

1

Answer the following questions in your own words.

Note : answers are only suggestions

1. Which crimes does the death penalty apply to in the U.S. today? **murder, rape, treason and other crimes**
2. Name a few countries in which the death penalty is a legal form of punishment. Refer to the map. **United States, China, India, Japan , the Middle East, some African countries**
3. How were criminals executed in revolutionary France? **guillotine, beheading**
4. Name some reasons in favor of capital punishment: **humans who kill have no right to live, appropriate form of punishment, deterrent, life imprisonment is expensive**
5. **Name some reasons against the death penalty: socially unjust, death penalty is immoral, no right to kill others, wrongful executions, life imprisonment is more effective**
6. When did the Supreme Court overturned its original ruling on capital punishment? **1976**
7. Which state has carried out the most executions since then? *Texas*
8. Why have some states decided not to continue with executions? **a number of defendants have been wrongfully convicted**
9. Which is the main method of execution in the United States today ? **lethal injection**
10. Why are doctors not allowed to take part in executions? **their job makes it unethical for them**
11. What was the problem with the gas chamber? **very painful**
12. How were women executed by the Roman Catholic church in the Middle Ages ? **they were burned at a stake**
13. What kind of instrument is the guillotine? When and where was it used ? **beheading machine; used during the French Revolution**
14. What is crucifixion? **death by nailing a person to the cross**
15. Where is stoning still carried out today ? **Middle East and Asian countries**

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT – KEY

2

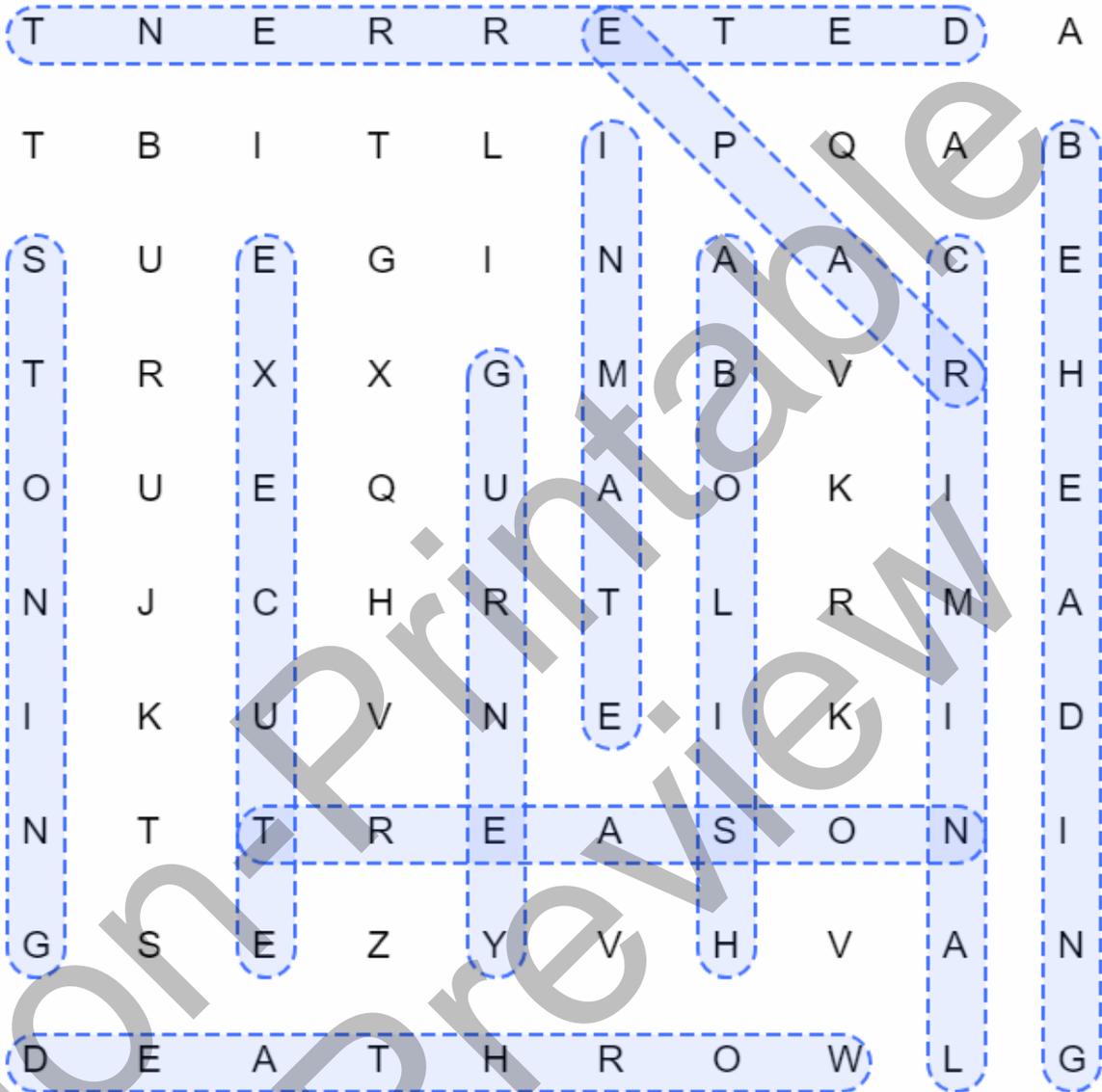
Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

