

IELTS Writing Sample #32

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You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Without capital punishment (the death penalty) our lives are less secure and crimes of violence increase. Capital punishment is essential to control violence in society.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion? You should write at least 250 words.

model answer: Before talking about the essential role of death penalty, you have to think about the meaning, and the purpose, of any kind of punishment. If you consider that the purpose is to prevent the guilty from being nasty again, you can be seduced by an argumentation in favour of the suppression of capital punishment. But you have to think about another aspect of the problem: a punishment is also useful to impress people, to make them fear the law. In fact, let's take the example of a young misfit, which has grown in a violent atmosphere, influenced by older delinquents, etc ... He lives in the streets, he's got no aim but to survive. This is the kind of person who could possibly kill someone for money, or even for fun ... Why would he fear prison? Life would be easier for him there. In addition, in many cases, when you behave normally, you can benefit from penalty reductions. This young misfit needs to be impressed, he needs to know that the law is a frontier. When you cross it, you can lose your life. That is why capital punishment helps keeping a distance between robbery and murder. If you abolish it, you suppress the difference between these two types of crime, which are completely different.

But there is also a limit to define: even if death penalty is unavoidable, it would be a crime to apply it to inadequate cases. If there is no premeditation or past facts which can justify such a punishment, it is far too strict to apply death penalty. That is why the lawmakers have to establish precisely the context in which capital punishment can be pronounced. That is the price to pay to limit violence without using excessive violence. Comment: This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a Band 8 score. Here is the examiner's comment:

This response is very fluent and well expressed in an appropriate register. A range of relevant issues is skilfully presented and discussed. The argument is logically developed and well organised. A wide range of structures and vocabulary are used appropriately and accurately with only minor flaws.

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