

13 Overpopulation

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UNDERSTANDING POPULATION

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q What is **overpopulation**?

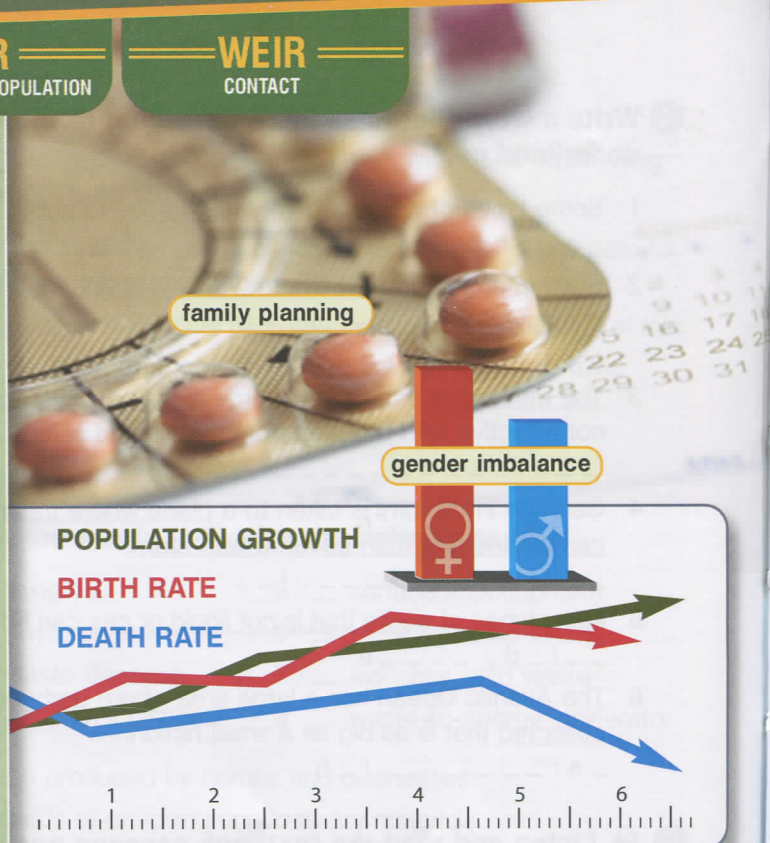
A An area is overpopulated when there are insufficient resources to support the population. Overpopulation occurs when **population growth** exceeds an area's **carrying capacity**.

Q What is causing today's overpopulation?

A Most parts of the world are experiencing **population change**. **Birth rates** are rising, but **death rates** are declining. Improvements in health and medicine have improved **life expectancy** and **fertility**. This has led to a rise in the global **TFR**. At the same time, the **infant mortality rate** has declined. This means that more children are becoming adults and reproducing. All these factors reduce **doubling time** and produce **exponential growth** in the world population.

Q How can people prevent unwanted population growth?

A **Population control** is a key factor in preserving our planet. Individuals can practice responsible **family planning** in order to prevent overpopulation. This already happens in places where **birth control** and **abortions** are commonly available. However, a few places are actually experiencing a decline in population. This is especially likely in places with a **gender imbalance**. This can also have harmful effects. In these places, the population would benefit from an increase in fertility rates.



Vocabulary

3 Match the words (1-9) with the definitions (A-I).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 ___ fertility | 6 ___ population change |
| 2 ___ abortion | 7 ___ population growth |
| 3 ___ birth rate | 8 ___ exponential growth |
| 4 ___ death rate | 9 ___ infant mortality rate |
| 5 ___ birth control | |

- A a method for preventing someone from becoming pregnant
- B a process for ending a pregnancy before a baby is born
- C a measurement of the number of people who die in a population
- D a measurement of the number of young children who die in a population
- E a measurement of the overall increase or decrease in population
- F a measurement of a person's ability to have children
- G the increase of something at a constant rate per unit of time
- H a measurement of the number of people who are born in a population
- I the increase of the number of people in a population

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 What are some factors which influence the population growth of a country?
- 2 What can lower birth rates?

Reading

2 Read the webpage. Then, mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- 1 ___ A population grows when the infant mortality rate goes up.
- 2 ___ Global birth rates are higher than global death rates.
- 3 ___ Gender imbalance is a cause of overpopulation.

4 Read the sentence pairs. Choose where the words best fit the blanks.

1 TFR / carrying capacity

A _____ measures how many children are born.

B _____ measures how many people an environment can support.

2 population control / life expectancy

A Some countries have laws that enforce _____.

B Medicine has improved _____ in many places.

3 gender imbalance / doubling time

A The _____ is one measure of how quickly a population grows.

B If a place has more women than men, it has a _____.

4 family planning / overpopulation

A When _____ occurs, there are not enough resources to sustain everyone.

B _____ prevents people from having too many children.

5 Listen and read the webpage again. Is population control important?

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between two scientists. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the main idea of the conversation?
- A what caused increased growth in a population
 - B how to improve life expectancy in a population
 - C why a population's birth rate declined
 - D which factors caused a population to exceed carrying capacity
- 2 According to the scientists, what caused the population change?
- A a family planning campaign
 - B reduced use of birth control
 - C an increase in the death rate
 - D an adjusted carrying capacity

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Scientist 1: The local government started a 1 _____.

Scientist 2: Oh, I see. That certainly could have 2 _____ with it. Do you know what the campaign involved?

Scientist 1: I think they gave out brochures and held classes. They might have offered 3 _____, too.

Scientist 2: Well that's good news. I've 4 _____ West Lantica.

Scientist 1: I have, too. Ever since their 5 _____ went up, I've expected them to exceed their carrying capacity.

Scientist 2: I hope they maintain this low level of 6 _____.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

I can guess ...

I wonder what caused ...

Ever since ... I've been ...

Student A: You are a scientist. Talk to Student B about:

- a change in population growth
- factors affecting the change
- likely reasons for the change

Student B: You are a scientist. Talk to Student A about a change in population growth.

Writing

9 Use the webpage and the conversation from Task 8 to write an analysis of a change in population growth. Include: the type of change, the causes of the change, and whether or not the change is good for the population.