

# TOO MANY PEOPLE, TOO FEW TREES

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**A. Work in small groups and discuss the relation between population and pollution. You may include these points in your discussion:**

1. Population explosion.
2. Its effect on the development of the country.
3. More people, more land.
4. Deforestation

## TOO MANY PEOPLE, TOO FEW TREES

- 1 **H**uman populations have always been in flux, for the simple reason that every day some people die while others are born. Throughout most of human existence, the number of births was slightly higher than the number of deaths; consequently, world populations grew at a very slow rate. A few hundred years ago, however, the situation began to change, especially in the industrialized world. With advances in nutrition, sanitation, and health, people live longer and more of them reach reproductive age. Thus, for the first time in our species existence, the balance between the number of deaths and births has been significantly disturbed. Consequently, during the last three centuries or so, the global human population has been rapidly going up. Every year, in fact, the world's population grows by more than 80 million people. It is, for instance, sobering to recall that for every eleven human beings alive now, only one was alive in the year 1950!
- 2 On first sight, it may appear that, when it comes to something as valuable as a human being, the more we have, the better off we are. In some ways, this is true. All things being equal, more people are likely to generate more inventions, more

technological breakthroughs, and more corporate profits. But, taken as a whole, ecologists are convinced that the world is already overpopulated.

3 Human populations cannot continue to grow indefinitely for the simple reason that the world itself is finite. More people will need even more food than they need now, and therefore, the process of deforestation will continue so that, eventually, wildlife will vanish. As the population goes up, so does pollution of rivers, lakes, air, and water and soil. With more people both town and country become more crowded. The quality of life, and the value we place on human life, will continue to erode. When population is stable, increases in such things as food production, number of physicians, or hospitals are often tantamount to improved quality of life, but such increases often fail to keep pace with population growth. Higher population density is also likely to exacerbate crime, ethnic conflicts, and warfare.

4 The American government, to take another example, estimates that some 60,000 Americans die each year from respiratory diseases which are in turn caused by human-made pollution. Fourteen Americans die each day of asthma aggravated by air pollution three times the incidence of just twenty years ago. Needless to say, the situation in cities like Los Angeles, Kathmandu, Mexico, and Shanghai is even worse. In all these cases, the situation could be considerably improved by controlling pollution and population.

5 Moreover, the world, as we have seen, faces such frightening problems as desertification, depletion of nonrenewable resources (e.g., oil, natural gas, helium), acid rain, loss of wild species, ozone layer depletion, and the greenhouse effect. A United Nations 1993 document puts it this way: "Population size and rates of growth are key elements in environmental change. At any level of development, increasing populations increase energy use, resource consumption and environmental stress. So, the more people the world has, the more severe these problems are likely to become."

**B.1.1. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements:**

1. Throughout most of human existence, the number of birth was slightly higher than the number of death.
2. More people will need even less food than they need now.
3. With more people both town and country become more crowded.
4. Higher population density is also not likely to exacerbate crime, ethnic conflict and warfare.
5. Population size and rates of growth are key elements in environmental change.

**B.1.2. Answer questions very briefly:**

1. For what population has been rapidly going up?
2. What population goes up?
3. How is each day of asthma?

Throwing populations make decisive contributions to all environments. In the long run, efforts to save the biosphere depend in part on our ability to check its numbers.

Yet the picture is otherwise grim. Hence tell us that we can control. The German and Swedish examples, defy world trends: declining. In such overpopulated areas, Thailand, and Egypt, growth has slowed down as a result of concerted government action.



Why, in these countries, population growth? Many factors account for these remarkable changes: literacy, media campaigns, readily available family planning, equal economic, educational, and legal opportunities for women, and so on. How do they know how to control their numbers? What they have been lacking is the will to make use of this knowledge.

7. Long-term problem: the state of the world's forests. Owing to rapid population growth, poverty, and other factors, many third world people are forced to clear, burn, or cultivate tropical forest. Thus, population pressure, along with the affluence and the affluence of some people – exacting demands for land, vs. more and more people are forced to convert forests into agricultural land. The people of rich countries satisfy Westerners' insatiable demands for hamburgers, motor cars, and other goods. Forests in countries like Brazil are cleared and converted to pasture for cattle. The people of rich countries also buy mahogany furniture, newspapers, and other products. It is frightening to recall, for instance, how many trees are cut down to produce the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*! Many forests are destroyed for pulp, paper, and other products. Deforestation, tourism, construction of houses and factories, and other activities are also contributing to the loss of forests. The productivity and general health of the world's forests are being threatened by such factors as the greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion, and air pollution.

- 8 The deforestation crisis is not new. Many earlier civilizations, including those of the Middle East, New Mexico, and Easter Island, precipitated their own decline through overpopulation and deforestation. The difference is that we are destroying our forests faster, and on a larger scale, than ever before.
- 9 Earlier in this century, forests covered around 40% of the earth's total land area. By this century's end, that figure will stand at about 25%. The destruction of forest, in turn contributes to such things as the greenhouse effect, irreversible loss of many thousands of species of plants and animals, landslides, soil erosion, siltation of rivers and dams, droughts, and weather extremes. For instance, as the trees of Nepal are cut down, its topsoil is gradually being lost and its rains are likelier to cause devastating floods in India and Bangladesh.
- 10 The eventual consequences of massive and ongoing deforestation are uncertain, but they are likely to damage the quality of life on earth, reduce the number of life forms that share the planet with us, and hamper the ability of the biosphere to sustain life. Humanity can continue to fell trees, cross its fingers, and hope for the best. Or it can take hold of its future and reverse the process of deforestation.

