2. The elements of a crime: actus reus

The chapter begins the exploration of the elements of criminal offences. Two factors are crucial: the event, behaviour or state of affairs known as the external element or actus reus, and the state of mind known as the mental element or mens rea. This chapter discusses the principle of actus reus, proof and the elements of the offence, how to identify elements of actus reus and mens rea, coincidence of actus reus and mens rea, the effect of penalty provisions in determining the elements of the actus reus, actus reus and justification or excuse, the problematic case of *Dadson* with regard to actus reus, physical involuntariness, a ‘state of affairs’ as an *actus reus*, general liability for omissions, offences of mere omission, causation, the ‘but for’ principle, the connection between fault and result, and negligible causes.
2. The elements of a crime: actus reus