

# Probation and parole essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



1. What did Cesare Beccaria, the Enlightenment thinker, mean when he said that a punishment should fit the crime?

A The severity of punishment should parallel the severity of the harm resulting from the crime. B The punishment should be severe enough to outweigh the pleasure obtained from the crime (such as the material gain from committing a robbery).

2. What reforms in penal institutions did John Howard advocate in his book *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales (1777)*?

A Penal environments should be made safe, humane, and orderly. B Incarceration should not only punish inmates, but also instill discipline and promote reform. C Prisons should provide an orderly institutional routine of religious teaching, hard work, and solitary confinement to promote introspection and penance.

3. What is generally considered the first state prison in the United States, and of what did the daily routine of inmates in this prison consist?

The first state prison in the United States was actually called a jail—the Walnut Street Jail of Philadelphia, which was a holding facility converted into a prison.

Inmates daily routine consisted of:

- A Laboring in solitary cells, doing handicraft work
- B Receiving large doses of religious teaching
- C Reflecting on their misdeeds

4. How did the Pennsylvania system of confinement differ from the Auburn system of confinement, and which system became the model followed by other states?

The Pennsylvania system, as noted above, focused on solitary confinement in which inmates performed handicraft work, studied religious writings, and reflected on their misdeeds. The Auburn system (also called the New York system, the silent system, and the congregate system) focused on inmates working and eating together, then returning to solitary cells in the evening.

The Auburn system prevailed for three reasons:

A The Pennsylvania system of solitary confinement created harmful psychological effects, such as insanity. B The Auburn system allowed for factory production in prison labor, which was far more cost-effective than individual handicrafts were. C Because inmates in the Auburn system spent most of their time outside of their cells, their cells could be smaller with more inmates housed in less space.

5. What were the main features of the reformatory?

The features of the reformatory were as follows:

- Reformatories were designed for younger, less hardened offenders between 16 and 30 years of age.
- They were based on a military model of regimentation, emphasizing academic and vocational training in addition to work.
- They used a classification system in which inmates were rated according to their progress toward reformation.
- Sentences were for indeterminate periods, in which inmates served sentences within given

ranges (such as between two and eight years). They could be released early or given parole for good behavior.

6. According to John Irwin, what three types of penal institutions have dominated different parts of the twentieth century?

The three types of institutions, and their approximate heydays, are as follows:

- The “big house” (1900–1930): A walled prison with large cellblocks with three or more tiers, which housed an average of 2,500 men. These prisons were old penitentiaries and reformatories that were converted and expanded to accommodate larger inmate populations. Big houses were inmate warehouses (you can point out to students that the concept of warehousing inmates is not new) focusing on custody and repression.
- Correctional institutions (1940–1960): A smaller and more modern-looking facility than the big house. These institutions supplemented, but did not replace, big houses. They emerged as part of the medical model, which held that crime was similar to personal illness in that it required treatment. The emphasis, therefore, was on treatment and the subtle coercion that inmates who did not respond to treatment would not receive a speedy parole.

Contemporary violent prison (1960–present): This type of prison developed by default when rehabilitation lost popularity. Because older methods of restraining inmates became illegal during the 1960s, the result was a power vacuum that was filled with inmate gang violence and interracial hatred.

7. What is an incarceration rate, and why is it used?

An incarceration rate is found by dividing the number of people incarcerated by the total population, then multiplying the result by 100, 000. This will show how many people per 100, 000 in a given state, country, or any other given area are incarcerated. These rates are used to show overall adult incarceration rates.

8. How does the incarceration rate of the United States compare with the incarceration rates of other countries?

Refer students to Figure 10. 2 on page 362 for a list of rates for 25 different nations, including the United States. This shows that the United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world.

Author James Lynch points out that the United States has higher incarceration rates because it has higher crime rates; if crime rates were leveled among other countries, the United States would be shown to use imprisonment less in comparison with the existing rates of crime. In contrast, Nils Christie and others state that crime rates are relatively stable and even declining in some cases; therefore, the recent incarceration boom is not justified by crime rates.

9. How do the authors of this textbook explain the prison overcrowding crisis in the United States?

The authors state that prison overcrowding has become especially troublesome over the past two decades, and can be explained as follows:

- Americans have become increasingly reliant on corrections to control crime, although this system has never worked very well.
- Because of the disproportionate amount of money spent on imprisoning more and more people, less money is earmarked for crime prevention and community corrections programs that might reduce reliance on imprisonment.
- This creates a double-bind: crowding creates a need for effective alternatives, but these alternatives cannot be afforded because of money spent on institutional corrections.
- Ineffectiveness in community corrections and crime prevention (which could be at least partially caused by inadequate funding) makes the problem worse.

