

UNIT 20 A MOTHER'S STORY

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will:

- 🎧 Listen to and read the story of a mother whose son was killed during a robbery.
- Answer open-ended comprehension questions to show understanding of the story.
- 🗣️ Consider four alternative opinions about the death penalty, and decide who makes the strongest point.
- Study the Opinion Network to learn how to express sympathy and understanding for someone's feelings.
- Extend the Topic by talking about the right punishment for different crimes.
- Read a Culture Corner extract in which three writers give their views of the death penalty.
- Share ideas about the right punishment for a certain crime.
- Watch a follow-up video extract from Scott giving his views about the death penalty.
- Take the Unit Test.

Authors' Introduction

Go to impactseries.com/issues to listen to Richard's unit introduction.

The Issue

In this unit, the death penalty, or capital punishment, is the issue. A mother's only son was killed senselessly during a robbery. She wants the murderer to die for his crime. She wants to watch him die in the electric chair.

Questions Raised

- Is capital punishment an appropriate punishment for murder?
- Does capital punishment prevent people from killing others?
- When is the death penalty the right sentence?

To Keep in Mind

- Capital punishment can be an emotional issue. Discussing it can provoke strong feelings.
- Discussions of the death penalty often involve religion.
- Cultural considerations often are part of considerations of the death penalty.

TEACHING GUIDE

Getting Ready

→ The three questions cover the principles of capital punishment.

🗣️ **Teaching tip:** Check to make sure everyone knows the meaning of the expression *by hanging*. Students could ask each other the three questions and compare their answers in small groups.

You could poll students for their responses to #2 before they hear the Situation. Later, at the end of the unit, you could do a follow-up poll to see if students have changed their minds.

Situation

→ Read the introduction to the Situation. Note that the question is rhetorical, and that students do not need to answer.

🗣️ **Teaching tip:** You might want to go over the five questions in the Check Your Understanding section (page 87) with your students before they listen to the recording. Students listen the first time with their books closed. Then they follow along in their books (page 86) as they listen a second time. If they need to listen a third time, they could also read aloud as they listen.

Check Your Understanding

Answer Key (sample answers)

1. Wang
2. Because he didn't (or could not) open the safe. (Or because he didn't have the key to the safe.)
3. No, the owner did.
4. He was executed. (Or, he died in the electric chair.)
5. Because she wanted to have peace. (Or because she wanted revenge.)

What Do You Think?

→ Before moving to What Do You think? check students' understanding of the story with the comprehension questions.

Teaching tip: For Activity A, you could have the students listen to the four people the first time with their books closed. Then have them open their books and follow along as they listen a second time, checking the opinions with which they agree. In Activity B, go over the expressions in the Opinion Network. Then have the students, in pairs, go over each of the four opinions. After students have completed B, you could ask the class for their opinions of Susan, Luis, Yeon-Suk, and Ken. Don't forget that there are more opinions at www.impact.series.com.

Culture point: Reactions to capital punishment often cut across cultural boundaries. That is, even where the majority of a society are in favor of the death penalty, for example, there will be a strong and vocal minority on the other side of the issue.

Extending the Topic: Just punishment

→ Have students work individually when completing the list in Activity A. You might need to explain the final item, "killed her husband so she would receive a lot of *insurance money*."

Place students in pairs or groups of three for Activity B. Have them read aloud the Basic structures (one student reading A and one student reading B). In the Extension, a third student adds a comment to what student B has said. Then student A provides a final opinion.

For Activity C, instruct the students in their groups to agree on which situations deserve the worst punishment. Then have each group report to the class.

Culture Corner

Have students work in pairs or groups of three. Students read through the three quotes about the death penalty, or read them aloud and check that students understand them. Give your students an opportunity to ask about unknown words. Then write a few questions on the board for discussion. For example: Do you agree with any of these people? Why or why not?

Sharing My Ideas: You be the judge!

→ Choose

Since the students are already familiar with the situations in Extending the Topic, they should have no trouble selecting one to talk about.

→ Prepare and Rehearse

Give students plenty of time to make their notes in the Prepare box. You could simply point out the Language Hints or go over them as a class.

