ProTalk

Discussion Files



Language Center

C2. Capital Punishment

Afaq Language Center

www. afaq-lc.com 021-5148 afaq.lc

Goals

- Can read and understand a technical text on capital punishment.
- Can present a detailed opinion on the subject of capital punishment and human rights.



What do you think?

The use of the death penalty is a controversial topic. Some people are **vehemently** opposed to capital punishment whilst others believe it is morally right and entirely **justifiable**. However, one thing is for sure, this **divisive** subject always sparks heated debate.

Criminal justice

What is the criminal justice system like in your home country? Imagine your teacher knows nothing about the system and try to explain it to them. Think about the prosecution process as well as the punishment and rehabilitation of criminals.



Criminal justice systems of the past and present

Our social and political systems have changed a lot through the centuries. Look at the cards below. What do you know about the things on each card? Tell your teacher.

witch burnings

duels

the divine right of kings

martial law

Capital punishment

Is capital punishment used in your home country? Whether or not it is still allowed, what is the public consensus on the death penalty? Do some people want to ban it, or bring it back?

Big question

Some people are vehemently opposed to the death penalty.

Is there anything to which you are vehemently opposed?

Have you fought for these beliefs?

Read the text and summarize it.

Capital punishment

The death penalty has been in use across the globe since ancient times but of the 196 countries in the world, only 58 still use capital punishment today. Prior to the 19th century, before the development of adequate prison systems, capital punishment was frequently **deemed** necessary as a method of **deterring** serious crime. However nowadays, the question of whether death by execution is morally permissible is an extremely **divisive** issue which gives rise to fierce emotions on either side.

International human rights organisations such as Amnesty International argue that capital punishment **breaches** human rights, namely the right to life and the right to live free from torture. However, those in favour of the death penalty argue that the **severity** of the punishment acts as a strong deterrent to would-be criminals, and that in murder cases, by taking the life of the victim, the murderer has already shown their contempt for the sanctity of human life.

Read the text and summarize it.

Capital punishment

Across Europe the use of capital punishment is outlawed by the European Convention on Human Rights, and in 2012 Latvia became the last EU member state to ban capital punishment in wartime. However, in other parts of the world the threat of the death penalty still looms. China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the USA currently top the **leadership boards** for the highest number of executions carried out in recent years.

Do you know these words from the text? Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

divisive

to deem

to deter

to breach

severity

leadership board

Cultural differences

There are nearly 200 countries in the world. Which ones have you already visited?

What are some cultural differences you remarked on compared with your home country?



For and against



Reread the text. Why do many human rights organisations oppose the death penalty? What do those in support of capital punishment think? Can you think of any other arguments for and against the death penalty?

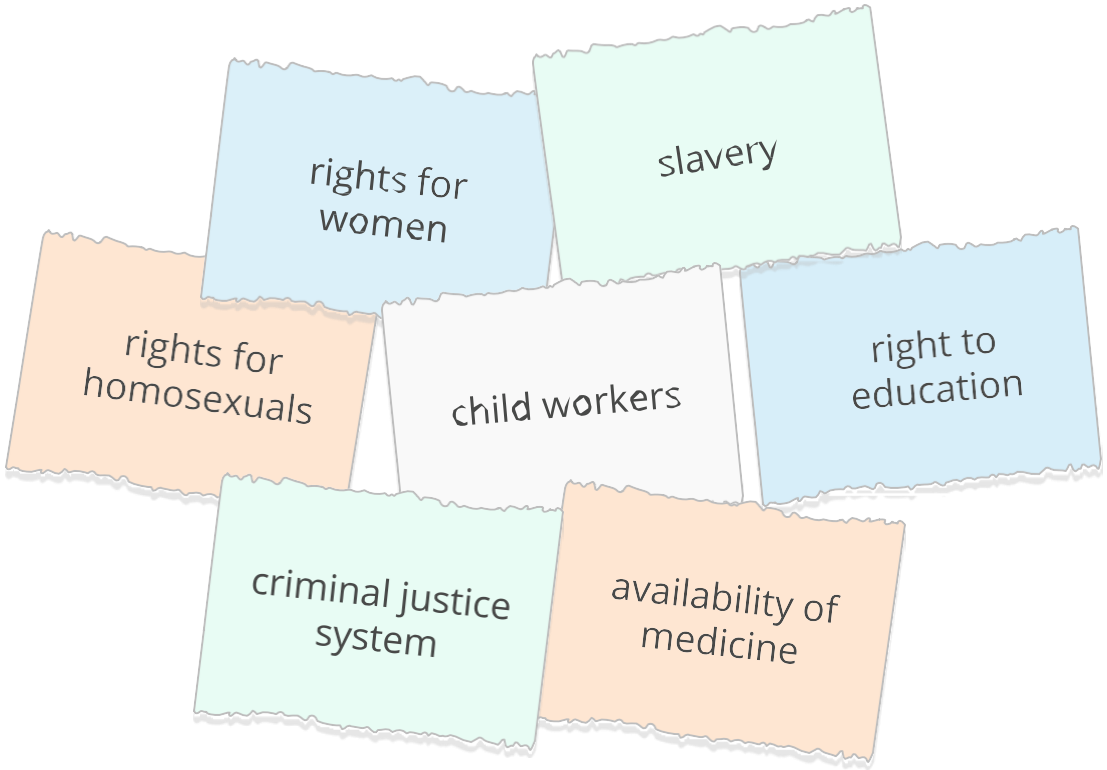
For and against

Imagine you are speaking on behalf of Amnesty International at an international conference on capital punishment. Think of the arguments in support of the death penalty and try to address them, use convincing language and try to persuade your audience round to your point of view.



Changes over time

Over time many things in our society have changed. Look at the cards below, talk with your teacher about how things have changed over time in each example. Talk about how things have changed in your country and contrast this with other countries in the world



And in the future?

Choose three cards from the previous slide. Now think about the future, how do you hope things might change further in the next 50 years, in your country and worldwide?



progression

justice

equality

opportunity

Take to the streets!

Imagine you have been asked to speak at a peaceful protest on behalf of a human rights organisation.

- Make your speech about any human rights issue, including the death penalty
- Do your best to inspire and motivate the crowd
- Persuade them that this is the most important issue that society needs to fight for.



Ladies and gentlemen...

An important man once said “I have a dream...“

Let me ask you to imagine a world where...

Presentation

Imagine you work for an international human rights organisation that is opposed to capital punishment. Prepare a two-minute presentation about campaigning to a government where the death penalty is legal.

Outline your views and try to persuade them to change the law and ban capital punishment.

Include several reasons to support your point of view.

Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.