



Cambridge International AS & A Level

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

9239/11

Paper 1 Written Exam

May/June 2023

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

The following documents consider issues related to crime. Read them both in order to answer all the questions on the paper.

Document A: adapted from *Young offenders don't belong in adult prisons. California has a chance to end the practice*, an article written by Vincent Schiraldi, published in 'LA Times' (US) in 2020. The author is former commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation and co-director of the Columbia University Justice Lab (US).

Adulthood doesn't magically happen on the day someone turns 18. Any parent knows this, and numerous laws and social practices also recognize the fact. In 2016, California prohibited the purchase of tobacco by anyone aged under 21. Californians under 21 are not allowed to consume alcohol or marijuana or purchase handguns in the state. Nationally, youth can stay on their parents' health insurance until age 26 under the Affordable Care Act.

In November, the Chief Probation Officers of California proposed raising the age limit on California's youth justice system from 18 to 20. The plan would make California the second US state to recognize that young people, whether they're 18 or 20, don't belong in adult courts and prisons. The bill could be introduced this year. This policy shift makes sense. We all want the same thing for youth who get into trouble with the law: a system that makes them less likely to re-offend and more likely to live happy, productive lives.

The youth justice system, though imperfect, is more appropriate. It has more rehabilitation than the punishment-focused criminal justice system. Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that juveniles under 18 who go through the youth justice system, have lower re-arrest rates than youths who go through the adult system. Engaging them in education, community service and work with people of their own age has the potential to steer youth toward more successful lives.

A prison record makes it far more difficult to find housing and jobs later on. The juvenile system, on the other hand, offers more protection. If they stay out of trouble, those who go through the system can have records hidden from public view. Youthful mistakes won't affect them for the rest of their lives. However, if they commit serious offenses, juveniles may still be tried as adults.

When America's juvenile courts were launched in the early 1900s, they generally adopted age 18 as their upper limit. At that time, 18-year-olds stepped into adult roles like spouse, parent and worker. Research shows that marriage and work help young people grow out of youthful troublemaking. Today, emerging adults live in their family homes longer. They complete their educations, go to work, and marry much later than previous generations. In 1960, for example, 45% of youth ages 18–24 were married; by the 2010 census, only 9% were.

Some have expressed concern that adding an influx of 18- to 21-year-olds to the state's juvenile courts, probation facilities and prisons would overwhelm them. Indeed, last year in California, there were nearly as many arrests for 18- and 19-year-olds (14,400) as for all youth ages 10 through 17 (17,200). But in states that have raised the age limit, such as New York and Massachusetts, juvenile court caseloads and detention populations actually declined.

To help prevent problems, raising the age to qualify for the youth justice system should be carefully planned, gradually phased in and properly funded, so the state maximizes its ability to turn young lives around.

A proposal that increases the chance that young people graduate from the justice system and go on to live productive lives has the potential to improve the safety of all Californians.

Document B: adapted from *Prison rehabilitation*, an article written by Akola Thompson, published in 'The Minority Report', 'Stabroek News' (Guyana) in 2020. The author is a freelance writer and journalist living in Guyana. She is currently the youngest columnist in the country and comments mostly on socio-political ills.

The public does not sympathise with the case for prison reform and rehabilitation. The fact that it costs more to rehabilitate an offender than to simply leave them in prison serves as a major barrier to prison reform.

While there has been slow progress towards the introduction of reform and rehabilitation programmes, we are still far behind what is needed. Academic and vocational programmes for small sections of the prison population have had some success. This is a first step towards a culture that treats its prisoners as citizens capable of change.

Many prisoners are uneducated and poor. So, gaining essential knowledge and skills does a lot to improve their lives after release. Decades of research has proven that prisoners who are exposed to, and participate in, prison rehabilitative programmes are less likely to reoffend. Given the high numbers of repeat offenders in our society, it is time we reform our prison system.

People being imprisoned daily for minor crimes has led to the urgent issue of overcrowding within the prisons. People who are awaiting trial mix with convicted criminals. With no separation, violent and non-violent offenders exist in the same space, often resulting in the influencing, recruiting and hardening of non-violent offenders.

Our lack of sympathy with rehabilitation comes from our belief that someone who is imprisoned automatically loses their right to basic humanity. So, when released from prison, they face stigmatization that makes it difficult for them to live and earn. Although prison conditions are horrible, some offenders prefer to return to prison. This is because it is so difficult for them to reintegrate into society.

There are always those who argue that the prison system as it exists is necessary to fight the high levels of crime we experience. While there certainly should be measures in place to hold criminals to account, our prison system does more harm than good. It is still tied to the old principles of racist and capitalist exploitation. The early justice system was based largely on control of the people and especially the work force. This is why anything that might cause social unrest, threaten private property or challenge the political establishment is criminalized and effectively shut down.

The history of our justice and prison system shows it is no coincidence that those behind prison bars are overwhelmingly poor and black. The justice system is set up to extract wealth from those who are least able to afford it. The class prejudice of capitalism underlies all of this. The rich and powerful are frequently allowed to commit fraud, rob and kill without any kind of punishment. Meanwhile, the poor and the working class, who are often pushed to crime through desperation, are sent to rot in jail.

People in prison do not lack humanity or the capacity to grow and develop. Those who live behind bars must be provided with opportunities to rehabilitate and explore other options beyond prison. To achieve that, effective justice and prison systems must be put in place.

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