

Some people believe that there should be fixed punishments for each type of crime. Others, however, argue that the circumstances of an individual crime, and the motivation for committing it, should always be taken into account when deciding on the punishment.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

One of the most controversial issues today relates to the best way to punish criminals. In this essay, I am going to examine this question from both points of view and then give my own opinion on the matter.

On one side of the argument there are people who argue that the benefits of standardised punishments considerably outweigh its disadvantages. The main reason for believing this is that it is more efficient and cheaper to manage. One good illustration of this is parking tickets. If every one of these had to go to court and be ruled upon by a judge and jury this would be very expensive and waste a lot of people's time. It is also possible to say that this system is fairer because every person is treated the same regardless of race or gender.

On the other hand, it is also possible to make the opposing case. It is often argued that in fact it is better to consider the situation and reason of a crime. People often have this opinion because sometimes people are forced to commit a crime such as murder due to reasons like self-defence. Clearly, this should be considered in sentencing for the crime. A second point is that the reason for a crime should be taken into account. A particularly good example here is that someone who steals food to feed their family shouldn't be punished as someone who steals a watch because they want to look wealthy.

In my opinion, both arguments have their merits. On balance, however, I tend to believe that it is better to decide the penalty on a case-by-case basis, as getting the right decision is more important than the justice system saving money.

[288 words]