

A World with no Prisons?



New Internationalist Easier English

Ready Elementary/Pre-Intermediate Lesson

This lesson



Grammar: Past Simple





Match:

1) prison cell

2) prison sentence

3) victim

4) therapy

5) reason

6) graduation

7) spend

a) If you kill someone, they are the _____



b) talking to a doctor to feel and be better



c) when you get your university degree



d) room in a prison for a prisoner

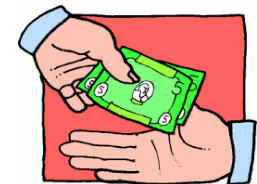


e) the number of months or years a prisoner must stay in prison

f) why we do something

WHY?

g) to buy something you must _____ money



Talk to another student...



What do you think?



- 1) Can you imagine a world without prisons? Why or why not?**
- 2) Why are some people criminals?**



Who do think they are?



Jessie with his dad. Jessie wrote, ‘When I was a child, my dad was in prison. When I got a life prison sentence, he changed his life, and stayed out of prison and helped me.’

**What do you think the answers are?
Talk with another student. Then read
to check answers:**



- 1) Jessie's father was in prison when Jessie was 5 years old. True/false?**
- 2) There was a drug problem in Jessie's family. True/false?**
- 3) Jessie thinks prisons are a bad idea True/false?**



‘Can you imagine a world without prisons?’

Yes, I can. But it was difficult at first because prison cells are my life. When I was 5, the police took my dad to prison, and they left me with my mum. She had a drug problem. In prison my dad got no help and he had only a prison cell. And my mum got no help with her drug problem. She was alone when she looked after me .

What do you think Jessie's answers are to these questions? Talk with another student. Then read to check answers:

- 1) Some young people kill themselves because their prison sentence is so long. True/false?
- 2) In a world with no prisons, people will help the prisoner, the prisoner's family, and the victim's family. True/false?
- 3) In a world with no prisons, children will not lose their parents. True/false?
- 4) A prisoner will miss only 4 important family days in one year. True/false?
- 5) 5 years in prison is enough time to change. True/false?
- 6) Prisoners with a university degree from prison don't usually go back to prison. True/false?



In a world without prisons, young people will not kill themselves because they won't get a 25 year or life prison sentence. In a world without prisons, doctors will help prisoners. They will find the reason for their crime and make a plan. The plan will help the victim's family and the criminal's family. We can then spend all the money not on prisons but on new ideas. It will be better for everyone. Parents will be there for their children. Brothers and sisters will be there to help each other.

365 days is a long time. That's time for about 30 important family days – birthdays, graduations, doctor's visits, holidays – all without the family. Ten years is a long time. It's enough time to study for a university degree and study five different courses, go to therapy, and be a new person. With a university degree the chances of going back to prison are less than 5 per cent.

Talk about these questions. What do you think the answers are? Then read to check:



- 1) When Jessie was a child, someone killed his cousin. True/False?**
- 2) The killer was a policeman? True/false?**
- 3) What was the first thing Jessie wanted his cousin's killer to do?**
 - (a) go to prison**
 - (b) say sorry**
- 4) How much does it cost to keep a prisoner in a prison in California for a year?**
 - (a) \$30,000**
 - (b) \$50,000**
 - (c) \$70,000**
 - (d) \$100,000**



A policeman's son killed my cousin. The policeman's son did not go to prison. My cousin's name was Anthony Northrup. What did my family want? We didn't want the killer in prison. It doesn't help and it doesn't stop the pain. We wanted him to say sorry and to change so he won't kill another person.

Prison is expensive, about \$70,000 a year for one person in the US. And prison doesn't help. It makes things worse. Prisoners and their families are angry and sad and have drug problems.

Little children are angry and sad with no father or mother.

I came to prison 18 years ago. I am not the same person now. The prison spent about \$1.2 million to keep me in prison for 18 years. And there are 128,000 people in California prisons.

Find the past simple of the verbs in the text.

1) is

1) was

2) take

2) _____

3) leave

3) _____

4) have

4) _____

5) get

5) _____

6) kill

6) _____

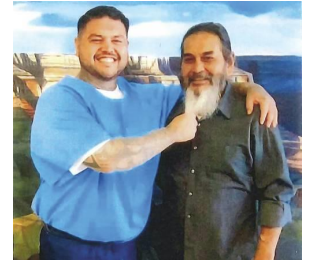
7) want

7) _____

8) come

8) _____

What do you remember about Jessie?



Complete the sentences with these verbs in the past simple:

have is come kill take leave want get

- 1) **Jessie _____ 4 years old when the police _____ his father to prison.**
- 2) **The police _____ Jessie alone with his mother.**
- 3) **She _____ a problem with drugs and she _____ no help.**
- 4) **The son of a policeman _____ Jessie's cousin.**
- 5) **Jessie and his family only _____ the policeman's son to say sorry.**
- 6) **Jessie _____ to the California prison 18 years ago.**