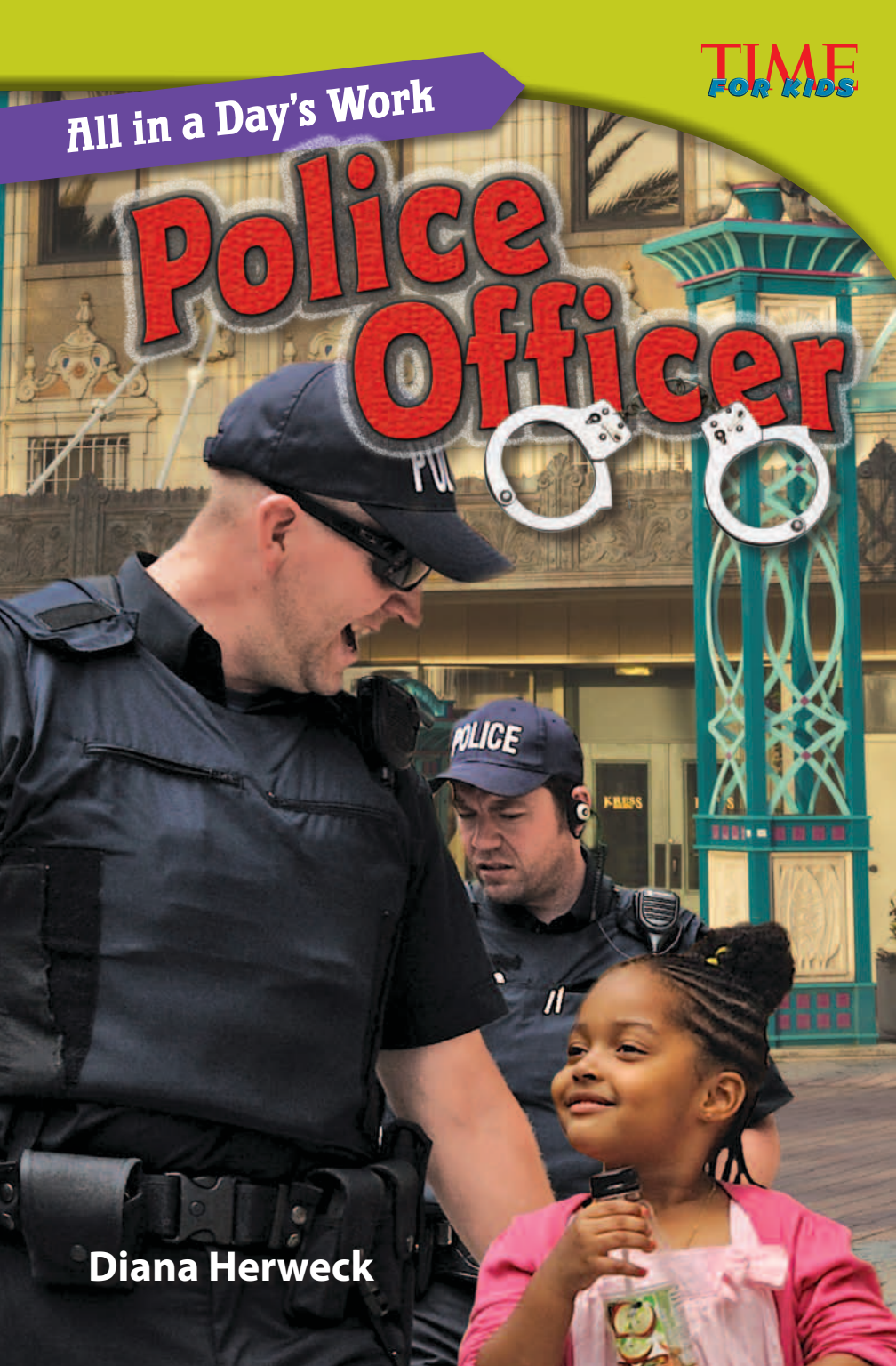

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PROTECT AND SERVE

"He's got a gun!" A call goes out to 911. The witness describes the **culprit** who fled. The **dispatchers** radio the police officers on duty. The officers turn on their sirens and rush to the scene. Half a dozen police cars pull up from all directions and screech to a halt. Help has arrived.

Police officers are trained to deal with criminals. And that's only one part of their job. Police officers protect and serve the community. They must be ready to respond to anything. They put their lives on the line to protect others. It's a dangerous job. But someone has to do it.



British police controlling crowds

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THINK LINK

- In what ways does a police officer protect and serve the community?
- What kind of training does it take to be a police officer?
- What motivates someone to become a police officer?

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

THE FIRST POLICE

Today, a police force of some kind exists in nearly every country. The profession has existed for thousands of years. In ancient China, **prefects** reported crimes to a judge. In ancient Greece, slaves guarded important meetings and dealt with criminals. In Spain, people banded together to protect themselves from criminals. These peacekeepers were called the *Hermandad*, which means "brotherhood." In the 1660s, law enforcement became paid work instead of just a social duty. In 1666, France created a unified police force led by the government. Many countries followed France's example.



