

Sample Text 1

Despite the marketing, fair trade sales are struggling to take off in the U.S. And yet, such products are everywhere. On supermarket shelves, in canteens, at Ben & Jerry's, and even at McDonald's.

Customers are told that by paying a little more for certain fair-trade certified products, farmers in developing countries will be able to live a better life. But still, few Americans buy products that are labeled "fair trade".

This is not necessarily due to a lack of interest but rather because they find these products too expensive and have doubts about the real impact of fair trade on small producers. Also, there is a discrepancy between the marketing rhetoric and the consumers' buying habits, who are suffering from the decline of their purchasing power.

In the 1990s, the world discovered the abusive and often inhumane practices of major brands like Nike and Gap and the slavery-like conditions in which certain products were manufactured.

This could explain why the arrival of products labeled "fair trade" in mass distribution does not necessarily appeal to consumers and especially because the major retailers refuse to reveal the margins and profits that they receive from the sale of fair trade products.

It is therefore understandable that consumers do not trust these large retailers when their management practices are often in deep contradiction with the basic principles of fair trade, and even more so if they refuse to be transparent.

The success of fair trade in terms of poverty alleviation is therefore rather mixed. All the more so since fair trade chains work mainly with the least disadvantaged regions of the world -Latin America- because farmers have more means to buy the certifications, but also because their productivity is higher, which makes their yield more predictable and cheaper.

Question

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast doubt on specific points made in the reading passage.

Sample Text 2

Throughout the ages, legal specialists, politicians, philosophers, but also ordinary people have expressed their views on the death penalty. The arguments put forward by proponents of capital punishment have remained almost identical since the origins of our societies. To this day, the three major arguments presented here are generally used to defend the principle of the death penalty.

To survive, a society must defend itself against disorder and enforce its laws. When one of its members breaks them, it is dangerous not only for the people he/she might attack but especially for society as a whole.

The state should therefore ensure that justice prevents the offender from causing disorder or committing further crimes. The most effective way to do this would be to physically eliminate the culprits of the most serious crimes. If the death penalty were abolished, society would appear weak and vulnerable and crime would increase seriously.

The murder of a man is such a serious crime that it can only be adequately answered by the death of the culprit. By eliminating him/her, society would satisfy the legitimate desire for revenge of the victim's relatives, especially in the case of, particularly awful crimes. The parents of a raped and murdered child, for example, could only find solace in the certainty that justice will kill the murderer.

Executions would be an effective weapon against crime. This would make criminals hesitate when the time comes to act. Even if they do not respect the lives of others, murderers would be afraid of being killed themselves once in the hands of justice. Impressed by this terrible sentence, all citizens would be driven to respect order, if not by conviction, then at least by fear.

Question

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Sample Text 3

In early modern Europe, a boy was hired to stand in place of a prince when he was to receive a punishment for his transgressions. This practice was originally called "punishment by proxy." As whipping was a common form of punishment by tutors, these proxies came to be known as whipping boys.

Throughout history, there have been references to "whipping boys" in historical accounts and literature. As a result, the term "whipping boy" is now used in modern language as a metaphor for a scapegoat or someone to take the blame.

One of the first known examples of a whipping boy was a young man named Barnaby Fitzpatrick, eventually the 2nd Baron Upper Ossory. Barnaby became a companion to Edward VI after he was sent to England as a hostage and was often punished for Edward's crimes. For example, when Edward uttered profanities, Barnaby was beaten as a result.

Another historical example is that of Charles I of England and his whipping boy, William Murray, in 1603. William was a close friend of Charles' and even grew up to be the 1st Earl of Dysart and Charles's Groom of the Bedchamber. It is thought that the reason for their continued closeness was because of their shared history of punishment.

Finally, Mark Twain himself wrote about a whipping boy in "The Prince and the Pauper", his 1881 novel which popularized the term. It is a work of historical fiction about two identical boys who were born on the same day: Tom Canty, a pauper, and Edward VI of England. While the royal "whipping-boy," Humphrey Marlow, is a fictional character, it is another great example of this role during the Renaissance.

Question

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