

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

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Summary:

The humanity is at full strain due to the constant rising of oil and food prices. The crisis is no longer spreading only in the developing countries, but in all parts of the world. The purpose of this essay is to outline the main causes of both the food and energy crisis and more importantly, emphasize on the possible ways to solve them. The key ingredients in the solution recipe are boosting the production of local markets instead of tolerating foreign imports, improving social Safety Net departments and educating people for their own responsibilities that can contribute to the global cause.

Essay:

It is no longer common to doubt that humanity is reaching the peak of an enormous food and energy crisis. Even previous skeptics are now asking what do we do? The causes for energy, food and the intrinsically linked economic crisis are countless, but the solutions given—inadequate and insufficient. With oil and food prices frantically rising by the day, as a function of contemporary over-consuming society, surviving is quickly becoming a global struggle, reflected in the recent global economic downturn. The latter can obviously be said to be putting an even larger strain on already drained and running out resources—oil prices are in a state of yo-yo fluctuation. This means fundamental resource procurement is now put at risk. All together, these events are prerequisite for unstable and insecure lifestyle, which consequently results in social discontent.

First, I would like to submit; discussing "well-being" while in an apparent state of deep crisis is unrealistic. Unfortunately, due to the food shortage over a large part of Africa, Asia and even closer to home—Russia, many people continuously lose their lives and even more are currently striving to make it through without the availability of basic hygiene and other resources. Therefore, I believe that the first solution stage, must address these vital survival issues, before going on to the higher level of well-being.

In an attempt to fight global warming (an issue directly linked to both the food and energy crisis), scientists have come up with an innovative solution. This involves the replacement of fossil fuels with biofuels made of photosynthetic plants and crops. Although this may have looked as a potential way to cut down harmful greenhouse-gas emissions, the benefits of using biofuels have been hugely questioned in recent months. In early 2008, The New York Times published an article, which revealed the results of a thorough study on the biofuel use. It appears that the process of turning plants into fuels itself releases many harmful emissions. It also contributes greatly to cutting down vast areas of rain forests. These are, albeit, replaced with cropland, but this does not absorb as much carbon emissions as forest planting. Thus, the final effect is even further exacerbation of the climate change phenomenon. In addition, experts have increasingly and separately come to the conclusion that using this technology is one of the main causes for the food crisis. Although on the one hand this essay is in agreement with this statement, on the other, it is arguable that the food shortage has been a burden for years and the development of biofuels-only triggered the outbreak of a global crisis. Common opinion is that the food crisis will last for years. Therefore, when considering possible ways of solving it, actions with a positive outcome in the long run must be taken into account.

Planting crops and cultivating large areas of land will increase the productivity of each country and reduce food prices as a result of enriched market. People often believe that their own production is more expensive than imports from foreign countries. What they don't realize, however, is that importing food from elsewhere stops the development of their own market and soon enough it becomes impossible for farmers to compete. This obviously hinders local produce and is thus another obstacle towards solving the crisis or at least marking an improvement.

In many affected parts of the world, actions have been taken to boost the production of rice and similar crops. Governments and many programs throughout Africa, for instance, have fully committed to financing the projects and providing farmers with help to improve their production as a way to stabilize local markets mostly in developing countries.

It is not the food shortage that is the problem but rather the fundamental issue is poverty. Unlike markets in the Third World countries, everywhere else there is plenty of food that people, however, simply cannot afford to buy. In this line of thought, I reckon if the Safety Net programs, in general, operate better and set more reasonable conditions, people would not fall into such a state of poverty that forces them to go to bed hungry. If the social services provided by every state

are more accessible for the citizen, no matter the nationality, age or religion, crime and poverty rates will significantly drop. I would like to set the country where I live as a good example for unsuccessful social Safety Net. Poor people in Bulgaria depend mostly on pensions, which, however, are more than scarce. The average middle-aged Bulgarian receives social benefits, after years of work, insufficient to cover monthly bills, let alone food. As a consequence, there is a common discontent amongst Bulgarians and history shows records of numerous strikes that led to even worse social discontent.

Since the aspects of the food crisis have already been clarified, I would like to move on to offering several solutions to the energy crisis.

For years governments have been aware that they have to take serious measures to reduce energy consumption. Unfortunately, for some reason big improvement has not been marked. People fail to realize that the change has to come from us first. There are simple steps that have been proven to have a positive effect, but nobody seems to take. Everybody believes that changing something in his or her daily routine could not possibly make a big difference if no one else does it and thus the final effect equals no improvement. Researches, however, show that simply by turning off the lights whenever you are not in the room, or switching off the television when not watching, as well as other simple steps of this kind, is enough to lower your personal energy consumption and respectively contribute to the bigger picture. Therefore, the first step to dealing with the energy crisis is to educate people because despite the laws and rules the governments force upon them, if people fail to see the need to follow those rules, they will not.

Given the world economic depression, it seems the crisis is continuing to deepen. However, as argued in this essay, humanity has walked a long way on the road to change and has finally answered many answers. Solutions have been found and all it takes from now on is the willingness and persistency to carry them out.