Resources for Research on Reducing Prison Incarceration (Decarceration)

Topic: How can we safely reduce the number of people incarcerated in the United States?
Beginning with the New Yorker article, “The Caging of America,” by Adam Gopnik, consider the ways in which minority communities have been devastated by excessive incarceration, and write an essay in which you make cause and effect argument for one change in our laws that would safely reduce the number of people, particularly minorities, behind bars.

Draw on at least 5 sources, including the New Yorker article and any other relevant articles we have read. (1) Describe the problems created by excessive incarceration, (2) propose one change that might improve the situation and (3) make an effective argument for why that change should be implemented. Be careful to research all sides of the argument so you can argue persuasively for your proposal and address any counter arguments. Draw on existing research for both statistical evidence and logical reasons to support your argument. Cite sources for all your information, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, using MLA style. As you write, assume that your reader is skeptical and does not see things the way you do. Be careful to avoid plagiarism!

Your paper should be between 5 and 7 pages long. Bring 5 copies of your draft for peer review on Wednesday, December 5th, and submit the final version on Monday, December 10th. Please attach to the final paper at least one preliminary draft and copies of all internet sources used. Papers must be typed and will not be accepted without drafts and sources. If you wish, you may send me a draft of your paper for comment, but I must receive the draft for comment no later than Saturday, December 8th. I encourage you to make use of the services of the Library for research and the Writing Center to help you draft, revise and polish your paper, but only after you have completed your research. The documented argumentative essay is worth 20% of your grade. Take time to proofread carefully.

A. Use our Library’s Licensed Subscription Databases:


2. Go to our database, Social Sciences Full Text. The following articles are from a special issue of the journal Social Research (Summer 2007) on incarceration and punishment in the U.S. In the search box, type in the last name of the author in the top box and in the next box, type the title of the article, enclosed in quotation marks. You can also search for the journal “Social Research” by typing its name in quotations in the first box and “summer 2007” in the box below.


3. Also in *Social Sciences Full Text* database:

4. Go to the database **Legal Source** and search for this article. Or use the search boxes and type in "imprisonment rates" and united states in the first two search boxes to find more.


**Good Articles and Reports from the Web:**

1. From the National Institute of Corrections:
   • [Safely Reducing the Corrections Population](http://nicic.gov/)
     For more information, try your own search on their website: [http://nicic.gov/](http://nicic.gov/)

   • [States Selling Prisons Including Inmates to Private Industry](http://www.OpposingViews.com)
   • [Study: U.S. Spends 16 Billion a Year on Elderly Prisoners](http://www.OpposingViews.com)

   • [U.S. Prison Count Continues to Drop - 2013 Report](http://www.pewstates.org/)
   • [2012 Public Opinion on Sentencing and Corrections Policy in America](http://www.pewstates.org/)
   • [Prison Count 2010 Prison Population Declines First Time in 38 Years](http://www.pewstates.org/)
   • [One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008](http://www.pewstates.org/)
   • [The High Cost of Corrections In America 2012 Data Visualization](http://www.pewstates.org/)

4. From *Right on Crime*, a politically conservative website based in Texas:
   • [Right on Crime Statment of Principles](http://www.rightoncrime.com/)

5. From The Rutherford Institute:
   • [Jailing Americans for Profit: The Rise of the Prison Industrial Complex](http://www.rutherford.org/)

6. From the ACLU (American Civil Liberties) website:
   • [Smart Reform Is Possible: States Reducing Incarceration Rates and Costs While Protecting Communities](http://www.aclu.org/)

7. A February 2012 article published by the Centre for Research on Globalization
   • [Profit-Driven Prison Industrial Complex: The Economics of Incarceration in the USA](http://www.crg.org/)
