

Justice Journal Example

Below is a student example of a full justice journal from the first day of the Mass Incarceration Unit to the last.

Justice Journal

What is justice and how is it protected in the United States?

Format for entries:	
Entry #_	Date
Prompt/Question	
Your answer...	

Entry #1

Date 1/12/22

What is justice and how is it protected in the United States?

Justice is when someone gets fairly punished for a crime they committed. Justice is protected in the US by our judicial branch and court system. For example, if someone is accused of a crime they go to court. In court, a judge examines the crime and the person who was accused of it and decides if they are guilty. The judge then decides what level of punishment the person deserves, if any, based on how bad the crime was and why they did it.

Entry #2

Date 1/20/22

How do you think the court should rule on this case and why?

I think the court should rule that the school's actions were unconstitutional because the right to protest and freedom of speech is protected by the 1st amendment. Students should not be punished for exercising their constitutional rights and protesting a rule they believe is unfair.

**How does the supreme court uphold justice in the United States?
What may be barriers to them upholding justice?**

The Supreme Court upholds justice in the US by looking at cases with an “unbiased” opinion and making sure everyone gets their constitutional rights. A barrier that may prevent them from upholding justice is bias or concern about pleasing the popular opinion.

Entry #3

Date 1/21/22

What would be a just outcome in the Brown vs. Board of Education Case? Do you think the supreme court ruled in the direction of justice?

A just outcome in the Brown vs Board of Education Case would be for Brown to win the case. I think the supreme court ruled in the direction of justice because the US has come a long way since the Plessy vs Ferguson case and at this point in history, the US has realized that separate but equal is wrong.

Entry #4

Date 2/2/22

People commit crimes because...

People commit crimes because they are either in a bad place or they need money. When people are in a bad place, it is harder for them to get support to help them not turn to a life of crime. When people need money, they probably need it to keep themselves and/or their family alive. Without money to support themselves, they may have to resort to stealing as a way to keep their family fed, sheltered, and healthy.

Entry #5

Date 2/3/22

Are all laws moral? If not, what does this tell us about crime? What does this tell us about criminals?

Not all laws are moral. An example of this was black codes, they were legal but not morally correct because they criminalized an entire race for the color of their skin. This tells us that crime isn't always something wrong, it is something considered wrong because of a law, which may or may not be moral. This also tells us that criminals aren't always people who did something wrong, they are just people who broke a

law. Sometimes laws aren't moral so just because someone broke a law doesn't mean that that person is immoral.

Entry #6

Date 2/10/22

What are the historical roots of mass incarceration in the United States?

The historical roots of mass incarceration in the US date back to the abolition of slavery. After slavery, the country was looking for a way fix the economy and they turned to criminalizing people of color so they would have free labor. Then, in the civil rights era, activists were criminalized. After that, the Nixon administration criminalized anyone who didn't agree with them by associating that group of people with drugs. Clinton then passed the 1994 crime bill, which helped put people behind bars. Now, our country is so deeply invested in the idea that black people are criminals that it is almost impossible to get out of this cycle of becoming tougher on crime and criminalizing people of color.

Entry #7

Date 3/3/22

How did Natalie's presentation teach you about the role journalism can play in creating a more just world.

Natalie's presentation taught me that journalism can play a huge role in creating a more just world. Journalists find a lot of information and have the responsibility of telling people about it. By learning about how other countries do things, we can learn how to improve our own country and create a more just system, especially when it comes to incarceration.

Entry #8

Date 3/14/22

Unit Reflection

I used to think that criminals were bad and prisons kept me safe. Then I learned that the U.S. incarceration system is racist and doesn't really help anyone. I now know that our incarceration system is seriously messed up. It actually makes crime worse and creates more problems than it solves.

Imagine a World Without Prisons
Unit by Kristin Leffler, part of the 2021-2022 Pulitzer Center
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