.

Table 22. Age of lone offender in homicides, by age of lone victim, 1986

Age of offender	Age of victim			
	1-11	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
1-11	3	1	0	—
12-15	3	26	6	1
16-19	13	34	31	7
20 or older	82	37	62	89
Unknown age	—	3	2	3

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Excludes victims whose age was unknown.

—Less than 0.5%.

Methodology

The National Crime Survey (NCS) obtains information about crimes, including incidents not reported to the police, from a continuous, nationally representative sample of households. The NCS measures crimes of violence (rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault), crimes of theft (personal larceny with and without contact), and household crimes (burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft). In 1988, 101,000 people in 50,000 housing units participated in the survey.

Calculation of rates

The rates in this report are annual average rates for the period 1985-88. The numerator (x) of a given rate is the sum of the crimes that occurred each year from 1985 through 1988; the denominator (y) is the sum of the annual population totals for these years. The average annual rate per 1,000 is computed as follows:

$$\frac{(x1985 + \dots + x1988)}{(y1985 + \dots + y1988)} \times 1000$$

where *x1985* is the number of victimizations of *x* in 1985 and *y1985* is the appropriate population total for that year.

Comparisons with first report

In the previous report on teenage victims (*Teenage Victims*, NCJ-103138), series crimes, which are three or more separate criminal events that the victim cannot describe in detail, were excluded. Because series crimes are included in this report and are counted as one victimization, the victimization rates in this report are not comparable to the tables presented in the first report. In addition, beginning in 1985, minor changes were made in the classification of robberies and assaults that occurred in commercial establishments. The appendix table presents victimization rates that are comparable to the tables in this report for the period covered by the first report on teenage victims.

Changes in the NCS questionnaire

A revised NCS questionnaire was introduced in July 1986. New response categories were added to a number of questions, including those dealing with the place of occurrence of the crime, the victim's relationship to the offender, and

the reasons for not reporting crimes to the police. These new categories have been combined to make the questions comparable to the data collected prior to July 1986.

In July 1986 the method of data collection changed for respondents who were age 12 or 13. Prior to that time, a knowledgeable adult proxy respondent provided information about nearly all persons age 12 or 13. Beginning in July 1986, persons age 12 or 13 completed the interview themselves, unless an adult member of the household insisted on a proxy interview.

Household composition

Household composition is determined by the relationship of all persons in the unit to the reference person or head of household who is generally age 18 or older. If a

head of household indicates being married but the spouse is absent and not available to be interviewed, then the head of household is categorized as being "single." Household members are defined as children if they are age 18 or younger. Table 3 in this report does not include data on teenagers who are not children of the head of household but does include teenage heads of household if they are married or are single parents.

Homicide data

The homicide counts were calculated from the Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Report for 1986. This data set is available from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Estimates of the U. S. resident population were used to calculate rates per 100,000 persons and were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census,

Appendix table. Victimization rates, and number of victimizations, by age of victim and type of crime, 1982-84

Type of crime	Age of victim		
	12-15	16-19	20 or older
Victimization rate			
Crimes of violence	56.5	72.9	30.2
Rape	1.6	2.1	.7
Robbery	9.7	11.6	5.6
Aggravated assault	11.0	21.3	8.5
Simple assault	34.3	37.8	15.4
Crimes of theft	129.3	124.6	69.7
Personal larceny			
With contact	3.0	3.0	3.0
Without contact	126.3	121.6	66.8
Number of victimizations*			
Crimes of violence	819,199	1,105,296	4,850,851
Rape	22,527	32,466	113,004
Robbery	140,444	176,592	903,372
Aggravated assault	159,410	323,142	1,359,524
Simple assault	496,819	573,097	2,474,950
Crimes of theft	1,875,700	1,889,956	11,198,304
Personal larceny			
With contact	43,510	45,909	475,302
Without contact	1,832,190	1,844,047	10,723,002
Number of persons	14,501,994	15,163,374	160,630,831

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. *Annual average for 1982-84.

Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1022, *United States Population Estimates by Age, Sex, and Race, 1980-1987*. The authors adjusted homicide counts for missing data and calculated homicide rates.

Reliability of comparisons

All NCS comparisons presented in this report were tested to determine if the differences were statistically significant. Most comparisons passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95% confidence level), meaning that the estimated difference between comparisons was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. Statements qualified by "somewhat" or "some evidence" were significant at the 90% level.

