

# CRITERIA SHEET ~ PERSUASIVE ESSAY ~ GRADE 12H

TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT: Persuasive Essay on Debate Topic

STANDARDS MET: E2e, Persuasive Essay - E4a&b. Grammar and Revision - E6a, Public Documents

DUE DATE: 5/24

Rubric  
Final Copy  
Edited Rough Draft  
Outline

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION: Students chose a position and construct a persuasive paper, based on the research compiled for their debate. The 5-paragraph paper will consist of:

- ◆ an introduction that informs the reader of the issue, stating the facts that surround the situation
- ◆ a thesis that contains a controlling idea, asserting why your position is the right
- ◆ 3 body paragraphs that explain your position, as well as, refute the opposition
- ◆ a conclusion, written in confidence, that reinforces your position
- ◆ quotes from experts, statistical data, and examples, in all three body paragraphs, that support your assertion

SPECIFIC CRITERIA (check list)

Your paper...

- has a lead that engages the reader \_\_\_\_\_
- has a clear argument in the thesis \_\_\_\_\_
- has an introduction, bodies containing topic sentences that are a point of thesis, and a conclusion \_\_\_\_\_
- includes details, reasons, and examples appropriately supporting your thesis \_\_\_\_\_
- includes information and arguments from experts and cites the sources \_\_\_\_\_
- excludes irrelevant information \_\_\_\_\_
- gives answers to possible counter-arguments \_\_\_\_\_
- provides a closure to your paper \_\_\_\_\_

GRADING: See Attached Rubric

## Persuasive Essay

5-23-05

Disobedience of the law has been a dilemma that has plagued humanity for many years. How to keep society orderly, how to punish those who break the laws and how to prevent criminals from repeating their past has been some of societies major problems. In today's world, the U.S. is one of the most advanced and powerful nations in the world, yet it still uses one of the most primitive ways to create obedience. The U.S. is one of three democratic nations left in the world to still implement the death penalty. Its high cost, its social bias nature and its inability to deter future criminals, makes capital punishment a highly unproductive method of punishment and should not be used in the United States.

Contrary to popular belief, the all-inclusive cost to execute a criminal is greater than a life sentence to prison. The average cost per year to contain one criminal in prison is \$16,100. Multiply this figure by the average time spent in jail by a convict with a life sentence, which is fifty years. The cost to hold a criminal in prison for life would total \$805,000 ([www.religoustolerance.org](http://www.religoustolerance.org)). "Since there is a possibility of the execution of an innocent victim, there is a system of appeals through progressively higher courts. The cost of the appeals will quickly exceed that of keeping criminal for natural life" ([www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)). In the state of Florida alone \$57 million was spent from 1973 to 1988 in order to execute eighteen people (Miami Herald 10 Jul 1988). The amount per execution comes to about \$3.2 million, which is a complete waste of money and human life no matter how heinous the crime. If an inmate were to work 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year at a rate of \$3 per hour for 50 years, that inmate would make a grand total of \$300,000. This money could go to the victims family or

to the prison in order to help pay for their imprisonment. Due to the fact that the death penalty actually costs more than life imprisonment and is a waste of human life it should not be used as a method of punishment.

Not only is the death penalty costly, it does not effectively deter future convicts from committing immoral crimes. Ever since the beginning of the use of the death penalty statistics have been unable to prove its effectiveness. From 1976 to 1996 the number of executions in the U.S. increased from zero to 60 per year. The homicide rate per 100,000 population per year has remained constant at just under ten ([www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org)). When a person commits a murder it is usually during times when emotions and adrenaline are running high. Many of these times the person is not thinking rationally and the thought he or she might receive the death penalty. Police chiefs around the country ranked the death penalty as the least effective among seven methods to decrease the homicide rate. Sixty-seven percent of U.S. police chiefs do not believe the death penalty significantly reduces the number of murders ([www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)). The death penalty is ineffective in its job to reduce the homicide rate. Usually when something does not work it is time to try something else and that is exactly what the U.S. government should do.

The social and economic biases created by jurors and court officials make the death penalty unfair and unacceptable. Throughout the U.S. court system, there are biases that make the sentences unjust. In the state of Oklahoma, if a black man kills a white man, there is a 10.1% higher chance that the black man will get the death penalty than if a white man was to kill a black man (Economics of Death Penalty). "From 1995 to 2000, federal prosecutors sought the death penalty for 183 defendants: 74% were minorities" ([www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)). Racial biases are not the only form of unfairness displayed in U.S. courts. "Between 1976 and 2000, at

least 35 mentally disadvantaged individuals were executed in the U.S.”

([www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)). A black man by the name of Tony Chambers was convicted of raping and murdering an eleven year old girl. Although DNA evidence proved that Tony was not the perpetrator, because he admitted to the attack he will probably be executed. Tony's IQ was in the 50's and was therefore unable to be properly defended in court

([www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org)). Due to the lack of equality in the court system, the death penalty is not fair to the criminal.

The death penalty should not be used to punish criminals because it is costly, unfair and ineffective. Once a person is dead, there is no bringing them back. There have been over 100 death row inmates cleared due to DNA evidence and many executions have been stopped minutes before they were supposed to begin because of the discovery of new evidence making the person innocent. Instead of implementing the death penalty, the U.S. government should give the person a life sentence without parole options. According to an in-depth study taken by the Death Penalty Information Center, 59% of U.S. citizens polled in 1993 prefer an alternative to the death penalty if it involved life in prison without chance of parole (Death Penalty Information Center). In order to make a better tomorrow, capital punishment should be banned from use in the United States due to its inefficient nature and primitive attitude.

*Excellent work!*

