



Should Minor Crimes Be Punished?

Exploring the ethics of proportionate justice and social responsibility.

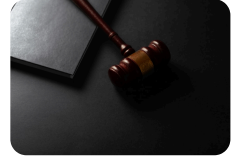
STUDENT NAME:

DATE:

INSTRUCTIONS

Understanding Minor Offenses

In this lesson, we examine 'minor' crimes—often called victimless or petty offenses—and discuss whether the punishment should always fit the crime. Review the vocabulary below and consider how society balances law and order with common sense.



Vocabulary Classification

Categorize the following minor crimes based on their impact and potential consequences.

Crime	Primary Impact	Common Penalty	Your Opinion (1-5)
Littering	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Fare Evasion	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Graffiti	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Illegal Downloads	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----

The Debate on Proportionate Punishment

Fill in the blanks using the words from the bank below.

severity

evading

restorative

fines

responsibility

The concept of proportionate justice suggests that the severity of a punishment should match the _____ of the offense. Critics argue that harsh penalties for minor crimes, such as _____ a subway fare, can lead to unnecessary criminal records. Instead, many suggest _____ justice, which focuses on repairing the harm caused rather than simply punishing the offender. By using _____ or community service, society can encourage individuals to take _____ for their actions without ruining their future prospects.

Quick Review: Legal Concepts

Define these terms in your own words to ensure you understand the legal context.

What is a 'victimless' crime?

Define 'deterrence'.

What is 'restorative justice'?

What does 'proportionality' mean?

True or False: Legal Perspectives

Read the statements and decide if they are true or false based on common legal debates.

1 Strict punishment for minor crimes is always the most effective way to prevent future offenses.

 T F

2 Community service is often considered a form of restorative justice.

 T F

3 Illegal digital downloading has no economic impact on creators.

 T F

4 A criminal record can significantly impact a person's future employment opportunities.

 T F