

ESLINTG 100
Summary Exercise #1: Article
“Violent Crime on the Rise”

By Thomas Campbell

Detroit Today

1 Homicides cause the deaths of more children in Washington, D.C. than any other single type of injury, including car accidents, house fires or drowning. Unfortunately, this is not an exclusive phenomenon of Washington. The overcrowded neighborhoods of many big American cities, such as New York, Detroit, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles, are all plagued with senseless violent crime. Types of violent crime range from arson and burglary to assault, rape, and murder. The solution to this growing problem is not to build more and bigger prisons, but rather to examine and deal with the causes: easy access to guns, constant craving for drugs, and overwhelming poverty.

2 An obvious trigger to violence is easy access to guns and firearms. Handguns are by far the most common murder weapon, accounting for 13,352 murders in the United States last year. Since almost anyone in the U.S. can buy a gun, the number of violent crimes involving guns is very high and continues to grow. For example, murders involving guns in New York City are more than thirty times what they were a half a century ago. In 1995 alone, there were 1,946 murders involving guns in New York City.

3 Drugs are also responsible for much of the violent crime that plagues American cities. Most inner-city crimes are drug related in some way. Many violent crimes involve drug buyers and sellers who are fighting. Others are committed by people acting under the influence of drugs, or thieves looking for money to buy drugs. Still other violent crimes are the result of territorial disputes between drug dealers.

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4 In addition to the prevalence of guns and drugs in the large urban areas of the U.S., the overwhelming poverty that afflicts many residents has a direct link to the amount of crime. No matter what the causes of poverty, the effect is always the same: people lack the basic necessities such as adequate nutrition, housing, education and medical care. As feelings of helplessness and frustration turn into anger, violent crime can become an increasingly serious problem for society.

5 People commit violent crimes for many different reasons. The question is, how can we as a society deal with this problem? Many experts feel that punishment is the best way to deter crime. Others feel that the best way to reduce crime is to rehabilitate criminals. Because criminals vary greatly in the kind of crimes they commit, their emotional stability, and their socioeconomic backgrounds, there probably is no one best way to solve the problem of violent crime. It is obvious, however, that education, stricter gun laws, and tighter controls on drugs would help reduce violent crime.