

Crime and Punishment.

What you need to know:

- Religious beliefs about punishment, repentance and forgiveness.
- Crime against the individual, property, the state and religion.
- Causes of crime.
- Aims of punishment.
- Issues around punishment.
- Affects of imprisonment.
- Treatment of young offenders.
- Parole and early release.
- Life and capital punishment.
- Other forms of punishment.
- Prison reform.

What is crime?

Crime is the breaking of a law in the country you happen to live in. There are crimes against a person (e.g. a mugging or slander), crime usually involving property (theft) and crime against the state (selling state secrets).

There are two main types of offence.

Non - indictable less serious crime.
E.g. motoring offences / petty theft.

Indictable More serious crimes.
E.g. rape and murder.

In the UK, these two types fall into criminal or civil law. If a crime is classed as a criminal law then the person who has committed the crime has broken the law of the land. Therefore the law can take action through the court system. Yet if a civil law is broken a court can award damages, a restraining order or to settle disputes regarding wills.

(THINK BACK TO WHEN WE DID THE OPINION LINE. LOOK AGAIN TO SEE IF YOUR MORE SERIOUS CRIMES ARE CRIMINAL OR CIVIL).

Some facts about crime include:

- Since the early 20th century crime has increased on average 5% per year.
- 5 Million Crimes are reported a year.

- Around 100,000 continuous offenders are responsible for 50% of UK crime per year.

Why do people break the law?

There are 4 main reasons why people break the law. They include:

- Social - to be 'part of the in crowd'.
- Environmental - poverty, unemployment and a lack of education.
- Psychological - selfish in their nature whether that be emotional or mentally.
- Drug addiction - prostitution or theft.

Aims of punishment:

There are 5 main types of punishment aims. Make sure that you know and understand all of these types along with the religious attitudes.

(THINK BACK TO THE WORK WE DID ON THIS. REMEMBER THE DIAGRAMS WILL HELP JOG YOUR MEMORY ON PUNISHMENT TYPES).

Protection: the public needs protection from lawbreakers.
This includes prison, so they cannot continue offending.

Retribution: 'getting your own back'. So criminals should be made to feel how the victim does.

Deterrence: the aim is stopping people committing the same crime.
This includes capital punishment.

Reform: the aim is to change the criminal's ways and to persuade them to become responsible citizens.
this includes probation and community service.

Vindication: Punishment is given to make it clear that the law is there to be taken seriously.

(BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER, ASK YOURSELF WHICH PUNISHMENT TYPE YOU WOULD PREFER AND WHY - YOU MAY NEED THIS FOR THE EXAM)

Religion:	Teaching:
Christianity.	<p>Right to obey government and uphold the law. (Romans 13).</p> <p>Punishment and forgiveness go hand in hand, with an emphasis on reform.</p> <p>Aim is reconciliation and rehabilitation.</p>
Islam.	<p>Punishment does not atone for sin, only Allah can do that.</p> <p>All punishment is a deterrent as punishment is meant to deter.</p> <p>Example: Amina lawal - burial up to the neck and stoned for adultery.</p>

Young offenders:

Once a young person reaches the age of 10, they are regarded as being old enough to understand right from wrong. They can be charged with breaking the law.

Yet in 1998, young people committed 40% of crime in the UK. Also in 1998 there were 5,283 men (under 18) in custody. So what types of punishment are available?

Community service unpaid community work which lasts between 40 and 240 hours.

Custodial. Sent to prison or detention centres.

Fines	Money is paid to the courts.
Suspended sentences:	Sentences (e.g. prison) comes into effect if the Convicted of a crime within a certain time span.
Probation:	Have to see a probation officer regularly. They are 'advised' and offered help to keep them out of trouble. If they do this they will go back to court.

Prison reform:

Britain's prisons are overcrowded; many are very old and have problems with violent behaviour. Over 70,000 criminals are in jail and over 40,000 of these are serving life sentences. Yet many only serve 15 years due to the parole system. A parole board will consider the risk to the public of an early release of the prisoner. How the person behaves within prison is considered in the making of the decision.

Yet it does not stop many people being concerned about the number of people in prison. Britain has more prisoners per head of the population than any other European country.

Many argue that:

- Too many people are sent to prison.
- Prison does very little to reform the person.
- Many will reoffend within 2 years of release.
- It reinforces criminal tendencies.
- Many families and marriages fail to survive.
- Many find it difficult to gain employment once they are released.
- Each prisoner costs £30,000 per year.

Others say that:

- If they loose their freedom then they cannot continue to offend.
- Other forms of protection cannot offer the same amount of protection for society.
- It is important not to be too 'soft' on prisoners.
- Prisoners are given education and taught new skills for their release.
- The lack of freedom teaches some people a lesson.

There are organisations that campaign for reform within prison. The 'Howard's League of Penal Reform' and the 'Prison Reform Trust' are just 2 of these.

Amnesty International:

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

This group wishes to end capital punishment, world wide. It also campaigns for the release of political prisoners and makes lists of those who are facing the death penalty. In 2001, over 3000 executions took place in 31 countries. The largest was China.

(THINK BACK TO THE GRPAHS YOU PRODUCED ABOUT THIS, CAN YOU NAME THE OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?)

Amnesty International encourages its members to write letters, sign petitions and email the governments where people are about to be executed. An example of this is in 2003. Amnesty encouraged people to sign petitions to be sent to the Nigerian government not to go ahead with the punishment of Amina Lawal, who was about to be stoned to death for having a baby to a married man.

Alternatives to prison:

Tagging:

This is mainly used in the US and has been introduced within the UK as an alternative to prison. Tags are attached to criminals so their movements can be checked. It may also be used in conjunction with the home detention curfew scheme. This is where the prisoner has to stay out of certain areas and be at home at a certain time.

The advantages of the scheme are that:

- a. It costs £4.00 per day.
- b. There is flexibility for the government.
- c. It avoids family separation.

The drawbacks to the scheme are that:

- a. There have been technical problems.
- b. They are not suitable for really dangerous criminals.
- c. Many will continue to commit crimes.

Community service:

Some see this as a 'soft option'. It allows various projects, for example clearing areas of derelict land to go ahead. The most famous case in the UK was Jonathon Woodgate. Who after being convicted of racist behaviour and acts of violence to an Asian male in Leeds, was asked to give football tuition to those who lived in poor communities.

Capital punishment:

Capital punishment exists within the world, despite 100 countries, including Britain, abolishing this. Where it does exist it is usually by hanging, firing squad or lethal injection. At the moment the USA has about 3,000 prisoners on death row.

For:

Innocents are killed.
No evidence that it does not work.
Prison protects society.
Only God can judge.
It is barbaric.

Against:

It does not act as a deterrent.
Terrorists deserve to die.
This protects all of the public.
'Life' does not always mean life.
Cheap option.

Christianity sees prison as being necessary to protect society. Yet many Christian groups, for example, the Quakers, are concerned with the damage prison can do to people. With the exception of dangerous criminals, many Christians would like to see non - custodial sentences.

Most Muslims believe that two crimes should end in death. They are murder and if someone openly attacks Islam. Muhammad* accepted that justice of a 'life for a life' was important. However if the relatives of the dead person choose for the murderer to be spared and the murderer is willing to pay compensation, then a life sentence can be given.

REMEMBER:

You have a lot of examples that can be used for this unit of work.
If there is a difference of opinion with your religion, make sure you name them.