

Name: _____

Malthusians versus Cornucopians Activity

Directions

- Write the letter “**M**” in the blank in front of the statement if it is a belief or a prediction that Thomas Malthus would have.
- Write the letter “**C**” in the blank in front of the statement if it is a belief or a predication that Cornucopians would have.
- *Cornucopians generally argue against economic and population-growth models with strict limits, while Malthusians (sometimes "neo-Malthusians", named after Thomas Malthus, 1766-1834) take opposing positions.*

_____ 1. “Power of the population is indefinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence.”

_____ 2. Hung Liangchi of China wrote in the 19th century that “Within a hundred years or so, the population can increase from fivefold to twentyfold, while the means of subsistence can increase only from three to five times.”

_____ 3. When faced with complex problems such as scarce food supplies, human beings are highly creative in finding solutions.

_____ 4. Life expectancy, air quality, and average education levels, have all improved over time.

_____ 5. “A strong and constantly operating check on population” would necessarily act as a natural control on numbers. The number of children born to the poor should be limited. (antinatalist)

_____ 6. “Natural elements” that bring population growth back into alignment with food supply are misery, poverty, and famine.

_____ 7. “There is no evil under which the human species cannot labor, that man is not competent to cure.” (William Godwin)

_____ 8. Producers intensify production in order to maintain an adequate food supply. Since the 1800s food supply has doubled five times and population has doubled three times.

_____ 9. Growing human populations the world over, with their potential to exhaust Earth’s resources, pose the most dangerous threat to the environment. Earth’s support systems are being strained beyond their capacity.

_____ 10. In order to lift living standards, the existing national efforts to lower mortality rates had to be balanced by governmental programs to reduce birth rates.

_____ 11. Agricultural intensity rises with population density. (Ester Boserup, Danish economist)

_____ 12. *The world will comfortably reach 9 billion people.*

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_____ 13. Taking the populations of the world at any number, a thousand million, for instance, the human species would increase in the ratio of –1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, & c. and subsistence as –1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & c. “Population, when unchecked, increase in geometrical ration. Subsistence only increases in an arithmetical ration. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second.”

_____ 14. Population pressure is the mother of invention.

_____ 15. Predicts a population doomsday. Regarded famine, disease, and war as the inevitable outcome of the human population’s outstripping the food supply. Foresaw a “dismal future.”

_____ 16. Only strict demographic controls everywhere will solve the lack of resources problem. If humans did not restrain their reproductive capacity with “private” means of moral restraint such as late marriage, or celibacy, nature would enact “destructive” checks on overpopulation.

_____ 17. On a global scale there is enough food to feed everyone on Earth. Food production has grown more rapidly than the world population over the past 50 or 60 years. Scientific innovation such as the green revolution have led to food increases that have far outpaced population growth.

_____ 18. Paul Ehrlich wrote: The battle to save humanity is over. In the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death despite any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date, nothing can be done to prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate, although many lives could be saved through dramatic programs to “stretch” the carrying capacity of the earth by increasing food production and providing for more equitable distribution of whatever food is available. But these programs will only provide a stay of execution unless they are accompanied by determined and successful efforts at population control (1968, xi).

_____ 19. Human beings are our greatest resource and that attempts to curb our numbers misguidedly cheat us out of geniuses who could devise creative solutions to out resource shortages.

_____ 20. Julian Simon, American economist, argued that resources do not exist in nature but are created by human ingenuity, which is the world’s ultimate resource base. For example, a resource such as oil was just a black gooey substance until humans discovered ways of refining it and capturing its energy content. For anti-malthusians, more people means more scientists and inventors.

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