

***AQA ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 2:
Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives***

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



***Two non-fiction texts on the
same theme or topic***

SOURCE A

This is an extract from a letter Oscar Wilde wrote to 'The Daily Chronicle' newspaper after his own release in 1897 from Reading prison. The letter, entitled: "The Case of Warder Martin: Some Cruelties of Prison Life", shows his concern over the treatment of children in prisons.

To The Editor, The Daily Chronicle, Friday 28th May 1897.

Dear Sir, the present treatment of children is terrible, primarily from people not understanding the psychology of a child's nature. A child cannot understand a punishment inflicted by society.

The child consequently, being taken away from its parents by people whom it has never seen before, and of whom it knows nothing, and finding itself in a lonely and unfamiliar cell, waited on by strange faces, and ordered about and punished by representatives of a prison system that it cannot understand, becomes an immediate prey to the first and most prominent emotion produced by modern prisons - the emotion of terror. 5

The terror of a child in prison is quite limitless. I remember once, in Reading prison, as I was going out to exercise, seeing in the dimly-lit cell right opposite my own, a small boy. Two warders — not unkindly men — were talking sternly to him, or perhaps giving him some useful advice about his behaviour. One was in the cell with him, the other was standing outside. The child's face was like a white wedge of sheer terror. There was in his eyes the terror of a hunted animal. 10

The next morning I heard him at breakfast time crying and begging to be let out. His cry was for his parents. From time to time I could hear the deep voice of the warder on duty telling him to keep quiet. Yet he was not even convicted of whatever little offence he had been charged with. He was simply on remand. This I knew by his wearing of his own clothes, which seemed neat enough. He was, however, wearing prison socks and shoes. This showed that he was a very poor boy, whose own shoes, if he had any, were in a bad state. Justices and magistrates, an entirely ignorant class as a rule, often remand children for a week. They call this "not sending a child to prison". It is, of course, a stupid view on their part. To a little child whether he is in prison on remand, or after conviction, is no different. To him, the horrible thing is to be there at all. In the eyes of humanity it should be a horrible thing for him to be there at all. 15 20

SOURCE B: Newspaper article: 'Back to the Chain Gang' by Dermot Purgavie

Beyond the sleek, mirror-glass guard towers and the coils of razor wire glinting around the perimeter, the Rocky Mountains are already glazed with snow, but soothing views are not part of the programme. Inside each cell, the window is positioned so all you can see is sky. That's the good part. The bed is a slab of concrete. Meals come through a slot in the steel door. The whole place smells of fresh paint and hopelessness.

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Welcome to Florence Federal Prison, the new showpiece of America's booming penal system. Built at a cost of £40 million, it offers trendsetting advances in the evolution of the dungeon and redefines the concept of 'doing time'. It's typical of the trend in America towards tougher and tougher prisons and prison regimes, which in some states now include old-fashioned chain gangs. Florence Prison makes Britain's maximum security prisons look like holiday camps. Those unfortunate enough to qualify for a place at Florence had better get used to cheerlessness. They will get out of their cells for just one hour a day and then only in handcuffs and leg-irons and escorted by three guards armed with yard-long prods known as 'rib-spreaders'.

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As my footsteps echoed along the corridors, the thought occurred that not even Mike Tyson would cause trouble here. The chances of inmates indulging in the antics the British have become used to – plotting escapes with mobile phones, running businesses from their prison cells and planning every type of crime – are next to zero here.

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When it opens next month this will be the toughest prison in America, designed for America's most dangerous convicts. It's in Colorado but once you're inside, you're nowhere. Florence is a glimpse of the future and an expression of the anger and fear of a crime-ridden society. America has been locking up criminals with such enthusiasm that it needs 250 new cells every day. The expense is staggering; it costs much more to send someone to prison than to university and it has been calculated that at the present rate of imprisonment – already five times higher than Europe – there will be more Americans inside jails than outside them by 2053.

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The convict population of 1.4 million is certain to grow even more under strict laws that impose longer sentences and restrict parole. As the prison system expands, public hostility to the idea of cosy jails has so far encouraged 36 states to adopt unforgiving methods for their most troublesome prisoners.

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Florence is meant to inspire fear and deter criminals from causing trouble. The prisoners will have to endure three years of rugged isolation, without incident, to gain release to a gentler prison. They are confined alone in their cell for 23 hours a day of relentless tedium. There is no recreation, no socialising, no work, no communal meals. The potential for trouble is reduced by severely limiting prisoners' movement. The accommodation is basic, with bed, desk, bookcase and stool made from vandal-proof, reinforced concrete, anchored to the floor. Matches and lighters are banned. An electric device gives smokers a light when they push cigarettes through a hole in the wall.

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Florence believes in sensory deprivation. Cells are built on a staggered system to prevent eye contact between prisoners. A steel door thwarts any conversation. Perhaps cruellest of all, the TV is in black & white and shows only religious and educational programmes. Prisoners get one ten-minute long phone call a month. No visits are allowed.

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While the trend towards tougher prisons has much public support, critics argue that it simply toughens criminals while others complain it is inhumane and criminals still commit crimes.

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Q1: Read Source A, lines 9 – 24.

Choose four statements below which are TRUE.

[4 marks]

- Wilde believes that prison is a good punishment for children
- Wilde claims that prison is a terrifying experience for children
- Wilde witnessed a child begging to be released from prison
- Wilde believes sending children to prison is a stupid idea
- The boy had lost his own shoes and socks
- The boy was so poor he did not have his own shoes and socks
- The boy cried because he missed his friends

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Q2: Refer to Source A and Source B. Write a summary of the two writers' attitudes to prison as a form of punishment.

[8 marks]

Q3: Re-read this extract, taken from Source B.

Florence is meant to inspire fear and deter criminals from causing trouble. The prisoners will have to endure three years of rugged isolation, without incident, to gain release to a gentler prison. They are confined alone in their cell for 23 hours a day of relentless tedium. There is no recreation, no socialising, no work, no communal meals. The potential for trouble is reduced by severely limiting prisoners' movement. The accommodation is basic, with bed, desk, bookcase and stool made from vandal-proof, reinforced concrete, anchored to the floor. Matches and lighters are banned. An electric device gives smokers a light when they push cigarettes through a hole in the wall.

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How does the writer use language here to convey his opinions of this prison?

[12 marks]

Q4: Refer to Source A and Source B.

Compare how the writers present their attitudes to the experiences of the prisons they describe.

In your answer, you should:

- **compare their different perspectives**
- **compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes**
- **support your ideas with quotations from both texts**

[16 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about **45 minutes** on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Q5

“Prison is a waste of time: it’s like home from home and is no punishment at all!”

Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper explaining your views on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]