



Reading Comprehension

LAW: DEATH PENALTY

“Death Penalty: death as a punishment given by a court of law for very serious crimes”

“Capital punishment: punishment by death”

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary, freely available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>)



Free image from:
<https://pixabay.com>

Death penalty laws are as old as the hills. According to the web page of the “Death Penalty Information Center”, a non-profit organization based in Washington DC, the first death penalty laws were established in the 18th century B.C.

China, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea and the USA are some of the countries that still embrace capital punishment. In the case of the US, out of the 50 states that make up the country, 31 have the death penalty. That is more than half of the country! The organization mentioned above explains that Britain had a huge historical influence on America’s use of the death penalty [recall that in Unit 5 we talked about the special historical relationship between Britain and the US]. When European settlers arrived in the new world (America), they also brought with them the practice of capital punishment. Remember the Jamestown colony of Virginia from Unit 5? Well, this is where the first recorded execution took place in 1608.

Besides the fact that the death penalty is inhumane, expensive and immoral, do you believe that the system always executes people who are really guilty of a crime? Or might mistakes be made and the law could end up condemning innocent people?

Let us take a look at the interesting case of a man called John Doe.¹ The setting is Texas in the 90’s. John was a philosophy professor at the University of Austin (Texas). Something happened to John, which is not important to our story here, and, as a result, John lost his job, his wife left him, and he lost custody of his kid. John’s life was absolutely destroyed. Later on, John was sentenced to death for the rape and murder of his university colleague and dear friend Jane Smith. Both were activists against capital punishment and both were the state’s leading death penalty abolitionists. John spent six years on death row before the state of Texas executed him.

¹ John Doe is the name given to a man whose identity is unknown. Find out more information about this on Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

Jane was found dead on her kitchen floor. She was naked, handcuffed, and she had been bagged, that is, she had a plastic bag over her head, which means that she choked to death. John's DNA was all over Jane's body. He had also been seen leaving her house the day she was supposedly murdered. Every clue points to John as Jane's murderer, right? However, one thing was missing from the crime scene. Somebody had left a tripod and a camera in Jane's kitchen. This means that somebody had recorded the whole crime, but the tape was missing and the video was never found until the day John was executed.

The person who found the tape was a New York reporter who had interviewed John in jail three days before he was executed. During the interview, the reporter learned that Jane had leukemia and that she was dying. The tape showed that everything had been planned by Jane and John. John had recorded Jane committing suicide: handcuffing and bagging herself. They wanted to make it seem like John was the murderer. He would thus be convicted and sentenced to death. Why did they do that? Well, Jane was going to die anyway and John's life had no meaning anymore. But they could do one last thing together to fight against capital punishment. They could prove that the system convicts and kills innocent people. They could make a point about the potential for error in capital punishment cases, which is what happens sometimes: people who are executed are later found to be innocent. Here is what the newspaper *The Guardian* published on April 28, 2014²:

At least 4.1% of all defendants sentenced to death in the US in the modern era are innocent, according to the first major study to attempt to calculate how often states get it wrong in their wielding of the ultimate punishment.

Jane and John's story is actually fiction. That is, the story comes from the movie called *The life of David Gale*, which is a must-see. Another strongly recommended movie is *Dancer in the dark*, which also discusses a similar case. Both stories are not real, but they do make a strong point against capital punishment, don't you think?

² Fragment of online newspaper article taken from:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/28/death-penalty-study-4-percent-defendants-innocent>



Exercises (see answers on page 295)

Exercise 1:

Fill in the gaps with the following words taken from the text (if you do not know the meaning of every word, try to guess their meaning from the context).

executed	crime	jail	sentenced to death	murder
guilty	innocent	convicted	death row	crime scene

- 1) A _____, or prison, is a place where criminals are kept in order to punish them.
- 2) If you _____ someone, you deliberately kill that person.
- 3) A man spent 18 years on _____ before he was exonerated, that is, before it was shown that he was not guilty.
- 4) A California sex offender was _____ on Friday for kidnapping and murdering four women.
- 5) Using the clues from the _____, police officers determined who the murderer was.
- 6) On August 6, 1890, William Kemmler was the first man _____ in the electric chair.
- 7) If somebody is _____ of a crime, they have committed that crime.
- 8) How many _____ people have been wrongly executed in the last 30 years?
- 9) John Doe was seen near Jane's house the night of the _____.
- 10) If a person is _____ of a crime, they are found guilty of that crime in a law court.

