



Amnesty International

THE DEATH PENALTY IN CHINA AND THE WORLD

A human rights education resource on the death penalty, focusing on China. For use with young people aged 11–16 exploring Citizenship/PSE through Maths.

**HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION RESOURCE
CHINA**

www.amnesty.org.uk/education



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

In this lesson students work collectively to use their mathematical skill and appropriate technology to examine and analyse information about the changing use of the death penalty in China and the world. They will look for the most effective ways of presenting information using charts, graphs and maps, and comment on the reliability and validity of the data that they have collected. The lesson could be used as part of a theme day on China, or a cross-curricular Citizenship/PSE project or as a stand-alone lesson.

Resources required

Graph paper
 Large sheets of paper for each group
 Felt tip pens for each group
 Glue
 Blue tac
 Rough paper
 Access to computers (optional)
 A dictionary
 2 world maps (just an outline is fine)
 Compasses and protractor
 A copy of the Questionnaire

Group 1

Group 1 Activity sheet
 Fact sheet 1: **Countries where executions were carried out 1975–2006**

Group 2

Group 2 Activity sheet
 Fact sheet 2: **Executions worldwide in 2006 and 2007**
 A world map, either to stick things onto for their presentation or to copy onto flip chart paper.

Group 3

Group 3 Activity sheet
 Fact sheet 3: **The leading executing nations in 2007**

Group 4

Group 4 Activity sheet
 Fact Sheet 3: **The leading executing nations in 2007**
 A world map, either to stick things onto for their presentation or to copy onto flip chart paper

Group 5

Group 5 Activity sheet
 Fact Sheet 4: **The death penalty in China**



Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Introduce the topic by saying that China is much in the news currently with the Beijing Olympics, China's huge economic growth and worldwide concerns about human rights and other issues. This lesson is about China and the death penalty that the students are going to investigate through the use of mathematical techniques.

Make sure that the students all understand the meaning of the words:
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
DEATH PENALTY

Explain that in the past most countries in the world included capital punishment in their legal systems. Now the great majority no longer do so.

Activity 2 (15 minutes)

Ask the students:
What do you think about the death penalty?
Is it justifiable? If it is – what crimes should it be used for?
Gather some views for and against.

Ask the class to come up with 10 different crimes, then write them up on the board.

Ask each student to come up to the front and rate each crime in terms of its seriousness – giving the least serious crimes 1 point and the most serious crimes 10 points. Add up the points for each crime. (Make sure you keep a record of the scores as these will be used by group 5.)

Give each student a copy of the Questionnaire. Ask them to tick which offences on the list they feel deserve the death penalty. Collect the questionnaires in and keep them for use as data by Group 5.

Activity 3 (20 minutes)

Divide the class into 5 groups.

Give each group a different activity sheet and the relevant fact sheets and resources. Give Group 5 the scores from the 'most serious crimes' poll and the completed questionnaire sheets on crimes punishable by death. Make sure each group has several sheets of graph paper, compasses, protractors etc.

Ask groups to work through the tasks on their activity sheet. It may be helpful to suggest they divide up the tasks between them.

The activities can be done either by hand, or using a computer.

**Activity 4
(10 minutes)**

Each group quickly presents their findings and opinions to the rest of the class, using either flipcharts or Powerpoint.



**Activity 5
(10 minutes)**

Discuss:

What have you learned about the death penalty worldwide and in China in particular?

What have you learned about the use of figures and their reliability?

What do they think about the use of the death penalty in China / in the world as a whole? Has anyone changed their position? If so, why?

GROUP 1 ACTIVITY SHEET



Use the information on **Fact Sheet 1**, Countries where executions were carried out, to create a bar chart showing the changing number of executions carried out by the regions of the world over the last 40 years.

Discuss:

What is the overall worldwide trend?

What regional patterns can you see?

Can you think of any reasons for this pattern? (NB: This data is just the information that is available. Some countries may not appear prominently on earlier lists because no one knew what was going on there).

Prepare a presentation to show this information and your opinions to the rest of the class. You have some flip chart paper and a world map to help you.

GROUP 2 ACTIVITY SHEET

Use the information on **Fact Sheet 2**, Executions worldwide in 2006 and 2007, to make 2 pie charts to show the number of executions carried out by the 8 countries listed as a proportion of all the executions carried out throughout the world in 2006 and 2007. You will need 9 sections on your pie charts, to include one section for the executions carried out in countries that are not listed.

Discuss:

How reliable is the information on which your pie charts are based?

What changes can you see between 2006 and 2007? How would you explain these?

Prepare to present your pie charts and your opinions to the rest of the class.

GROUP 3 ACTIVITY SHEET



Using the information and the statistics of executions and population shown on **Fact sheet 3**, The leading executing nations in 2007, make bar charts or pie charts to show:

- the total number of executions carried out by each of the top executing countries in the world in 2007
- the number of executions carried out *per head of the population* by the top 7 executing countries in 2007

Discuss:

What do your graphs reveal?

