

Name _____

The Eighth Amendment: Shielding Against Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The protection of human dignity through the Eighth Amendment is vital because it upholds the principle that even individuals accused or convicted of crimes have inherent worth and rights that should not be violated. This ensures that the criminal justice system operates with fairness, respect, and empathy.
2. (Answers may vary. An example could be the case of *Roper v. Simmons*, where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty for juveniles violated the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.)
3. The U.S. Supreme Court interprets and applies the Eighth Amendment by hearing cases related to specific punishments and conditions of confinement. The Court considers legal arguments, examines relevant facts, and assesses whether a punishment violates the amendment's protections. Its rulings set precedents for future cases.
4. The Eighth Amendment plays a crucial role in promoting fairness, justice, and accountability in the criminal justice system by ensuring that punishments are not excessively harsh or degrading. It reflects the societal commitment to treating individuals with humanity and upholding their rights, even in the context of punishment.