Exercise 2:

Write a summary (70-80 words) of the text "Law: Death Penalty". Remember that you do not need to deal with or talk about everything that is said in the text. Try to write about the most important facts.



Glossary

death penalty	n.	pena de muerte, pena capital
capital punishment	n.	pena de muerte, pena capital
as old as the hills (informal)	idiom. (adj.)	muy viejo, más viejo que Matusalén
non-profit organization	n.	organización sin ánimo de lucro
to be based in	v expr.	estar (algo) localizado en, tener sede en
to embrace	v.	aceptar, acoger
to mention	v.	mencionar
to make up	vtr phrasal.	formar, constituir
huge	adj.	enorme, gran
to recall	v.	recordar
practice	n.	práctica, costumbre
execution	n.	ejecución
besides	prep.	aparte
inhumane	adj.	inhumano, -a; salvaje
expensive	adj.	caro, -a
immoral	adj.	inmoral
guilty	adj.	culpable
crime	n.	delito, crimen
mistake	n.	error
to end up (doing sth.)	vi phrasal.	acabar
to condemn	v.	condenar
innocent	adj.	inocente (de un crimen)
to take a look at sth.	v expr.	echar un vistazo
case	n.	caso
setting	n.	escenario
custody	n.	custodia (de un menor)
to sentence (sb. to death)	v.	condenar (a alguien a muerte)
rape	v.	violar
(to) murder	n. / v.	asesinato / asesinar
colleague	n.	colega; compañero, -a de trabajo
activist	n.	activista
abolitionist	n.	abolicionista
death row	n.	corredor de la muerte
naked	adj.	desnudo, -a
to handcuff	v.	esposar
to choke (sb.) to death	v.	ahogar (a alguien hasta matarlo, -a)
supposedly	adv.	supuestamente, presuntamente



clue	n.	prueba, pista
to point to	v. + prep.	apuntar a, señalar, indicar
crime scene	n.	escena del crimen
to record	v.	grabar
reporter	n.	periodista
to interview	v.	entrevistar
jail	n.	cárcel
to die	v.	morir
to commit suicide	v. + n.	suicidarse
to convict	v.	condenar
anyway	adv.	de todos modos
to fight (against sth.)	v.	luchar (contra algo)
to prove	v.	probar
to make a point	v expr.	llamar la atención sobre algo, dejar claro



Notes



Use of English

Prepositions and Multiword Combinations

Pay attention: Prepositions are words that introduce information about where something takes place (position and location), when something takes place (time) and how the movement is carried out (direction).

1. FOUR KINDS OF PREPOSITIONS

a) Position Prepositions

on + the desk / in + the drawer / under + the table / next to + my office
My office:

The computer is **on** the desk, but I keep my pens **in** the drawer. You can find a dustbin **under** the table. I usually have lunch **next to** my office.

b) Location Prepositions

at + home / in + (the) hospital / on + the street
My company:

The bank branch is **on** Richmont Street. Unfortunately my secretary is now **in** hospital and I cannot work **at** home.

c) Time Prepositions

in + year (or) season / in + months/ on + days / at + time / until + hour
My work hours:

I started working there **in** 1983. I will be retired **in** a few months. I will be **on** holiday **on** Friday. I usually leave my office **at** 5.00 p.m. However I do not get home **until** 1 hour later.

d) Direction Prepositions

up + the stairs / down + the street / off + the elevator / up to + the top
When I talk to my boss I go **up to** his office. He doesn't live far from the office. In fact he lives **down** the street. He told me about it one day when he was getting **off** the elevator and I wanted to go **up to** the top of the building. (American English)

2. VERB + PREPOSITIONS

Remember: Sometimes a verb followed by a preposition can be transitive (vtr.) when the verb is followed by a noun, or intransitive (vi.) when that same verb is not followed by a noun.

Example: The prepositions UP and DOWN together with a verb often relate to a physically higher or a physically lower position and can appear with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

- Transitive verb (vtr.)
Put up your hand, vtr. "levantar la mano"
Pick up something, vtr. "recoger del suelo"
Put down something, vtr. "bajar algo"
- Intransitive verb (vi.)
Stand up, vi. "levantarse"
Sit down, vi. "sentarse"

3. TWO TYPES OF VERB PREPOSITION COMBINATIONS

Remember: English verbs may take a preposition and act as prepositional verbs or a particle and act as phrasal verbs with a different meaning.

a) Prepositional Verbs (v. + prep.): When a preposition follows a verb adding some meaning like place, direction, or origin, among other things.