How reliable is this information and these statistics?

Prepare a presentation to show your findings to the rest of the class.

GROUP 4 ACTIVITY SHEET

Use the information on **Fact Sheet 3**. The leading executing nations in 2007, to create a bar chart showing all the different capital crimes on the X axis and the number of countries where these capital crimes are applied on the Y axis. You will have to miss China off as there are so many capital crimes there, but mention it in your presentation.

Discuss:

What crimes are punishable by death?

What methods are used?

Does anything surprise you?

Do the punishments seem fair to you?

Prepare a map to show the different methods of execution used. You have a world map to help you. One suggestion is to use icons (simple drawings) to represent the different methods of execution used in different countries.

Present your bar chart, map and your opinions to the rest of the class.

GROUP 5 ACTIVITY SHEET



Create a bar chart to show the opinions gathered from the class on the seriousness of different crimes. Use the total scores for each crime identified.

Using the questionnaires gathered from the class. Create a bar chart which shows the class opinion on which crimes on the questionnaire sheet should be punishable by death and which should not.

Read **Fact Sheet 4**, The death penalty in China.

All of the crimes listed on the questionnaire sheet can be punishable by death in China (April 2008).

Discuss:

Does this surprise you?

Do you think the use of the death penalty in China is justified?

Prepare to present your graphs and what you have learned from Factsheet 4 to the rest of the class

FACT SHEET 1

COUNTRIES WHERE EXECUTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT



EXECUTIONS IN 1975/6

AFRICA	AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN	ASIA	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST
Benin Cameroon Central African Republic Chad Egypt Equatorial Guinea Ethiopia Ghana Kenya Malawi Mali Namibia Niger Nigeria Sierra Leone Somalia South Africa Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) Zaire (D.R. Congo)	Antigua Argentina Bahamas Bermuda El Salvador Grenada Guatemala Guyana Haiti Jamaica Peru USA	Afghanistan Bangladesh Burma (Myanmar) China India Indonesia Japan Kampuchea (Cambodia) Malaysia North Korea Pakistan Philippines Singapore South Korea Sri Lanka Taiwan Thailand Viet Nam	Albania Belarus Bulgaria Czechoslovakia Hungary Poland Spain USSR Yugoslavia	Bahrain Iran Iraq Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Saudi Arabia Syria United Arab Emirates Yemen

EXECUTIONS IN 1985/6

AFRICA	AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN	ASIA	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST
Algeria Angola Benin Cameroon Comoros Egypt Ethiopia Ghana Guinea Bissau Kenya Liberia Libya Mauritania Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Nigeria Somalia South Africa Sudan Uganda Zimbabwe	Antigua Bahamas Belize Cuba Dominica Guatemala Guyana St Lucia USA	Afghanistan Bangladesh Burma (Myanmar) China India Indonesia Japan Laos Malaysia Pakistan Singapore Taiwan Thailand Viet Nam	Belarus Czechoslovakia Hungary Poland Ussr Yugoslavia	Bahrain Iran Iraq Jordan Lebanon Saudi Arabia Syria United Arab Emirates Yemen

FACT SHEET 1 CONTINUED
COUNTRIES WHERE EXECUTIONS
WERE CARRIED OUT



EXECUTIONS IN 1995/6

AFRICA	AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN	ASIA	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST
Comoros Egypt Nigeria Somalia Uganda Zimbabwe	Bahamas Guatemala Guyana USA	Afghanistan China India Japan Malaysia Mongolia Pakistan Singapore Taiwan Thailand Viet Nam	Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Latvia Turkmenistan Russian Federation Ukraine Uzbekistan	Bahrain Iran Iraq Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Saudi Arabia Syria United Arab Emirates Yemen

EXECUTIONS IN 2006

AFRICA	AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN	ASIA	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST
Botswana Egypt Equatorial Guinea Somalia Sudan Uganda	USA	Bangladesh China Indonesia Japan Korea (North) Malaysia Mongolia Pakistan Singapore Viet Nam		Bahrain Iran Iraq Jordan Kuwait Saudi Arabia Syria Yemen

FACT SHEET 2

EXECUTIONS WORLDWIDE IN 2006 AND 2007



In 2006, according to official figures, 1,591 executions were carried out in 25 countries. In 2007 at least 1,252 people were executed in 24 countries.

Most of these executions took place in the 8 countries listed below. (Amnesty International believes that in those marked with* the actual figures were far higher than those publicly acknowledged. In China death penalty statistics are a state secret.)

