

Death Penalty



Home



Criminal Justice



U.S. History



Project History

Capital Punishment in the United States

Is the death penalty a violation of the 8th Amendment?

The use of capital punishment in the United States is a controversial issue. Over the next two weeks you will be researching both sides of the argument. Regardless of your opinion you will be asked to engage in a debate where you will be expected to argue both sides of the controversy. A majority of research will be done in the computer lab and at the end of the unit you will be handing in a packet of work that will include the notes that you have collected.

Research Directions:

- 1) You must research both sides of the debate.
- 2) You must have specific evidence and examples to support your arguments. I want concrete evidence such as statistics, dollar amounts, people, events, and court cases.
- 3) Instead of writing an essay your notes will be collected and graded

Day 1 Research- Facts, Statistics, and Public Opinion

[\[Click here to print out note sheet\]](#)

You will investigate the application of the death penalty. You are looking for facts, not emotions. The information that you find could help you with either side of the debate. Your goal is to learn as much as possible about the use of the death penalty in the United States. You should compile a list of information about public opinion, numbers of executions, racial and economic backgrounds of people who are executed.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cp.htm>

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/dpusa.htm>

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/death-penalty-facts/page.do?id=1101088>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/timeline.html>

<http://filipspagnoli.wordpress.com/2009/06/08/human-rights-maps-57b-countries-using-the-death-penalty/>

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/methods.htm>

<http://deathpenalty.procon.org/>

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1606/death-penalty.aspx>

Day 2 Research- Yes, the death penalty violates the 8th amendment.

[Click here to download the worksheet](#)

Directions: Use the following websites to help you build your argument against the death penalty. Research and answer at least 6 of the questions on the worksheet. You are not limited to these websites or the questions on the worksheet.

<http://www.aclu.org/human-rights/death-penalty>

<http://www.nyadp.org/main/faq>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/procon/greenbergarticle.html>

<http://www.deathpenalty.org/article.php?list=type&type=24>

http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/29/national/main3422627.shtml?source=related_story&tag=related

http://www.aclu.org/capital-punishment_human-rights/european-union-calls-global-abolition-death-penalty

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/18/us/18scotus.html>

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/innocence-and-death-penalty>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/procon/aba.html>

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/us/04penalty.html?_r=1&fta=y

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/25/us/25death.html?_r=1

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/10/20/death.penalty/index.html>

Day 3 Research- No, the death penalty does not violate the 8th amendment.

[Click here to download worksheet](#)

Directions: Use the following websites to help you build your argument against the death penalty. Research and answer at least 6 of the questions on the worksheet. You are not limited to these websites or the questions on the worksheet.

<http://www.wesleylowe.com/cp.html#cost>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/procon/haagarticle.html>

<http://www.prodeathpenalty.com/>

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/death.htm>

<http://www.albanylawreview.org/archives/66/3/FederalismandtheDeathPenalty.pdf>

http://web.telia.com/~u15509119/ny_sida_3.htm

Political Issues that could be used for both arguments

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/procon/deathissue.html>

<http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/death/history.html>

Social/Moral Issues that could be used for both arguments

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/18/us/18deter.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1258380270-1we+ehWcs5Qr1Sn2PgLLEg>

Economic Issues that could be used for both arguments

http://www.econ.ilstu.edu/uauje/PDF's/issue1996/Death_Penalty.pdf

Guiding Questions

Use the following questions to help guide you while you research. You do not necessarily have to answer these questions but if you do a thorough job in researching the opposing sides the answers should be present in your notes.

- 1- How do most Americans feel about the death penalty?
- 2- How do other countries view the death penalty
- 3- What is the economic cost of the death penalty?
- 4- How does the death penalty compare to life in prison in regards to cost?
- 5- What is a worse punishment? Execution or Life in Prison.
- 6- What impact does the death penalty have on the legal system in this country?
- 7- Is the death penalty an effective method to stop crime?
- 8- Is the death penalty cruel and unusual punishment?
- 9- How does the death penalty impact the families involved?
- 10- Should states or the federal government decide the legality of the death penalty?
- 11- How has the Supreme Court influenced the use of the death penalty in America?
- 12- How have advancements in DNA evidence changed society views of the death penalty?
- 13- Are the current methods of execution the most humane?
- 14- Is the Death Penalty racially biased?

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