**AP Literature and Composition**

**U.S. Penal System Research Guide**

Students will research the realities of the current U.S. penal system. They will look for answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of our population is currently incarcerated?
2. What percent of incarcerated individuals are there for non-violent offences?
3. How does race affect the likelihood of someone being incarcerated?
4. What options are available to incarcerated individuals to better themselves (GED programs, college courses, skilled trades training, etc.)?
5. What is an average day like in a state prison?
6. What is an average day like in a federal prison?
7. What are the positive aspects of our penal system?
8. What aspects of our penal system might be improved?
9. What constitutes “cruel and unusual punishment,” and is this practiced in any of our penal institutions? Describe.

Beyond the other questions, focus on any aspect of the American penal system that interests you. You will be expected to spend at least one hour continuing your research at home as homework.

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