2006	2007
China 1010*	China 470*
Iran 177	Iran 317*
Pakistan 82	Saudi Arabia 143*
Iraq 65*	Pakistan 135+
Sudan 65	USA 42
USA 53	Iraq 33*
Saudi Arabia 39*	Viet Nam 25*
Vietnam 14*	Sudan 7*

FACT SHEET 3

THE LEADING EXECUTING NATIONS IN 2007



In those countries where the number of executions is marked with an asterisk* Amnesty International believes that the actual figures are in fact far higher.

IRAN

Executions: 317*

Population: 65 million

Methods of execution: Hanging (by suspension from crane); stoning; being pushed over cliff.

Capital offences: Murder, drug offences, adultery, prostitution, homosexual acts, being 'corrupt on earth'; being 'at enmity with God', (being hostile to God, opposing God's word).

SAUDI ARABIA

Executions: 143*

Population: 28 million

Methods of execution: Beheading in public with a sword; stoning; firing squad.

Capital offences: murder, sedition (actions or language which could lead to rebellion against the government), rape, adultery, homosexuality, piracy, car theft, drug offences, witchcraft.

USA

Executions: 42

Population: 301 million

Methods of execution: Lethal injection (37 states); electric chair (10 states); gas chamber (4 states); firing squad (3 states); hanging (3 states).

Capital offences: murder.

CHINA

Executions: 470*

Population: 1320 million

Methods of execution: Single shot to head or neck; lethal injection.

Capital offences: 68 different offences for planning or carrying out wide range of violent and non-violent offences including theft, corruption and economic crimes.

IRAQ

Executions: 33*

Population: 27 million

Methods of execution: Firing squad, hanging.

Capital offences: murder, affiliation to an armed group, kidnapping, drug running.

PAKISTAN

Executions: 135*

Population: 164 million

Methods of execution: hanging, stoning.

Capital offences: murder, kidnapping, hijacking, illegal currency dealing, dacoity, robbery, arms dealing, drug trafficking, adultery, blasphemy.

VIETNAM

Executions: 25*

Population: 82 million

Methods of execution: Firing squad

Capital offences: 29 offences including murder, armed robbery, prostitution, pornography, drug related crime, economic crime.

FACT SHEET 4

THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



The Chinese authorities currently use the death penalty as a method of punishment for around 68 different offences.

Two methods of execution are used. The most common has been by shooting – a single bullet is fired at the back of the head. However, lethal injection, which was introduced in 1997 and involves the killing a prisoner by injecting poison, is being increasingly used.

Information about the exact numbers of people who are executed in China is classified as a state secret. Some cases are announced in the press. Some are posted at police stations or confirmed on internet message boards with a red tick when the prisoner has been executed. This makes the true scale of executions very hard to estimate. While official figures for Chinese executions in 2007 were 470, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations believe that China actually executed up to 6,000 people that year – or 16 a day.

Around 68 different crimes in China are punishable by execution, some of which are not capital crimes in any other country in the world. They include attempted crimes that are not actually carried out, economic crimes, small-scale drug offences and relatively minor crimes committed by repeat offenders such as theft or causing minor injury,

The death penalty in China is not applied in Hong Kong or Macau

QUESTIONNAIRE



In the column on the right, please tick which of these crimes, if any, in your opinion, should be punishable by execution?

AIDING THE ESCAPE OF AN ARRESTED PERSON	
ARSON	
ASSISTING PEOPLE TO CROSS THE TIBET BORDER	
ATTEMPTED THEFT	
BRIBERY OF OFFICIALS, TAKING BRIBES	
BREACHING DRAINAGE DITCHES	
CAUSING DAMAGE TO STATE PROPERTY	
CONSPIRING WITH THE ENEMY	
DISTRIBUTING PORNOGRAPHY	
DRUG TRAFFICKING	
FORGING OR SELLING VAT INVOICES	
FRAUDULENT FUNDRAISING	
GIVING STATE SECRETS TO FOREIGN POWERS	
HOARDING FOOD	
HOOLIGANISM	
ILLEGAL CURRENCY DEALING	
INCITEMENT TO LOOTING	
KILLING A PANDA	
MURDER	
PLANNING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT, TREASON	
PLANNING TO STEAL A CULTURAL RELIC	
PRODUCTION OR SALE OF FAKE MEDICINE	
PROSTITUTION	
RAPE	
ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE	
SABOTAGING COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT	
CAMPAIGNING FOR INDEPENDENCE FOR PARTS OF CHINA (SPLITTISM, SEPARATISM)	
SELLING HARMFUL FOODSTUFFS	
SETTING UP AN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION	
SMUGGLING RARE ANIMAL PRODUCTS	
SMUGGLING SOLID WASTE	
SPYING	
MINOR THEFT eg STEALING A BICYCLE	
STEALING PETROL	
TAX EVASION	
TRAFFICKING WOMEN, PIMPING	
TREASON	
WRITING SLOGANS ON A WALL	