



Multiple choice

Listening – Multiple choice (script)

One of the biggest problems facing mankind in the near future may very well be the overpopulation of planet earth. A variety of factors have contributed to overpopulation especially in developing nations. Some of the contributing factors include the improvements we have made in modern medicine which has seen people's survival rates increase, while mortality rates are on the decrease each year. Access to better healthcare, improved education and also development programmes have seen increases in the likelihood of survival for both mothers and children. Modern agricultural techniques and genetic modification of crops have also played a part in population growth.

Historically wars, natural disasters and the spread of disease curbed the growth of humankind, but In the 21st century it looks unlikely that any of these factors would have a dramatic effect on the current rates of population growth.

So what are the main causes of overpopulation? If we were to investigate overpopulation from a statistical perspective, the birth rate has been steadily rising, while there has been a decline in the rate of death in our global community.

The standard of medicine has dramatically improved seeing a greater life expectancy for adults and a lower mortality rate for infants. Better treatment for patients means we are much more likely to be able to save lives and cure diseases that may have been fatal in the past due to a lack of available treatments or vaccines.

We have not only become better in the field of medicine, but technology has also enabled us to feed more people and produce larger quantities of food. These improvements in the supply of food along with a decrease in mortality rates are the biggest factors in the cause of overpopulation.

An area of medicine that has definitely had an effect on overpopulation is the advancements made in the treatment of infertility. It is now possible for many people to have their own children who were previously incapable. Moreover pregnancy is far safer because of modern day techniques than it was in the past.

Education certainly has a large part to play in this modern day dilemma. Developing nations are often unable to provide quality education in areas such as family planning, or advise their citizens about the use of birth control. Many cultures also promote marriage at an early age which not only improves the chances of having children, but also increases the likelihood of having larger families.



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Now that we understand some of the causes of overpopulation we need to look at some of the effects, what problems we may face in the future and importantly, some potential solutions.

The earth does not have unlimited resources and it is looking increasingly likely that we will be unable to supply enough food and water for the ever-increasing population. Due to this the environment is suffering with large scale deforestation occurring to make way for crops and the farming of livestock. Wildlife is also feeling the effects with people hunting many rare and endangered species in increasingly aggressive manners.

A greater number of people have become dependent on fossil fuels including petroleum products, coal and natural gas. This has led to significant environmental problems with large decreases in air quality particularly in large cities and industrial areas. The rise in CO2 emissions has seen changes in worldwide environmental conditions with altered weather patterns and the melting of polar ice due to global warming.

There is not a single simple solution to this modern-day dilemma, but it is something we need to consider more carefully to ensure the survival of our species. In the past education has been sadly lacking, particularly in developing nations, but it may well be instrumental in changing the current trend of overpopulation. Educating people on family planning and making better choices regarding more careful consideration before having children is important. Understanding safe sex practices, knowledge of available birth control and a more open discussion on these topics can help to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies and aid in controlling an ever-increasing population.



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