

Discussion Questions

"The Cost of Capital Punishment" by Ian Urbina

1. The death penalty is sometimes applied to federal crimes like treason, terrorism, and espionage. Why do you think these crimes may be punishable by death?
2. Do you agree with those who say eliminating the death penalty will result in an increase in crime? Why or why not?
3. Are you surprised that the United States is one of the few industrialized democracies that still has capital punishment? Why do you think this is so?
4. What might account for changes over time in public support for the death penalty?
5. What do states get to determine whether or not to use the death penalty?
6. What does the phrase "an eye for an eye" mean, and why might modern supporters of capital punishment invoke it? What are some of the arguments for and against the "eye for an eye" philosophy?
7. Why do you think capital punishment has been in use for so long?