10. What are some major differences between the federal prison populations and state prison populations?

Federal prison populations make up only ten percent of the American prison population. In 1997, more than 60 percent of federal inmates were serving time for drug offenses. More than 57 percent of federal prisoners are white or Hispanic, and only about 38 percent were black. Federal inmates tend to be somewhat older and better-educated than state inmates.

State prison populations make up the other 90 percent of the American prison population. In 2001, 49 percent of state prisoners were serving sentences for violent offenses, about 20 percent for property offenses, about 21 percent for drug offenses, and the remainder for public order offenses. Most state prisoners are male and black.

11. What is the official mission of the Federal Bureau of Prisons?

The mission of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is “ to protect society by confining offenders in the controlled environments of prison and community-based facilities that are safe, humane, and appropriately secure, and that provide work and other self-improvement opportunities to assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens.”

As of 1999, the BOP operated 98 institutions, with 21 more in various stages of construction. 12. What are the purposes of inmate classification?

Inmate classification serves many purposes. In most states, inmates are initially sent to a classification facility, sometimes referred to as an assessment, reception, or diagnostic center. At this facility and throughout the inmate’s sentence, classification is used for the following:

- Assessing an offender’s security risk
- Determining which program services the offender needs, such as counseling or education
- Deciding at which institution an offender will begin his or term
- Assessing which problems the offender must address while in prison, such as substance dependency
- Assessing other factors, such as the nature of the offense and the offender’s record, propensity toward violence and escape, and vulnerability to victimization by other inmates.
- Routinely monitoring and reclassifying inmates for purpose of transfer, programming, and release decisions.
- Providing special services for inmates with health or mental disorders.

13. What are prison security and custody levels, and how do they differ?

A security level is the way by which men's prisons are often distinguished, and an institution's security level is determined by two related factors:

A The degree of external or perimeter security surrounding the prison B The measures taken to preserve security within the institution

The simplest security levels are maximum, medium, and minimum. As of 1999, different security levels are distributed among 1, 419 correctional facilities as follows:

- Maximum security (including super-maximum): 7. 5 percent
- “ High/close” (between maximum and medium): 4. 8 percent
- Medium security: 24. 7 percent
- Minimum security: 18. 2 percent
- Community/low security: 17. 5 percent
- Multilevel security: 20. 8 percent
- Intake facilities: 6. 6 percent

Jurisdictions vary in the security levels that they use.

14. What are the purposes of a jail?

A jail is a facility run by a city or county government. Most jails are small, about half hold less than 50 people, and serve a “ catch-all” function.

The purposes of jails are to hold:

- Unconvicted defendants who are awaiting arraignment or trial for short periods of time.
- Juvenile offenders (sometimes), although this practice has been severely criticized because juveniles are more vulnerable to influence

and victimization by adult criminals). • Convicted offenders who are serving short sentences that are usually less than a year. • Convicted offenders who are awaiting transfer to prison. • Offenders who have violated probation or parole.

- Vagrants, drunks, homeless people, and the mentally ill.

15. Why do jails represent one of the most problematic aspects of criminal justice?

There are many reasons for this, including:

- Overcrowding
- Lack of services and programs for inmates
- Inadequate staffing
- Unsanitary and hazardous living conditions
- The limited and unstable nature of local taxes to fund and staff jails
- A general lack of public support for jail reform
- Rapid rates of inmate turnover
- High diversity of inmate needs and risks
- Erratic and corrupt administration

16. What are some objectives of inmate rehabilitation programs?

Some objectives related to helping inmates better themselves are: • Self-improvement, such as those offered by religious groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Jaycees • Work programs; some institutions require work while others make it voluntary. Inmates work in areas such as food

service, maintenance, laundry, and clerical and industrial work. • Education programs, such as GED, ESL, and confidence-building courses. In addition, many institutions offer college courses. • Vocational training in many of the same industries offered through the work programs. Inmates learn how to manufacture furniture, make sausage, landscape gardens—a wide variety that changes from institution to institution. • Counseling and therapy, such as for substance abuse or anger management. Inmates understand that failure to show progress will prevent an early release.

17. What is the less-eligibility principle, as applied to corrections? The less-eligibility principle holds that prisoners should receive no service or program (such as a free college education) that is superior to the services and programs offered to free citizens without charge. This creates a dilemma because many traditional inmate jobs will not pave the way for satisfying careers in the real world, but many citizens resent prisoners receiving free technical or professional training.