

Argument-Centered Education -- Argument Builder Model -- Mass Incarceration = Slavery

Overall Position: Mass incarceration is the moral equivalent of slavery.

Label	War on Drugs/Law and Order designed to enslave
Argumentative Claim	The War on Drugs and Law and Order campaigns were designed to imprison and control black men.
Evidence A (Summary or Quotation of Facts, Research, Expert View, etc.)	According to the 2015 news analysis video produced by Vox, entitled "How Mandatory Minimums Helped Drive Mass Incarceration," The War on Drugs initiated in the 1980s led to the establishment of mandatory minimum sentences for low-level drug offenses, minimums that were racially biased in the extreme. For instance, possessions of 500 grams of powder cocaine could still lead to probation, whereas possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine would lead to a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years in a federal penitentiary. Mandatory sentencing laws have led to a "grotesque injustices" and an explosion in the number of incarcerated black and brown men.
Reasoning (Analyzing How the Evidence Proves the Argumentative Claim)	The differences in the way that possession of drugs was punished -- with very tough punitive laws for drugs used more often in "inner-city" areas, and much more lenient laws for drugs used more by affluent and suburban whites -- is objective proof that the War on Drugs had the intention of incarcerating and controlling black men. There has never been a reasonable way to explain the "grotesque" bias in this system. But even if the War on Drugs were unbiased, it had the effect of locking up millions of black men in this country, and the best measure of a policy's intention is that policy's effects.
Evidence B (Summary or Quotation of Facts, Research, Expert View, etc.)	"None of what's happened has been an accident, and all of it has depended on the participation of rational people. Those of us who would prefer to think otherwise are forced to see the criminal justice system not as a well-intentioned instrument that has simply become overused, but as a weapon—one that has been aimed and fired with deliberateness and precision" (Leon Nayfakh, "New Slaves," Slate, October 6, 2016).
Reasoning (Analyzing How the Evidence Proves the Argumentative Claim)	Commentator Leon Nayfakh supports the move to look at the broader purpose and agenda represented by the War on Drugs and, before that, the Law and Order campaign launched by Richard Nixon. These programs certainly had the effect -- and very likely had the express purpose -- of putting a large segment of the black male population under state control and domination. This intent and this outcome parallel the institution of American slavery.