



Law Q1

What injury should one person be permitted to inflict on another in the defence of private property?

Recommended Readings

Historical Sources

1. John Locke, "Second Treatise of Government" (1689)

Chapters 2 and 5 are particularly relevant

Locke argues that property rights derive from labor mixing with resources

Discusses the right to defend property as an extension of natural rights

Establishes proportionality in defense - the response should be proportional to the threat

2. Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan" (1651)

Presents the state of nature as a "war of all against all"

Property rights exist only under a sovereign power

Provides contrast to Locke's more optimistic view of natural rights

3. Hugo Grotius, "On the Law of War and Peace" (1625)

Early work on just war theory with principles applicable to individual defense

Discusses proportionality in self-defense

Influenced Locke's thinking on natural law

4. Samuel Pufendorf, "On the Duty of Man and Citizen" (1673)

Examines natural law and property rights

Discusses limits of defensive force

Influenced Locke's conception of natural rights



5. Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals" (1797)

Presents a rights-based approach to property

Discusses the moral limits of defense

Offers a deontological perspective on property rights

Contemporary Sources

1. Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia" (1974)

Modern libertarian defense of property rights

Discusses the "Lockean proviso" and entitlement theory

Examines minimal state and property protection

2. Judith Thomson, "Self-Defense and Rights" (1991)

Examines the moral foundations of self-defense

Discusses proportionality and rights violations

Considers when lethal force is justified

3. Jeremy Waldron, "The Right to Private Property" (1988)

Critical examination of property rights

Discusses Locke's labor theory and its limitations

Addresses tensions between property rights and other values

4. Jeff McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life" (2002)

Discusses liability to defensive harm

Examines proportionality in self-defense

Considers culpability and threat

5. David Rodin, "War and Self-Defense" (2002)



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown

Law Category - Recommended Readings



Though focused on international conflict, provides relevant framework for individual defense

Analyzes justification for defensive force

Examines proportionality

6. Andrew Ashworth, "Self-Defence and the Right to Life" (1975)

Examines legal dimensions of self-defense

Discusses Castle Doctrine and property defense

Addresses proportionality requirements

7. Suzanne Uniacke, "Permissible Killing: The Self-Defence Justification of Homicide" (1994)

Examines when killing in self-defense is justified

Addresses property defense as extension of self-defense

Discusses moral and legal perspectives

8. Jonathan Quong, "Killing in Self-Defense" (2009)

Distinguishes between different theoretical approaches to self-defense

Examines liability to defensive harm

Addresses proportionality in property defense

9. Arthur Ripstein, "Force and Freedom: Kant's Legal and Political Philosophy" (2009)

Modern interpretation of Kantian property theory

Discusses rights of exclusion and enforcement

Examines the moral status of property

10. John Simmons, "The Lockean Theory of Rights" (1992)

Comprehensive analysis of Locke's rights theory

Examines Locke's view on property and its defense



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown
Law Category - Recommended Readings



Discusses limitations and proportionality

