



Emerging | Exemplar Essay

Criminal Justice Reform

Change the Law



Claim and Focus

A claim is difficult to identify as no clear position on the issue is present (“Everyone should treat everyone the same”). The essay discusses the ways people of color are treated unfairly by the police instead of focusing on recommendations to make courtrooms more equitable.



Support and Evidence

Evidence and reasoning are unclear (“People can be stuck in jail for a long time while they wait”) and there are no quotes from the sources to support the ideas of the essay. Counterclaims are not acknowledged.



Organization

An introduction and conclusion are unclear, transitions are not used to make connections between ideas, and the essay lacks a basic organizational structure.



Language

Sentence structure is predominantly simplistic, unvaried, and often incorrect (“Bail is up to the judge. So are sentences”). Word choice is at times repetitive (“long,” “really long”), uninteresting, and informal (“when they totally didn't have to at all,” “for something that wasn't even that bad”).



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

Criminal Justice Reform



Notes

Change the Law

You would think in court everyone is treated the same but they're not. It's not fair that some people get away with crimes and some people get out of jail and other people don't. Everyone should treat everyone the same. Judges shouldn't care if someone is white or black. People are protesting because people of color are treated differently by police. Police can be extra rough when they totally don't have to at all and no one knows. Even when they're caught on video they still can get away with it. And that happens in the courtrooms too. Bail is up to the judge. So are sentences. People can be stuck in jail for a long time while they wait and then they can get a really long jail sentence for something that wasn't even that bad. That's not fair so you should change the law.