



Crime and Punishment

Task: The Ethics of the Death Penalty in Modern Society

Activity 1: Listening

Welcome to a practice listening task for the GESE 9.

You are going to hear a talk about **the ethics of the death penalty in modern society**. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

Audio Script

Little did anyone know that exploring the topic of the death penalty would uncover one of the most controversial and emotionally charged issues in modern society. The by-product of the death penalty is complex and multifaceted, with both supporters and opponents fiercely advocating for their positions. While some argue that the death penalty serves as a necessary form of punishment for the most heinous crimes, others deny seeing the morality and effectiveness of taking a human life as a punishment. Either society continues to grapple with the complexities of the death penalty, or it must find alternative forms of punishment that balance the need for justice with the preservation of human life, as the debate surrounding the ethics of the death penalty continues to rage on.

The death penalty has been a subject of debate for decades, and some argue that it serves as a deterrent to crime. Potential criminals may think twice before committing a crime, hence seeing a reduction in crimes that are committed. What is more, the death penalty provides a sense of closure and justice for victims' families and loved ones, who may feel that the punishment fits the crime in cases of heinous crimes such as murder. That is to say that the death penalty can help to maintain order and respect for the law in society, by punishing those who have committed crimes and ensuring that they are held accountable for their actions. It could have been argued that the death penalty is a legal punishment in many countries, namely in those that believe it is a just form of punishment for those who have committed serious crimes. No sooner has a dangerous criminal been sentenced to death than society can feel a sense of justice and security, knowing that the criminal will never harm others again.

Against the death penalty, there are several arguments that have been noted to raise concerns about its effectiveness and ethics. Whereas the use of the death penalty is controversial, as it involves taking a person's life and raises questions about the value of human life and the role of the state in executing its citizens, the death penalty is not always applied fairly or impartially. For instance, it can be influenced by factors such as race, income, and geography, leading to concerns about systemic biases in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, there is a risk of executing innocent people, as there have been cases of individuals who were later found to be innocent after being sentenced to death. On top of that, these factors have created a struggle to justify the use of the death penalty, especially when the cost of a death penalty trial and subsequent appeals is much higher than the cost

of a trial resulting in life imprisonment, and this cost is often borne by taxpayers. Therefore, the use of the death penalty has been seen as increasingly controversial in recent years, as more and more people question its effectiveness and ethics. Nevertheless, some continue to see it as a necessary form of punishment for serious crimes.

In summary, the death penalty remains a highly debated issue with both supporters and opponents offering compelling arguments for their positions. One can only wish for a clear-cut answer on this complex ethical issue, but the reality is that there are no easy answers. Only when the aggravating and mitigating circumstances of a crime are fully examined can one begin to understand the complexities involved in sentencing someone to death. It is in this delicate balance of justice that the question of clemency arises, as it is up to individuals and societies to determine whether it is truly ethical to take a life as a form of punishment. In other words, those who support or oppose the death penalty will have been doing so with full knowledge of the nuances involved in this highly charged issue. Ultimately, it is only by realizing the complexity and gravity of the decision to impose the death penalty that we can hope to make informed and ethical choices in the criminal justice system.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me about **the reasons for and against the death penalty.**

Now tell me about **the reasons for and against the death penalty.** You have one minute to talk.

This is the end of the listening task.

Answers:

For the death penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some argue that the death penalty serves as a deterrent to crime, and that potential criminals may think twice before committing a crime if they know they could face execution.• The death penalty provides a form of closure and justice for victims' families and loved ones, who may feel that the punishment fits the crime in cases of heinous crimes such as murder.• The death penalty can help to maintain order and respect for the law in society, by punishing those who have committed crimes and ensuring that they are held accountable for their actions.• The death penalty is a legal punishment in many countries, and is seen as a just form of punishment for those who have committed serious crimes.• In some cases, the death penalty may be the only way to ensure that a dangerous criminal will not be able to
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	harm others in the future, such as in cases of serial killers or terrorists.
Against the death penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The use of the death penalty is controversial, as it involves taking a person's life and raises questions about the value of human life and the role of the state in executing its citizens. ● The death penalty is not always applied fairly or impartially, and can be influenced by factors such as race, income, and geography, leading to concerns about systemic biases in the criminal justice system. ● There is a risk of executing innocent people, as there have been cases of individuals who were later found to be innocent after being sentenced to death. ● The cost of a death penalty trial and subsequent appeals is much higher than the cost of a trial resulting in life imprisonment, and this cost is often borne by taxpayers. ● The use of the death penalty has declined in many countries in recent years, as more and more people question its effectiveness and ethics, and as alternatives such as life imprisonment without parole become more widely available.

Marks: +_ / +10



Grammar Used in the listening task:

- Verbs with infinitive or Gerunds
- Passives with Modal Verbs
- should / must / might / could + perfect infinitive
- wish / hope / if only
- either....or (else)..... / neither.....nor.....
- hence / whereas / what is more / On top of that
- namely / in other words / for instance / that is to say
- Inversion:
 - Little did I know / realize / think (Little did I know that I would end up moving here.)
 - Only by....will you.... (Only by working hard will you pass your exam.)
 - Only when....did I.... (Only when he explained it did I understand it.)
 - No sooner.....than.... (No sooner had we left than it started raining.)