English 9 - Writing Prompt Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Punishment that Fits the Crime

All societies have maintained the right to punish people who break their rules. But what is the purpose of punishment? What is it supposed to accomplish? Experts and the general public often disagree. Over the years, theories have been advanced about different ways of handling wrongdoers.

People advocating one approach have often condemned other approaches as brutal, unjust, or ineffective. *As a teenager in America, what are your thoughts on crime and punishment?*

The American juvenile justice system was designed over 100 years ago to reform kids found guilty of minor crimes, minor crimes such as petty theft and truancy. Today, the system is becoming overwhelmed by crimes of violence. Stealing and skipping school have been replaced by rape, robbery, and murder. The juvenile justice system was never meant to deal with these problems. *What then should be done about juvenile crime?*

What are the major categories of punishment? Are any more important or effective than the others?

* **Rehabilitation**: seeks to treat and reform the lawbreaker. Advocates of this theory believe that the correctional system should try to turn the wrongdoer into a productive member of society.

To implement this theory, the prison system has to provide job training, psychological counseling, and educational programs. Critics of this theory admit that it is a noble idea, but they argue it just does not work in practice.

* **Restitution**: seeks repayment. The offender repays the victim or community in money or services. Critics say money and services cannot sufficiently repay for the harm cause by violent crimes.
* **Incapacitation**: seeks to isolate criminals from society to protect ordinary citizens.

Confinement in a secure prison makes it impossible for a criminal to commit further crimes in the surrounding society. Critics argue that most criminals have fixed prison terms, and they will be released sooner or later. If they are not reformed, the protection is only temporary.

* **Deterrence**: seeks to prevent crimes. Deterrence targets criminals in question, as well as other potential criminals, to discourage them from committing crimes because of the harsh punishment that may ensue. Critics argue that few criminals expect to be caught and deterrence is only powerful when criminals fear they will, in fact, be caught and punished.
* **Retribution**: seeks revenge. This is perhaps the oldest theory/form of punishment based on the ancient “eye-for-an-eye” philosophy. Advocates say that by imposing punishment we “get even” with criminals. Some critics argue that retribution is often too cruel for modern society, and others claim that it does nothing to address serious issues like reforming criminals or protecting the innocent.

**Prompt:** Write a persuasive, multi-paragraph essay in which you offer a teenager’s perspective of appropriate punishments for crimes. You may choose to include details from reading, research, personal experience, or the media. Considering all that you have read and discussed in class, create a strong thesis statement which you can support with detailed explanations.

Thesis Statement: From a teen’s point of view… \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Basic Structure of Persuasive Essay

Paragraph #1 - Introduction:

Hook

Bridge

Thesis Statement

Paragraph #2 – Body

Paragraph #3 – Body

Paragraph #4 – Conclusion

Thesis Statement Restated

Call to Action

Thought-provoking idea: question, quotation, or insightful thought

Juvenile delinquency describes the antisocial behavior of many different types of youth who are in trouble, or who are on the brink of trouble with the law. In general terms juvenile delinquency means different things to different people. By law, a juvenile delinquent is a minor under seventeen who commits a criminal act determined by law and found guilty in court. Juvenile courts, see a juvenile delinquent as a youth who goes against a state or local law. Children are not just born delinquents, they are products of circumstances and chance, and culture and environment. A youth named a delinquent by circumstance and chance is just a youth who has been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Usually, the juvenile who commits a delinquent act by chance is a part of a gang that takes part in unlawful behavior temporarily. Most juveniles become delinquents because of the culture and environment that surrounds them. Juveniles who are in an area of violence and crime learn to go against authority and engage in crime because it is the acceptable thing to do. The juvenile justice system originated about 1819, and on July 1, 1899 the first juvenile court in the United States was set up in Cook County, Illinois. It represented a dramatic change in the way [the criminal](http://d.7769domain.com/r/rd.html?#http%3A%2F%2F7769domain.com%2FAd%2FGoIEx%2FUWJCTWg2MUJaSGJ6Y0VoV1NGOWhXWDJ1SGcyU1JkWmF6QzJhSGc0SWp6Um1CTTN3ZGI3b2k3b2hNMTRrVEE5dUh3eUtZcklvbWR6MW8xNUEzVjQ3K0kzeTh5d2ZUMEs0MnAzYTJ5YlRoSTlpdkZDZ1YvNjhmam56TC9mU29uZ1RTTVRObko1TUg0Y2hOWmE0dzZldlZ5bm0wU2JYUmgvVWpoMkpDSnlpVjBkcVdSczhlRFNHU2x1NHRVSy8xN2V50) justice system and all of the American society viewed criminally involved youth. The new court was founded on the principle of parens patriae , the idea that children should not be treated as criminals, but as wards of the state. Parents patrae tried to show that children were not fully responsible for their conduct and were able to be rehabilitated. Parens patraie tried to explain the view that children were fully responsible for their conduct and were able to be rehabilitated. Parens patraie remains the base of the juvenile justice system in Massachusetts and across the country. Then, like now, juvenile court was designed more to protect the child that to punish [bad behavior](http://essaymania.com/). Most people feel that until recently, the juvenile justice system served our country and our children pretty well. Beginning in the 1970 s, the nature of juvenile crime became different. Juvenile crime grew more common and more violent, and the system was not prepared. The biggest problem facing law enforcement today may be the very structure of the juvenile justice system. A system that neither punishes nor rehabilitates is useless. Examples of juvenile justice system failures are found everywhere throughout the United States. In Rhode Island, Craig Price, age fifteen, deliberately killed a mother and her two young daughters. Yet, this wasn t his first offense, or murder. Two years earlier he had murdered another woman. He also had a long record of assaults, burglaries, and other crimes. In Chicago, two of the neighborhood’s toughest bullies lured a five year old boy and his eight year old brother up to an empty fourteenth floor apartment. While up there one of the bullies decided to dangle the helpless five year old out the window by his feet. As the eight year old tried to help his younger brother, the bully dropped him, and he plunged fourteen floors to his death. The bullies, who were both ten years old, are not even going to juvenile prison. Journalist Richard Lacayo calls these kids predator juveniles (Lacayo 60), because they steal the life of others. Closer to home, the system is just as corrupt. A sixteen year old boy from Somerville has been charged with killing his next door neighbor, his best friends' mother. According to police the boy was infatuated about her, and before killing her, he beat her and then stabbed her seventy-two times. Violent juvenile crime is increasing at twice the rate of violent crimes made by adults. By the year 2,005, the number of teenagers between ages' fourteen and seventeen will grow by twenty-three percent. How can this epidemic of violence among our young people be controlled? First and foremost is education, in elementary school, in middle school, in high school, and most important, [education at home](http://essaymania.com/). Learning the difference between right and wrong begins at birth. Early childhood is the

most crucial time for this learning