A	abolish		C	prisoner
B	persecute		K	the act of choking to death
C	inmate		N	cells of a prison in which inmate await their execution
D	court		J	permission to leave prison if you have behaved well
E	solution		U	person who has seen something happen
F	appropriate		S	change your decision, decide differently
G	anesthetic		L	you cannot move or use parts of your body
H	gurney		A	to get rid of, do away with
I	treason		T	gentle, soft, more civilized
J	parole		R	set of laws and rules by which a country is organized
K	suffocation		W	guard of a prison
L	paralyze		F	right, correct
M	blindfold		E	liquid into which a gas or chemical has been mixed
N	death row		O	the act of giving back something or paying for damages
O	restitution		H	long, narrow table on wheels, which is used in hospitals to move people around
P	innocent		Q	sentence, to put someone into prison
Q	convict		I	crime against the government, in which you help its enemies
R	constitution		G	medicine that stops you from feeling pain
S	overturn		V	death on the cross
T	humane		M	to put a cloth or band across your eyes
U	eyewitness		B	bully, punish, discriminate against
V	crucifixion		P	not guilty
W	warden		D	place where a trial is held

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT – KEY

3

Find 11 words in the grid and mark them .



5

Multiple choice – Fill in the correct word

Capital punishment – often **(1) referred** to as the death penalty - is among the most discussed topics in **(2) society**. Although abolished in most countries it is still a common form of **(3) punishment** in the United States, the Middle East, China and other states.

Almost all ancient civilizations have executed people for **(4) serious** crimes. Jesus Christ, for example, was crucified by the Romans. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic church killed non-believers and burned women as witches at the **(5) stake**. Beheading was widespread during the French Revolution.

In the last 200 years many countries have **(6) abolished** capital punishment. In the United States discussion about the death penalty has been going on for decades. Even the Supreme Court, the highest court in the country, once reversed its **(7) decision** on capital punishment.

Those in favour of the death penalty say that it is an **(8) effective** deterrent for potential criminals and may stop them from **(9) committing** awful crimes. They also maintain that humans who kill others do not have the right to live themselves. On the other side, there are many arguments against capital punishment. One of the most heard is that the **(10) judicial** system is flawed and wrongful executions cannot be reversed. **(11) In addition**, life imprisonment without **(12) parole** would be a more effective way of punishing a criminal.