- Place: Be at home / Work at an office
Ex. John is **at home**; he doesn't work **at an** office.
- Direction: Look at me / Speak to me / Talk to me
Ex.: Peter **looks at** me when he **talks to** me.
- Origin: Come from
Ex.: Peter **comes from** California and doesn't speak German.

b) Phrasal Verbs (v phrasal.): They have an unpredictable meaning.

Ex.: look after, come across, get on with, find out, etc.



Notes



Exercises (see answers on pages 295-297)

Exercise 1:

Position and Location Prepositions.

Fill in the gaps with the following prepositions: *at / next to / on / under / in.*

- 1) The laptop is ____ the table next to the lamp.
- 2) The woman stood ____ the tree waiting for the rain to stop.
- 3) My friend was sitting ____ the table waiting for dinner to be served.
- 4) My neighbor's dog always sits ____ the dinner table begging for food.
- 5) I found his glasses ____ me on the bus and I gave them back to him.
- 6) We have Internet access ____ work, but we don't have a high-speed connection ____ home.
- 7) The kids are learning about prepositions in their language class ____ school.
- 8) My mother was ____ the hospital for two weeks after her car accident.
- 9) Their children saw dolphins ____ the ocean last summer.
- 10) You can buy batteries at the store ____ Oxford Street.

Exercise 2:

Time Prepositions.

Fill in the gaps with the following prepositions: *at / in /on / until / Ø.*

- 1) It usually snows ____ December.
- 2) I am leaving ____ Friday.
- 3) She started working for her company ____ 1999.
- 4) Franklin began working on the project ____ yesterday.
- 5) The plane leaves tomorrow morning ____ 8:00 a.m.
- 6) The streets are covered with ice ____ winter.
- 7) My husband is arriving ____ January 26 ____ 2 o'clock ____ the afternoon.
- 8) ____ New Year's Eve, it's tradition to kiss the one you love ____ midnight.
- 9) They met ____ the restaurant at 9:30 and stayed ____ 11:30.
- 10) The telephone was invented ____ the 1870s.

Exercise 3:

Direction Prepositions.

Fill in the gaps with the following prepositions: *on / down / down from / out / out of / up / up to / into / out.*

- 1) The bank is just ____ the street near the hospital.
- 2) The builder had problems climbing back down from the roof because he had injured his ankle as he was climbing ____.





- 3) Although you can take an elevator ___ the top of the Eiffel Tower, I was tired.
 4) Our customer service center will help you solve that problem. Just walk ___ the hall.
 5) I was getting ___ the elevator when I heard the noise.
 6) Then I realized I was ___ the wrong floor.
 7) Just as Peter was stepping out of the elevator he realized he was on the wrong floor, so he quickly jumped back ___ before the doors closed.
 8) Molly went ___ the store, but I don't think she found what she was looking for because she came back ___ almost immediately.

Exercise 4:**Phrasal Verbs.**

Read the following 4 stories and identify each type of verb according to the translations provided below.

1) Peter Brown and Molly Green are a couple of experienced thieves. Last Friday they tried to *steal from* a luxury fashion shop in London. They *went into* the shop in the middle of the night wearing smart clothes. They were putting accessories worth €40,000 into a bag when the police arrived. However, the criminals didn't *run away*. They stood completely still. The police *looked for* them but didn't see them. Then one of them moved. The police arrested them immediately.

- a) Steal from, "robar de algún sitio" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 b) Go into, "entrar dentro" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 c) Run away, "escapar" (vi phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 d) Look for, "buscar" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)

2) Police in Amsterdam had to investigate a difficult case last week. A work of art disappeared from a literary festival. The work of art was a bottle of wine. It was special because the liquid *came from* animal blood. An English biologist called Peter Brown *brought back* two liters of blood from an African elephant and an artist made a bottle for it. The work represented the problem of endangered animals. It was valued at over €42,000, so Brown wasn't very happy about this disappearance. Did an art thief take it? Or maybe somebody *came across* the bottle, thought it was rubbish and threw it in the bin. The police *looked into* the case but no evidence has turned up.

- e) Come from, "provenir de algún sitio" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 f) Bring back, "traer de vuelta" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 g) Come across, "encontrarse de casualidad" (vi phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 h) Look into, "investigar" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 i) Turn up, "aparecer" (vi phrasal. / v.+prep.)



