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English Language and Composition
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Suggested Writing Time: 40 Minutes

Directions: the following prompt is based on the accompanying eight sources. This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both indirect and direct citations.

Introduction

Since the beginning of history, the human race has been steadily increasing in number. In the past few hundred years this growth rate has sped up tremendously, causing overpopulation in many locations around the world. To slow down the rate, many things have been suggested but the most extreme example is the one-child policy adopted by China. Though effective, many consider the policy unethical and unnecessary.

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges or qualifies the claim that overpopulations is a real problem, and drastic measures (such as the one-child policy) must be taken to help solve it.**

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

Source A
Source B
Source C
Source D
Source E
Source F

Source A

<http://blogs.venturacountystar.com/vcs/greenberg/archives/Population422.gif>



Source B

<http://peopleandplanet.net/doc.php?id=2907>

The following is excerpted from an article that contains many interviews with the Chinese public, about the one-child policy.

"It's terribly expensive to have just one baby," said Mrs. Na, a university English teacher in Inner Mongolia, "I wouldn't dream of raising two kids. Children's education fees are a middle class family's biggest expense. A year at kindergarten costs more than a year of university tuition where I live and teach. And kids are so much work; without my mother I'd be unable to continue my career. Besides, I like being out of the house and earning money."

"The idea that kids are great because they will care for their elderly parents is disappearing," said Dr. Wang, a 55 year old female doctor in Hohut specializing in obstetrics. "Work pressure, women staying in school longer, and a desire for more consumer goods, as well as a wish to have a solid economic base before having kids - all of these factors influence women."

Source C

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overpopulation>

The following is an excerpt from the Wikipedia article on Overpopulation

Overpopulation refers to when an organism's numbers exceed the carrying capacity of its habitat. In common parlance, the term usually refers to the relationship between the human population and its environment, the Earth .

Overpopulation is not simply a function of the size or density of the population. Overpopulation can be determined using the ratio of population to available sustainable resources. If a given environment has a population of ten, but there is food or drinking water enough for only nine, then that environment is overpopulated; if the population is 100 individuals but there is enough food, shelter, and water for 200 for the indefinite future, then it is not. Overpopulation can result from an increase in births, a decline in mortality rates due to medical advances, from an increase in immigration, a decrease in emigration, or from an unsustainable biome and depletion of resources. It is possible for very sparsely-populated areas to be overpopulated, as the area in question may have a very meager or non-existent capability to sustain human life (e.g. the middle of the Sahara desert or Antarctica).

The resources to be considered when evaluating whether an ecological niche is overpopulated include clean water, clean air, food, shelter, warmth, and other resources necessary to sustain life. If the quality of human life is addressed as well, there are then additional resources to be considered, such as medical care, employment, money, education, fuel, electricity, proper sewage treatment, waste.

Some have argued that poverty and famine are caused by inept governance and economic policies, and that higher population density leads to more specialization and technological innovation, potentially leading to a higher standard of living. Others argue that overpopulation is an important cause of these problems.

Source D

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7000931.stm>

The following is an excerpt from an article on BBC news entitled “Has China’s one-child policy worked?”

China's family planning policy has prevented 400 million births, officials say.

Since the regulations were introduced in 1979, China has kept its population in check using persuasion, coercion and encouragement.

And it looks likely that, nearly 30 years after the policy was first introduced, it will not be relaxed to allow couples to have more children.

Many Chinese and foreign academics believe this is a mistake and will result in a number of serious demographic problems in the future.

At a press conference earlier this year, Chinese officials were keen to declare the controversial policy a success.

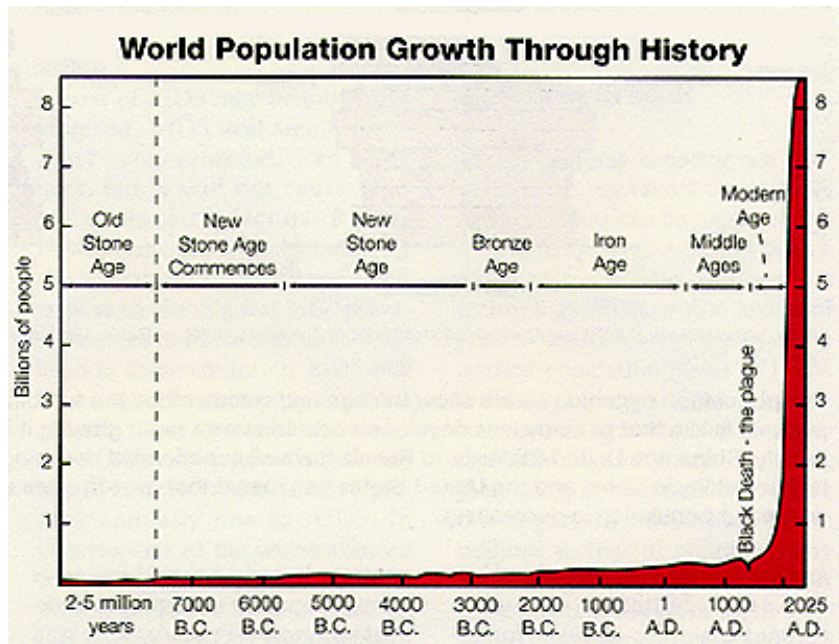
"Because China has worked hard over the last 30 years, we have 400 million fewer people," said Zhang Weiqing, minister in charge of the National Population and Family Planning Commission.

"Compared with the world's other developing countries with large populations, we have realised this transformation half a century ahead of time."

A team of independent Chinese and foreign academics, who this year completed what they say is the first systematic examination of the policy, agree that China has managed to limit its population growth.

Source E

www.geocities.com/.../Watershed/4345/Overpop.htm



Source F

<http://www.buddycom.com/ecol/population/index.html>

The following is an excerpt from "Principles of Political Economy," by John Stuart Mill in 1848.

"There is room in the world, no doubt, and even in old countries, for a great increase in population, supposing the arts of life to go on improving, and capital to increase. But even if innocuous, I confess I see very little reason for desiring it. The density of population necessary to enable mankind to obtain, in the greatest degree, all the advantages both of cooperation and of social intercourse, has, in all the most populous countries, been attained. A population, may be too crowded, though all be amply supplied with food and raiment. It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated, is a very poor ideal. Solitude, in the sense of being often alone, is essential to any depth of meditation or of character, and solitude in the presence of natural beauty and grandeur, is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which are not only good for the individual, but which society could ill do without. Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature; with every rood of land brought into cultivation, which is capable of growing food for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up, all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man's use exterminated as his rivals for food, every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture. If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger but not a better or a happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it."