

## Opinion Essay Task

**Topic:** “**THW** hold parents legally accountable for their children’s criminal actions.”

### Your Task

Write an opinion essay (180–250 words) expressing your view on whether parents should be held legally responsible for the criminal actions of their children. You should:

- Clearly state your opinion in the introduction.
- Present well-structured arguments supported with examples.
- Acknowledge the opposing viewpoint.
- Conclude by summarising your main points and restating your opinion.

### Points to Include

#### Arguments FOR holding parents legally accountable

- Parental responsibility: Parents shape children’s behaviour; negligence may contribute to delinquency.
- Deterrence: Legal responsibility may motivate parents to supervise their children more effectively.
- Safety of society: Encourages better monitoring, reducing juvenile crime.
- Moral obligation: Parents are primary caregivers and must ensure their children do not harm others.
- Early intervention: Families may take behavioural issues more seriously if legal consequences exist.

#### Arguments AGAINST holding parents legally accountable

- Autonomy of teenagers: Teens may act independently despite good parenting; unfair to punish parents.
- Socio-economic factors: Crime often stems from poverty, peer pressure, and environment—not parental failure.

- Unjust punishment: Innocent parents may be punished for actions beyond their control.
- Stigmatization: Families may face social judgement, worsening the situation.
- Focus on support, not punishment: Rehabilitation and community programs are more effective.

## **Useful Academic Phrases and Structures**

### **Introduction**

- The issue of whether parents should be held legally responsible for their children's criminal actions has sparked considerable debate.
- In my opinion, ...
- This essay will examine arguments on both sides.

### **Body Paragraphs**

- Supporters of this view argue that...
- It is widely believed that parents...
- One strong argument in favour of this idea is that...
- On the other hand, opponents claim that...
- It could be argued that...
- Furthermore / Moreover / In addition...

### **Examples**

- For example,
- This can be seen when...

### **Conclusion**

- To conclude,
- Although there are convincing arguments on both sides, I firmly believe...
- Ultimately, society should focus on...

## **Useful Articles & Readings**

1. Youth crime: Parents Face Fines and Prison in Government Plan to Reinforce Young Offenders' Sentences. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2008/jul/16/youthjustice.youngpeople1>

2. Should Parents Be Legally Responsible For Children's Serious Crimes?

<https://www.npr.org/2014/12/16/371264533/should-parents-be-legally-responsible-for-childrens-serious-crimes>

3. POV: Should Parents Be Charged for a Child's Crimes? That's the Wrong Solution

<https://www.bu.edu/articles/2024/charging-parents-for-childs-crime/>

4. Helping Teens Make Responsible Choices

<https://youthfirstinc.org/helping-teens-make-responsible-choices/>