- 3) Shops use complicated systems to stop shoplifters. So what happened last weekend at a shop in Paris was very surprising. It was Sunday dinner time. French shops don't usually open at that time on Sundays. A couple and their son were outside one store. The child disappeared for a minute; when he *came back*, he said: "Dad, the shop's open". His father didn't believe his son at first. But he *found out* it was true. The door was open! Nobody was inside but they saw cash register machines unprotected. They called the police and *waited for* them to arrive. They *figured out* that there was a problem with the door and sent somebody to lock it. They thanked the couple and gave them a big present as reward.
- j) Come back, "regresar" (vi phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 k) Find out, "descubrir" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 l) Wait for "esperar a" (vi phrasal. / v.+prep.)
 m) Figure out "resolver" (vtr phrasal. / v.+prep.)

Exercise 5:**Phrasal Verbs.**

Find the phrasal verbs in the stories above and match them with the definitions below:

turn up find out look for figure out come across look into

- 1) investigate _____
 2) find by accident _____
 3) solve the problem by considering the facts _____
 4) try to find _____
 5) discover _____
 6) arrive or appear unexpectedly _____

Exercise 6:**Phrasal Verbs.**

Use the correct phrasal verb from exercise 5 to rephrase each of the following sentences.

Sentence 1: The police are trying to find the hackers.
 Rephrase: The police are looking for the hackers.

- 1) Nobody has investigated the case.
 Nobody _____
 2) She found her ring by accident in her car.
 She _____





- > 3) The key appeared unexpectedly in the couch.
The key _____
- 4) Inspectors investigate how a crime takes place.
Inspectors _____
- 5) After the investigation, he soon discovered where the thief was.
After the investigation, he _____

Match the meanings on the right with the phrasal verbs on the left.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 6) LOOK FOR | a) Find by chance |
| 7) CARRY ON | b) Register |
| 8) CUT DOWN | c) Leave the ground |
| 9) PICK UP | d) Search |
| 10) TAKE OFF | e) Continue |
| 11) CHECK IN | f) Gather |
| 12) COME ACROSS | g) Cut something at its base |



Notes

Oral Skills

READ AND LISTEN TO THIS CONVERSATION BETWEEN AN ATTORNEY AND A LAW STUDENT

STUDENT: Good morning, sir! Have you got a few minutes? I've always been very interested in the Roaring Twenties and the consumption of alcoholic drinks and I'd like to ask you a few questions.

ATTORNEY: Sure! You should have made an appointment but I'm at your disposal right now.

STUDENT: When did the American people vote in favour of the Eighteenth Amendment?

ATTORNEY: It was a long time ago, in 1919. Well, actually people don't vote for amendments.

STUDENT: Really? What's the amendment process?

ATTORNEY: Amendments are submitted to the states following a two thirds vote in favour from chambers of Congress, and three quarters of the state legislatures must ratify it.

STUDENT: I've been told there's an alternative option using conventions rather than the legislatures for submission and ratification.

ATTORNEY: Yes, but that process has only been used once: to ratify the Twenty-first Amendment, which repealed Prohibition.

STUDENT: What did the Eighteenth Amendment consist of?

ATTORNEY: It prohibited the making or selling of alcoholic drinks in the United States.

STUDENT: But why did people support prohibition?

ATTORNEY: Because they thought that it would stop alcoholism and drunkenness and make the US a happier country.

STUDENT: Was it effective?

ATTORNEY: Unfortunately, many Americans were not willing to give up alcoholic drinks. Many of them, actually millions began to break the prohibition law.

STUDENT: But where did they get alcoholic drinks from?

ATTORNEY: Well, there were illegal drinking places called speakeasies in basements and backrooms all over the country. There were thousands especially in big cities, of course.

STUDENT: Really?

ATTORNEY: Yes. In fact, New York had about 32,000 and Chicago had around 10,000.

STUDENT: And who provided those speakeasies with spirits?

ATTORNEY: Criminals called bootleggers, who worked in dangerous gangs. Have you ever heard of "Scarface" Al Capone in Chicago?

STUDENT: Sure! And I learnt that bootlegging was basically a war between rival gangs or mafias that sometimes caused horrible street fights with machine guns. But what about the police? Didn't they put those offenders behind bars?

ATTORNEY: Gangsters used to bribe the police and politicians to turn a blind eye. In some way, we can say that Al Capone ruled Chicago. He became one of the wealthiest men in the country and had a private unofficial army that controlled every neighbourhood. Interestingly, Capone was eventually thrown in jail for tax evasion.

