

Death Penalty Online Scavenger Hunt

An online activity for students to learn more about the death penalty

Designed by Laura W. Ramey 2006 and adapted by Catholic Mobilizing Network in 2010

Find the answers to as many of the following questions as you can:

The Death Penalty in Your State: From your state's Department of Corrections Website (if your state does not use the death penalty, please use another state's information to answer the following questions)

1. How many total inmates are on your state's death row? _____
2. How many women are on your state's death row? _____
3. What percentage of your state's death row inmates are: _____
 - a. Black? _____
 - b. White? _____
 - c. Hispanic? _____
 - d. Other? _____
4. Find the total percentage of populations in your state for those same racial/ethnic groups:
 - a. Black? _____
 - b. White? _____
 - c. Hispanic? _____
 - d. Other? _____
5. What age group has the highest percentage of people on death row in your state (and how many)? _____
6. In which year did your state condemn the most people to death? _____
7. Which county in your state has the highest percentage of people on death row? And how many?

8. (extra credit) Which county has the highest per capita number of people on death row? (Note, this question requires looking up the population in each respective county)

9. How many people condemned to death have currently had their death sentences overturned and are awaiting retrials? _____
10. How much does it cost to house an inmate on death row for a year in your state? _____

Death Penalty Online Scavenger Hunt

11. When did your state return the use of the death penalty after it was reinstated by the U.S. Supreme Court? _____
12. Who was the first inmate executed in your state after the death penalty? _____
13. What method(s) of execution is(are) used in your state? _____
14. How many People have been executed in your state since 1976? _____
15. How many witnesses are allowed at an execution in your state? _____

Across the US: From the Death Penalty Information Center 's website (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)

16. How much does it cost to keep an inmate on death row until execution compared to keeping the same prisoner in prison until his/her natural death? Explain why one would cost more than the other? _____
17. How many prisoners on death row have been released because of actual innocence in the United States? _____
18. Which state has released the most number of prisoners from death row because of actual innocence? _____
19. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme Court ruling in *Furman v. Georgia*, 1972:
20. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme Court Ruling in *Gregg v. Georgia*, 1976:
21. What significant action was taken by Governor George Ryan in Illinois in January, 2000? In January 2003?
22. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme Court ruling in *McCleskey v. Kemp*, 1987:



Death Penalty Online Scavenger Hunt

23. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme court ruling on Ring v. Arizona, 2002:
24. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme Court ruling on Atkins v. Virginia, 2002:
25. In one sentence, describe the implications of the Supreme Court ruling on Roper v. Simmons, 2004:
26. What is the definition of clemency, as it pertains to capital punishment? Who grants clemency in your state? When was the last time clemency was granted in your state?

From Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights www.mvfr.org, Murder Victims Families' for Reconciliation www.mvfr.org, and Parents of Murdered Children www.pomc.org:

27. Find the profiles/victims' stories from MVFHR and write down at least two reasons families identify their opposition to the death penalty
28. What are the two key reasons why MVFR does not support the use of the death penalty? Explain
29. According to POMC, what are three key problems that families with murdered children face? Explain

From Pro-Death Penalty – www.prodeathpenalty.com

30. In your opinion, what is the strongest argument this group (prodeathpenalty.com) has to support the use of the death penalty? Explain



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People, Places, and Things Identification

Identify the following people and their significance to the issue of the death penalty (make sure to indicate the source of your information)

31. Stanley "Tookie" Williams
32. State of Texas
33. Sister Helen Prejean
34. Mike Farrell
35. Rolando Cruz
36. Joseph O'Dell
37. Anthony Porter
38. Bud Welch
39. Justice Antonin Scalia
40. The Innocence Project
41. Pope John Paul II
42. Scott Turow
43. James E. Tilton
44. Michael Morales
45. Kevin Keith
46. Juan Melendez
47. Teresa Lewis

The Catholic Faith and the Death Penalty: From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
(www.usccb.org/deathpenalty and <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>)

48. What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say about the Death Penalty (hint: CCC 2267)?
In one sentence explain how this teaching applies in the United States today.

49. Which Papal Encyclical includes teachings on the Death Penalty? Who wrote it?

50. Overall, does the Catholic Church support or oppose the death penalty in the United States?
Why?



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Discussion Questions

1. Why do we use the Death Penalty
2. How does the Eight Amendment prohibition against “cruel and unusual punishments” impact the question of the death penalty? What might have motivated the Founding Fathers to include this prohibition in the Bill of Rights?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the argument that Life without parole achieves the same goals as the death penalty?
4. As a juror, would you hesitate to convict someone if there was a possibility that he could be executed?
5. What is the best method of execution? Why?
6. Why do you suppose the US is almost alone among industrialized democracies in the use of the death penalty?

