

# Example of essay on death penalty

[Law](#), [Death Penalty](#)



Death penalty or capital punishment is the practice of executing someone as a punishment against a crime after a legal trial has determined the person guilty of that crime (BBC Ethics Guide, 2013). In the 17th and 18th century, England as well as America considered treason, rape, murder, manslaughter, counterfeiting, burglary, and arson as capital crimes (Banner, 2003). The methods of execution in death penalty includes beheading, hanging, electrocution, lethal injection, and shooting by firing squad or at close range to the heart or the head. Public executions are quite common, especially in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, and North Korea. Executions in Saudi Arabia are usually beheadings using a sword. In one case recorded by Amnesty International, a Sudanese man's head was sewn back onto his body and hung from a pole in a public place (Rogers, 2013).

In 2012, about 1, 722 people were sentenced to death in 58 countries, which is a drop-down from 2011, when 1, 923 people were sentenced to death in 63 countries worldwide. In 2012, Amnesty International recorded executions in 21 countries and abolishment in 97 countries. China, Iran, North Korea, Yemen, and the US (the only G7 country to still execute people) carried out the most executions in 2010. Executions have also taken place in Egypt and Syria, although this is not confirmed. Thus, there was an overall decline in death penalty cases in a decade, as, in 2003, 28 countries performed executions (Rogers, 2013).

There are many reasons to support and oppose death penalty. Each reason depends on one's perspective of life, death, religion, and belief, as well as on a boarder perspective of the society as a whole. The major thing that works for capital punishment is that it probably deters prospective criminals and

prevents existing criminals from performing capital crimes (Banner, 2003). Also, it is a belief that subjects of the punishment should receive maximum attention and so should the social cause of the crime, because to be responsible for the past act is to be liable to praise or blame (Pojman & Reiman, 1998) and it is mandatory to punish an evil. In contrast, subjecting even a criminal to a harsh vengeance seems violent and irrational in a quest for revenge (Pojman & Reiman, 1998).

Death penalty has merits, which is summarized as follows. The logic behind prison use is to rehabilitate convicts who will eventually leave prison and not for those not meant to leave. So, why sentence one to life imprisonment, why not to death? Also, the cost of maintaining a convict in life imprisonment is much more than executing him/her. Capital criminals are mostly violent individuals; thus, considering the safety of the guards and other prisoners, capital punishment is safer. Also, as severe crime calls for severe punishment, death penalty qualifies for capital crimes. Crimes that are brutal and horrific ask for revenge and retribution, which is a valid justification. Some of the concerns the world society has with death penalty can be summarized as follows. Life imprisonment without parole is just as painful and should be meted out instead of death. Killing a person is not humane, and people have varied views on this depending on their upbringing, beliefs, education, and religion. Also, just like how two wrongs cannot make a right, killing a criminal cannot compensate for the murder. People have also argued about the method of punishment, one may prefer a quick and painless death over a slow and painful one and vice-versa. The method of capital punishment is subjective to a society's norms and culture. Moreover,

killing can be considered as a violation of the person's right to live. It violates human rights. Innocents may be at stake of the system and may get wrongly convicted and executed. People wonder whether death should be delivered by humans, whether it's a forte of the God, whether death penalty can act a salvation, whether criminals may have potentials for rehabilitation to become better person in future, and whether the offender can repair the damage done from the crime. Lastly, the needless hardships that the family members of the executed are subjected to is a point of concern for many. Punishment should be imparted to a guilty in a manner that the amount of punishment is morally and legally equivalent to the seriousness of the offense, justifying strict equality. Although there may be grounds for mercy, forgiveness, and rehabilitation to lessen the severity of the punishments, it is important to maintain the moral homeostasis, i. e., rewarding the good and punishing the bad in proportion to the deed (Pojman & Reiman, 1998). Also, Ehrlich's 1975 paper tracking 1933–1969 US time-series data reported a statistically significant negative relationship between murder rate and execution rate, indicating that death penalty deters crime rate (Capital Punishment and the Deterrence of Crime, 2004).

Substituting death with life sentence without parole meets our needs of punishment and protection without any risk of an irrevocable and erroneous punishment; it accomplishes just as much as a death penalty because these offenders are civilly dead. Basically, as life sentence lasts longer, it is more painful as a punishment.

Mostly, offenders sentenced with death penalty become famous by virtue of the controversy surrounding their punishment and the societal attention that

it receives. Few famous historical figures have been executed in the history, for example, Nathan Hale, an American hero (d. 1776); Louis XVI, King of France (d. 1793); Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France (d. 1793); Harry Harbord “Breaker” Morant, an Australian poet and a national hero (d. 1902); Benito Mussolini, an Italian dictator (d. 1945); and, most recently, Saddam Hussein, an Iraqi dictator (d. 2006). Most offenders maintain their innocence until execution, some pray to their god, victims, and families for forgiveness, while some show humor, like James Jackson (d. 2007), “See you on the other side, Warden, murder me!” and Jimmy Glass (d. 1987), “I’d rather be fishing!”

Some personalities believe that death penalties may not really deter terrorism, as people would continue killing in the first-degree and continue committing crimes of passion. Albert Camus, a famous French philosopher, believed that capital punishment is the most premeditated of murders. Lewis Lawes, a warden of Sing Sing prison in New York during the 1920s and 30s, observed that it’s duplicating crime committed by an individual by all men acting collectively. Victor Hugo believed that, although a society must exact vengeance and punish, vengeance comes from an individual, but punishment from God. Also, ex-president of the US, George Bush, who supports death penalty, is against that for juveniles.

I personally believe that death penalty is a good idea overall. I agree with those who are for it and their arguments in its favor. Penalties may be thought of as inappropriate, repulsive, or wrong, and offenders may look pitiable, but infliction of legal punishment on a guilty is not unjust. The offender volunteer to assume the risk of receiving a legal punishment when

they commit a crime, which can be abstained from. The balance of justice is disturbed when you kill someone. Restoring that balance is critical so that the society does not succumb to the rule of violence and to imbibe that murder is an intolerable crime that deserves the harshest form of punishment under our system of law—death penalty. Anything less severe would undermine the value a society places on protection of lives. Death penalty is a retributive justice that balances the crime with the punishment. It is in favor of our concern for a society, the victims, and their families. Death punishment helps decrease murders. It is scarier than life imprisonment and cheaper too. Cases of murderers being sentenced to death and executed makes potential murderers think twice before committing a crime. It's a preventive action in a way, which should be appraised by the criminal law, because law is meant to protect the lives of potential victims than of actual murderers.

However, our capital punishment system is unreliable as human judgments are fallible. Wrongful executions of innocent people have happened, but that is a preventable risk. Death sentences should be swift and sure; they should be non-discriminatory against race, gender, and ethnicity. No high-paid, skillful lawyers should be able to get guilty defendants off. The guilty should be punished.

“ An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life” ---Moses in Old Testament

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