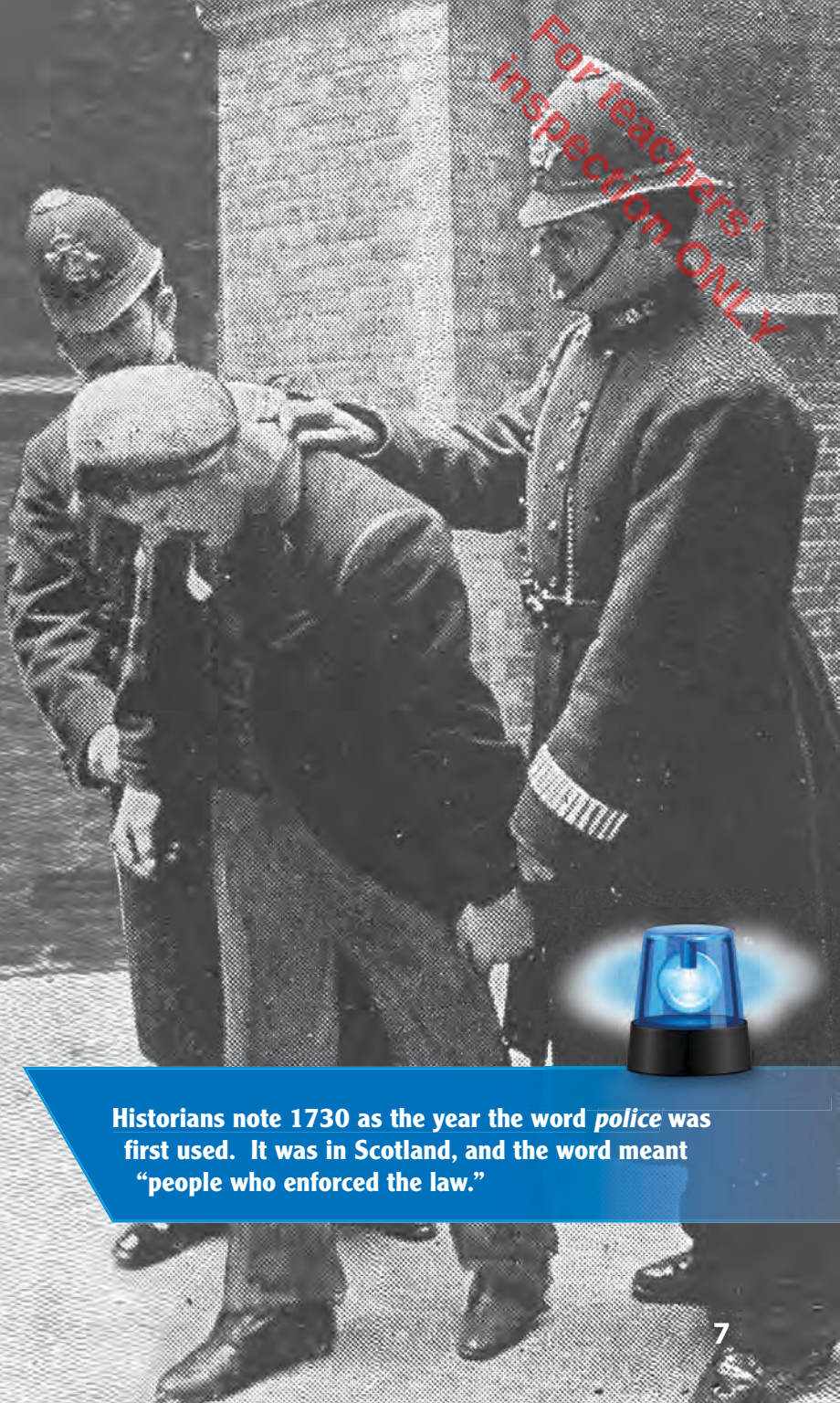
French police officer from the 1600s



Arresting Origins

The word *police* comes from the ancient Greek word *polissoos*, which means "a person guarding a city."

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Historians note 1730 as the year the word *police* was first used. It was in Scotland, and the word meant "people who enforced the law."

LEARNING THE ROPES

Many people want to become police officers. But not all of them can handle the training. Others will fail the final test. In most places, people need to be over 21 years old to take the **entrance exam** for the **academy**. The test isn't easy. Depending on the size of the force, more than 3,000 applicants might take the test at one time. When someone passes the test, a **background check** is run. A history with gangs or even a simple traffic ticket can disqualify someone. Of the thousands who might take the test, very few will be invited to the academy.



Starting Early

Some police departments take on young **cadets**. Cadets can perform office work and take classes before they become old enough to apply for a regular police job.

The Good Citizen Award

Do you want to become a police officer? You need to stay out of trouble, follow the law, and be a good citizen, too. Police officers need to be good citizens. They need to have a clean record when applying for the police academy. The choices you make today can affect your future as an adult.

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