STUDENT: But prohibition did not last for a long time.

ATTORNEY: Indeed. Widespread corruption made people lose respect for the new law and so it was finally repealed in 1933.

STUDENT: Certainly a bad example for citizens. Could we say this period marks the beginning of law-breaking as a kind of habit even for respectable Americans?

ATTORNEY: Evil has always existed and we've been at it much longer than this but sure, you could say that! We can also say that those gangs set up other apparently respectable businesses and have remained powerful since then.

STUDENT: Thank you, sir. This is fascinating!



Glossary

amendment	n.	enmienda
basement	n.	sótano
backroom	n.	cuarto trasero
bootlegger	n.	contrabandista de licores
gang	n.	banda
to turn a blind eye	v expr.	hacer oídos sordos
army	n.	ejército
neighbourhood	n.	barrio
citizen	n.	ciudadano, -a



Writing Skills

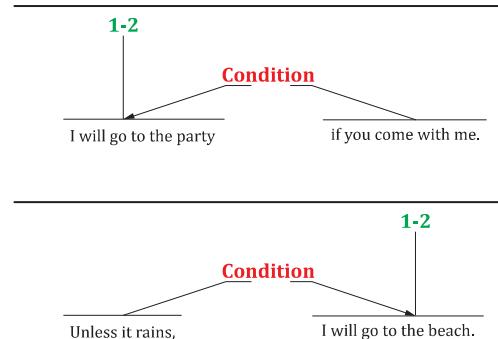
Writing: Coherence and Cohesion (CONDITION)

Another discourse relation that can be found in texts is CONDITION. This relation is usually held between two fragments in a sentence: one fragment includes an action or situation that depends on a condition, and the other fragment contains this condition. For example:

"I will go to the party **if** you come with me."

"**Unless** it rains, I will go to the beach."

These examples could be represented in this way:



With connectors, we can link both fragments to show a CONDITION. The fragment expressing the condition includes the connector. See, for example, the items in bold in the previous sentences.

Other connectors of CONDITION:

1	as long as
2	if
3	in case
4	provided
5	providing
6	unless
7	whether

Pay attention: In general, the fragment that expresses the condition can be placed before or after the other fragment.

For example:

"If he apologizes, I will forgive him."
"I will forgive him if he apologizes."



Glossary

condition	n.	condición
action	n.	acción
situation	n.	situación
to depend on	prep. v.	depender de
party	n.	fiesta
to rain	v.	llover
beach	n.	playa
as long as	conj.	siempre que, mientras
if	conj.	si
in case	adv.	en caso de que, por si acaso
provided	conj.	siempre que, mientras
providing	conj.	siempre que, mientras
unless	conj.	a menos que
whether	conj.	si
to apologize	v.	disculparse
to forgive	v.	perdonar



Notes



Exercises (see answers on pages 297-298)

Exercise 1:

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with these words (each word has to be included in a different sentence).

lawyer letter assistance contract family legal

- 1) Don't go to the court **unless** they send you a _____.
- 2) I am sure that **if** she does not sign the _____, she is going to regret it.
- 3) **As long as** you are a resident in the country, you can ask for **legal** _____ from the social service department of your town.
- 4) **Provided** you need _____ advice, you should call her.
- 5) **If** the situation becomes worse at work, maybe you will need a _____.
- 6) Take this phone number **in case** you need _____ mediation.

Exercise 2:

Choose the correct connector for each sentence from the two options provided in bold.

- 1) **As long as/Unless** the law remains unclear regarding that specific aspect, states will continue arguing about it.
- 2) She wonders if it is ethical to break the law **providing/unless** you do not hurt anyone.
- 3) That student will not finish his Law degree **whether/unless** he works harder.
- 4) He asked his teacher whether international laws can really be considered laws **if/unless** they do not have an equivalent in national laws.

Exercise 3:

Match each item 1-4 with another item a-d to form a sentence with a CONDITION relation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) In a reward contract, a person who has lost a cat and promises a reward for finding it should pay the reward | a) then you are bound by its terms. |
| 2) As long as the circumstances imply that different people have reached an agreement (even though they have not done so expressly), | b) provided someone returns it safe and sound. |
| 3) An oral contract is valid | c) a contract is considered implied-in-fact. |
| 4) If a contract is in a written form, and you sign it, | d) providing the contract is not required by law to be written. |