In the past governments have been seeking more **(13) humane** ways of carrying out death sentences. Hanging and death in front of a firing squad were common methods used up to the 20th century.

Most **(14) inmates** in the early part of the last century were killed on the electric chair. This was a painful death that **(15) resulted** in severe burns if it went wrong. Oklahoma was the first state to use lethal injection in 1977. Defendants are put on a gurney and a needle is stuck into their blood stream.

Three **(16) liquids** put them to sleep, stop breathing and the heart from beating within a few minutes. Executions are carried out by **(17) wardens** because doctors have sworn to save lives instead of taking them.

6

The Case of Troy Davis – Fill in the blanks with the words from the box. There are TWO words you will not need.

Troy Davis was an African American who was **(1) convicted** and executed for the murder of a police officer in the car park of a restaurant in Savannah, Georgia. The killing occurred in August 1989, when a **(2) security** guard tried to stop Davis from attacking a man. Seven **(3) witnesses** said that they had seen Davis actually shoot the officer, while two others **(4) testified** that Davis had **(5) confessed** the murder to them. Although the murder weapon was never found and there was no physical **(6) evidence** that Davis had been at the crime scene, he was sentenced to death in 1991.

In the 20 years between the first **(7) trial** and his execution in 2011, Troy Davis repeatedly said that he had not **(8) committed** the crime. Famous people, including former president Jimmy Carter and Pope Benedict XVI, as well as human **(9) rights** organizations, tried to help Davis. Even people in favor of the death penalty **(10) supported** Davis and stated that a possibly innocent person should not be executed.

In 2009 the United States Supreme Court decided that the case should be **(11) examined** again. Some of the witnesses who had seen the shooting said that they were not sure any more if Davis had been the killer. In 2010 the court **(12) confirmed** the sentence and set an **(13) execution** date. After a number of **(14) appeals** had failed, Davis was finally executed through lethal injection on September 21, 2011. Even a **(15) petition**, signed by a million people, could not stop the execution.

The Troy Davis case triggered angry reactions and **(16) outrage** across the world. Top level officials in the European Union, which is extremely **(17) critical** of capital punishment, said that a person should not be punished if there are serious doubts about his **(18) guilt**.

appeal
committed
confessed
confirmed
convicted
critical
evidence
examined
execution
guilt
injection
outrage
petition
punishment
rights
security
supported
testified
trial
witnesses

8

Facts about the death penalty

Take a look at the fact sheet provided by the *Death Penalty Information Center*. Find information to answer the following questions.

Source : <https://dpic-cdn.org/production/documents/pdf/FactSheet.pdf>

1. How has the number of executions developed in the past 50 years? **the number of executions has risen steadily up to the turn of the century, then gone down until 2020; in the past 5 years it has risen again**
2. Compare the race of defendants executed with the race of victims in capital punishment cases. What differences can you see? **more Black defendants than Black victims ; about 50% of defendants are White whereas Whites make up 75% of all victims**
3. How many death penalty states are there in the U.S.? **27**
4. How many death row inmates have been exonerated in the past 50 years? Which states have carried out the most cases? **202 ; Florida, Illinois, Texas**
5. Look up the percentage of the Black population in the U.S. compare it with the proportion of Blacks on death row. **about 13 % of the total population are Black where as 41% of death row inmates are Black**
6. Which state has the most death row inmates? **California**
7. Which state has carried out the most executions since 1976? **Texas**
8. What has the Supreme Court decided in regard to mental disabilities of death row inmates? **in 2002 the Supreme Court decided it was unconstitutional to execute inmates with mental disabilities**
9. Why do death penalty trials cost more than others? higher **costs for prosecution and defense; more time consuming, lengthy jury selection, more security, longer trials**
10. How has America's support for the death penalty developed over the decades? What is the situation today? **the public's support for the death penalty was lowest in 1995 (below 20%); since then, it has gone up ; today about 43% are in favor of the death penalty**