Before students begin rehearsing, draw their attention to the Presentation Tip and encourage them to practice making eye contact with their partners. The first part of the Rehearse step involves silent practice. Then give students a chance to improve their notes. Once they are ready, they should practice with a partner. Be sure everyone has read and understood the Listener task. Give students time to make any additions based on the listener's feedback.

Sample Presentation

I am going to talk about the situation in which a wife killed her husband. She did this because she wanted to get the money from his insurance policy. She needed the money to buy drugs. She was addicted to crack. In

this situation I believe the woman should spend the rest of her life in prison. Killing her is wrong. All killing is wrong. If we, society, kill her, then we are murderers. Let her spend her life in prison, behind bars, so she can think about what she did. In conclusion, I feel this crime is wrong and life in prison is the right punishment.

→Present

Have students change partners, or put them in small groups. Encourage listeners to take notes, because they are asked to give their opinion of the presenter's ideas at the end of the presentation.

If you are using the assessment guide below, go over each point with the whole class before students begin their presentations. (This could also be done during the Rehearse step so that students have time to prepare for or practice each assessment point.) Be sure to remind your students that communicating their ideas is more important than using perfect English!

Assessing the Activity

Create a handout with a rating grid such as the one below, or simply write it on the board. (Note: For more information on student assessment and ways to modify the assessment system, see Assessing the Activity, Unit 1.)

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1 – There was a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 2 – The presenter gave good reasons for what the punishment should be. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 3 – There was enough information in the presentation. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 4 – The presenter looked relaxed. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 5 – The presenter made eye contact with the audience. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |

When students are working in pairs, have each student evaluate the other. If a student presents in front of a small group or in front of the class, have each student evaluate him or her. A rater can give up to 5 stars for each category, so the maximum score for any presentation is 25 stars.

Of course, you can also give your own assessment, along with positive suggestions for how the presenter can improve next time.

PERSONAL OPINION

→ If you have downloaded the video clip or have access to the Internet in class, play the video clip. The first time, have the students watch with books closed. Ask questions to see if the students have understood the gist of Scott's opinion. Then have them look at the summary. See if they can fill in the missing words. Play the extract once or twice more. Then check the answers.

Answer Key

Scott

I'm a little skeptical about this. The woman in the story said that it made her feel better when she saw her son's killer die. But actually studies have shown that when people like this actually watch the execution, they may in the short term feel good, but the long-term effects aren't good at all. Nobody is actually psychologically prepared to deal with this.

Generally speaking, I don't approve of the death penalty. I don't think that a life for a life makes sense. The state is just as barbaric as the killer if you do that. And then also from the psychological point of view of those who were done wrong by the killing, in the end, it doesn't make anyone feel good. So I don't agree with the mother's stance.

Video Script

Well, you see, the woman said that it made her feel better that she saw him die, but actually in my opinion, and also studies have shown, that even when families who have had that happen actually watched that they may in the short term feel good but the long term effects aren't good. You're not actually psychologically prepared to deal with that either. Um, so I don't approve of the death penalty.

Ah, generally, I don't think that a life for a life makes sense. The state is just as barbaric if you do that. And then also from the psychological point of view of those who were, ah, done wrong by the killing, um, in the end, it doesn't make anyone feel good. So I don't agree with the mother's stance that watching someone be killed watching someone die, is a good thing.

UNIT TEST

→ Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Distribute the copies and allow about 15 minutes for the class to complete the test. Correct the test in class.

A. Understanding the Situation: The focus is on understanding the story in the Situation. Students answer five multiple-choice questions.

B. Vocabulary: The focus is on understanding vocabulary from the Situation or the Extending the Topic sections. Students fill in three missing words of a short paragraph that summarizes the Situation.

C. Expressions: The focus is on checking students' understanding of expressions or phrases from the What Do You Think? and Opinion Network sections. Students answer two multiple-choice questions.

Answer Key:

A. 1. b 2. d 3. c 4. a 5. a

B. ordered, threatened, pleaded

C. 1. b 2. c

LINKS

If you would like the class to do additional research on the death penalty, here are some useful links:

For general information:

www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/

For information in favor:

www.prodeathpenalty.com/

For information against:

www.aclu.org/capital/index.html