

The death penalty in practice: Match the four texts (A-D) with the four summaries (1-4) below:

TEXT A: A disturbing video of a public execution in XXXX has been released by Amnesty International. In the executions, which took place in July 2011, three men, previously convicted of rape, stand on buses while guards put ropes around their necks, attached to a bridge above. The busses are then driven off. A large crowd, including a number of children, watches the execution, and some people appear to be filming the hangings on their mobile phones.

A spokesman for Amnesty says it is shocked by the apparent 'normality' of the event; 'as if it were a football match'. The authorities say public executions are related to the most serious crimes, such as rape and drug-trafficking.

TEXT C: A man who murdered 13 women and attempted to kill another 7 had his attempt to be released from a maximum security prison turned down in 2010. At that time, he had been in prison for 29 years. The newspapers commented that the legal costs amounted to around £200,000, which of course came on top of the cost of keeping him in prison for all that time. Many people believe that the death penalty would be appropriate, as punishment, as a deterrent, or even just on economic grounds.

The murderer claimed that he hear voices from tombstones telling him to 'kill prostitutes'. Not all of his victims, though, were prostitutes.

TEXT B: Moments before he was put to death by lethal injection in September 2011, XXX XXX looked directly at the family of the man he was convicted of killing and said "I was not responsible for what happened that night. I did not have a gun. I was not the one who took the life of your father, son, brother." He then said to the medical personnel who were about to kill him "may God have mercy on your souls", and laid his head down again.

His lawyers and thousands of supporters around the world were convinced that an innocent man had been sent to his death. After the execution, XXX's lawyers lamented what one described as a "legal lynching", describing the execution as "racially bigoted", and pointed out that seven of the nine witnesses at XXX's trial had since changed their accounts.

The prosecutor in the case, however, remained convinced that the correct man had been found guilty and punished, and the execution was welcomed by the victim's family. "He had all the chances in the world," the mother of the murdered man said, referring to the numerous hearings over the years. "It has got to come to an end."

TEXT D: But indeed, at that time, putting to death was a recipe much in vogue with all trades and professions, and not least of all with Tellson's. Death is nature's remedy for all things, and why not Legislation's? Accordingly, the forger was put to Death; the utterer of a bad note was put to Death; the unlawful opener of a letter was put to Death; the purloiner of forty shillings and sixpence was put to Death; the holder of a horse at Tellson's door, who made off with it, was put to Death; the coiner of a bad shilling was put to Death; the sounders of three-fourths of the notes in the whole gamut of Crime, were put to Death. Not that it did the least good in the way of prevention – it might almost have been worth remarking that the fact was exactly the reverse – but, it cleared off (as to this world) the trouble of each particular case, and left nothing else connected with it to be looked after.

- 1) ____ A serial killer avoids the death penalty, and costs the taxpayer a huge amount of money.
- 2) ____ A convicted murderer is executed in a controversial case.
- 3) ____ A public lesson is made of three rapists.
- 4) ____ Charles Dickens (in A Tale of Two Cities) believes the death penalty is overused, and of little benefit.