LESSON 7
RESOURCE SHEET 2
For and against the death penalty

ARGUMENTS PEOPLE USE FOR THE DEATH PENALTY

- Capital punishment is the right punishment for those who take away life – murderers, terrorists and drug peddlers. Those who have taken a life should be killed – a life for a life.

- Capital punishment is a deterrent. The fear of being executed must surely put off the criminals from committing murder if they know they'll face the death penalty if caught.

- One thing is certain: no executed person will ever kill again.

- Public opinion wants executions.

- The families of those killed need justice and retribution (revenge).

- It would surely cost a lot more money to keep murderers in prison serving a life sentence than it would to execute them.

- It is more humane to put someone to death than to keep them locked up for years.

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ARGUMENTS PEOPLE USE AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

- Execution is a violation of the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- It is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, whether by the hangman's rope, the firing squad, poison gas, lethal injection, the sword, stoning or the electric chair.

- Capital punishment does not deter crime. All studies by the UN and others show the death penalty does not prevent crime any more effectively than other punishments.

- Courts can make mistakes. Innocent people are being executed. A study in 1987 showed that 350 innocent people had been condemned to death in the USA since 1900 and 23 of them were executed.

- The state carrying out the death penalty makes us all into killers. If we support the death penalty for murder, we end up supporting murder, which makes us guilty of hypocrisy.

- The death penalty is discriminatory and is often used disproportionately against people from poor backgrounds or of particular races, or those with mental health problems.

- If someone is put to death, they have no chance to change their life or to contribute positively to society.