The data tables note when estimates are based on 10 or fewer sample cases. Because standard errors cannot be computed accurately for such estimates, it is inadvisable to compare estimates based on 10 or fewer sample cases to other small estimates.

More information on NCS sampling and estimation procedures can be obtained from Appendix III of *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1988* (NCJ-122024).



The National Victims Resource Center

provides vital information

The National Victims Resource Center (NVRC) is a national clearinghouse for victims information funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. Like the Justice Statistics Clearinghouse, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the NVRC is one of several information resources maintained by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). When you contact the NVRC, information specialists will provide you with access to the following resources:

- More than 7,000 victim-related books and articles covering child physical and sexual abuse, victims services, domestic violence, victim-witness programs, and violent crime included in the NCJRS data base.
- National victimization.
- Federally sponsored victim-related research studies.
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of people to contact for information and assistance.
- Information on State victims compensation programs funded by the Office for Victims of Crime.

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From the clearinghouse you can get free publications, borrow hard-to-find publications, and buy selected videotapes. The NVRC information specialists can also conduct data base searches designed especially for your needs.

The NVRC is the single most comprehensive source of victim information: it can refer victims to programs that help soften the blow, ease their recovery from trauma, and educate them about the aftermath of crime.

OVC, NVRC information is now available on the NCJRS Electronic Bulletin Board. Call for additional details.

For your convenience, we now offer a toll-free telephone number.

If we can be of assistance, call us at
(800) 627-NVRC (6872) or
(301) 251-5525 or 251-5519,

or write

National Victims Resource Center
Box 6000-AJE
Rockville, MD 20850

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(Revised April 1991)

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Single copies of reports are free; use NCJ number to order. Postage and handling are charged for bulk orders of single reports. For single copies of multiple titles, up to 10 titles are free; 11-40 titles \$10; more than 40, \$20; libraries call for special rates.

Public-use tapes of BJS data sets and other criminal justice data are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (formerly CJAIN), P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (toll-free 1-800-999-0960).

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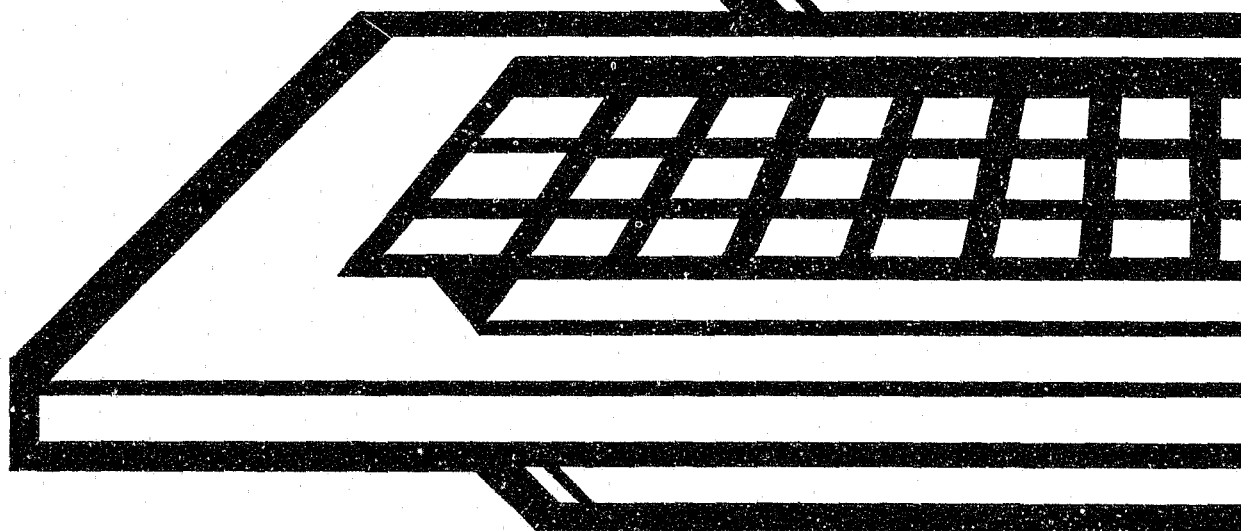
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