**B.2.1. Complete the following sentences on the basis of the lesson:**

1. The more we have, the better .....
2. History and common sense tell us that we .....
3. As the population grows, more and more people are forced .....
4. Forest covered around 40% of the earth's .....
5. Humanity can continue to fell trees, cross its finger, and .....

**B.2.2. Answer the following questions very briefly:**

1. Name the countries in which the population growth has been slowed down remarkably?
2. The productivity and general health of the world's forest is threatened. How?
3. What hampers the ability of the biosphere to sustain life?
4. How does deforestation in Nepal affect India?

**GLOSSARY AND NOTES**

**flux** (n) : continuous flow

**existence** (n): the state or fact of being real or living

**sanitation** (n): improvement in sanitary methods.

**species** (n): group having some common characteristics

**sobering** (adj): serious.

**vanish** (v): to disappear.

**tantamount** (adj): equivalent

**exacerbate** (v): to make sour and bitter

**ethnic** : pertaining to races

**erode** (v): to destroy

**desertification** (n) the process of becoming or making something a desert

**defy** (v): resist openly

**campaign** (n): organised course of action.

**arable** (adj): fit for cultivation

**tropical** (adj): pertaining to the tropics.

**pastures** (n): land for grazing of cattle.

**landslides** (n): falling of rocks and stones from mountains

**devastating** (v): causing destruction

**hamper** (v): to hinder

### C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why have human populations always been in flux?
2. What does the writer mean by reproductive age? How do people reach this age?
3. What is human made pollution? How has it affected America? How will it affect your locality?
4. Population size and rates of growth are key elements in environmental change. Explain with any two examples from your own society.
5. How do countries like Germany, Switzerland, China, Thailand and Egypt manage to 'reverse' or slow down population growth? What does 'reverse' mean here? How has it been possible?

### C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in groups or pairs:

1. "Rising population and deforestation are likely to damage the quality of life on the earth."

### C.3. COMPOSITION

1. Write a letter to your friend, emphasising the need of population control.

### D. WORD STUDY

#### D.1. Dictionary Use:

Ex.1. Correct the spelling of the following words:

existense

contineu

resorses

specis

eventually

probelm

allready

fourty

compain

D.2. Fill in the blanks with suitable form of words given below:

We are ..... our forest. (*destroy*)

We are **destroying** our forest.

rise

lose

go

grow

- As population ..... up, more and more people are forced to convert forests into farmlands.
- In fact world population has been rapidly ..... up
- As population ..... up, so does pollution of river, lakes, air, drinking water and soil.
- As the trees of Nepal are cut down, its topsoil is being .....

D.3. Match the following words in column A with the meanings in column B

A	B
i. grim	(a) unsatisfied
ii. decisive	(b) cut down
iii. affluent	(c) to support.
iv. insatiable	(d) severe, horrible.
v. felled	(e) wealthy
vi. sustain	(f) deciding

### E. GRAMMAR

Look at the following sentence:

*It **may** appear that, when it comes to something as valuable as a human being, the more we have, the better off we are.*

Here '**may**' indicates **possibility**. 'May' is a 'Modal' or 'Modal Auxiliary'.

**can, may, shall, will, could, might, should, would, must, dare, need, used to** and **ought to** are called Modals or Modal Auxiliaries.

Now look at the following sentences:

**May** I come in, please? Yes, you **may**. (Here '**may**' indicates permission)

'**May**' indicates 'possibility, wish, permission':

You **can** take this pen. (Here '**can**' indicates permission.)

Ravi **can** solve this problem (Here '**can**' indicates ability.)

'Can' indicates 'power, capacity, ability'; in informal use 'permission' also.

He said that he **could** do it (indirect speech.)

When Rohit was young, he **could** run twenty miles (Here 'could' indicates 'past ability, power'.)

'Could' indicates 'past ability / power / capacity' etc. It also indicates an unreal situation and a polite request.

You **must** do as you are told. (Here 'must' indicates 'compulsion')

You **must** have heard about Pt. Nehru (Here 'must' indicates 'strong possibility')

'Must' indicates 'compulsion, strong possibility, duty, certainty'

We **should** love our country (Here 'should' indicates 'duty'.)

'Should' indicates 'duty, obligation, advice, instructions'.

Ex.1. Fill in the blanks with suitable Modals given below:

can    may    should    could    must

- i. We ..... serve our master honestly.
- ii. Soldiers ..... obey their commander.
- iii. It ..... rain today.
- iv. I ..... lift this box.
- v. He said that he ..... catch a cobra.
- vi. Jack was so strong that one ..... not defeat him.
- vii. Candidates ..... answer all the questions.
- viii. We ..... honour our National Flag.
- ix. My father ..... be late today.
- x. I ..... win the race.

## F. ACTIVITIES

1. What big changes do you find in your surroundings? Make a list with the help of three experienced persons in your locality.
2. Ask your geography teacher to explain desertification and its impact on human life.
3. Do a project work on the devastation caused by flood.

**G. TRANSLATION**

Translate the following sentences into English:

1. तुम्हें माता-पिता की आज्ञा माननी चाहिये।
2. तुम यह ले सकते हो।
3. हमें सत्य बोलना चाहिये।
4. सोनू परीक्षा में उत्तीर्ण हो सका।
5. क्या तुम मेरी मदद कर सकते हो ?
6. क्या आज वर्षा होगी ?
7. उसे वहाँ जाने की जरूरत नहीं है।
8. क्या मैं आपकी मदद कर सकता हूँ?
9. हमें जल प्रदूषित नहीं करनी चाहिये।
10. हमलोग कल बाढ़ पीड़ितों की सेवा करने जायेंगे।

