

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

ID number: 656

Summary:

The human race has been facing a food and energy crisis, during its entire existence. As the world has developed, the population has grown. Today we are more advanced than ever but are also threatening the earth and thereby threatening ourselves. The main issue today is the size of our population. We must take responsibility by solving our own problems and the key is a higher rate of self sufficiency. By using oil, extracted from algae, every farm and country has a chance to grow their own energy, which will reduce conflicts and turbulence in the world.

Essay:

The world is screaming for more energy and food, to supply people's needs. Environmentalists are trying to find ways to feed people, without exploiting our planet. Even if possible, would this be the right way to solve our problems or are we merely trying to postpone the inevitable collapse?
If we accept the world's expanding population growth and try finding ways to feed it, we have already given up. Today's horrendously large population and its bizarre growth, only generates negative effects. The world's resources are used up at an increasing pace, forests are cut down, wars are fought over land, water, minerals etc. Therefore, we must accept, wholeheartedly, the challenge to decrease our population. The first step, which particularly applies to the western world, is to stop seeing our diminishing population, with an increase in the elderly population, as a problem, because it's not!

With a slowly but surely diminishing population, we will constantly be facing positive effects, instead of having to tackle impossible problems. Not being forced to produce the highest volumes, we will be able to focus on quality, which is in everybody's interest, including nature's. Not having to fill as many bellies, the main argument against organic food will be overruled. With healthier people, the costs for medical and environmental care will decrease, as will the amount of suffering caused by polluted air, water and food.

Some might say that people will die if we don't feed them.

Surely, but this is not meant to happen over-night, a steady fall in population generated by low birth-rates, should be the method. Through financial subsidies, we must relieve people of life threatening situations. The classic reasons for a high birth rate are high death rates among children coupled with poverty. A smaller population will increase people's standards. The government must do everything in its power to improve people's life circumstances. This must become every politician's mission, for their own sake. Historically a stable society has brought forth a stable birth-rate.

Energy

The energy crisis cannot be solved, merely through a diminishing population, since the energy reserves will deplete, before population rates start to fall.

The oil producers and companies are wrongly accused of being non environmentalists. No one is forcing them to sell oil; they drill for it because people want it. The oil producers should be as worried over the diminishing reservoirs as we are. Therefore it would be in their interest to find new ways of supplying us with energy. The oil producers have every opportunity to become the real environmentalists. They have the money, they are organized and they employ a lot of skilled people.

In studying agriculture I have got the impression that no terrestrial plant is sufficient for our needs of energy in the transport sector and most plantations are terrible to the environment, destroying soil and requiring vast quantities of fossil fuel. The palm tree plantations, for instance, supply a substantial amount of the world's release of CO₂ to the atmosphere. One "plant" that among other things is used for oil and really interests me and I think would be perfect for the oil business, is algae. A few of the benefits are:

It's extremely fast-growing, making several harvests per year possible.

The oil content is very high, **in the entire plant**.

Algae are very easy to grow and don't compete with our crops, as they are grown in water.

Using algae for fuel will also generate far more oil producers. Each country has a chance to become, at least to some extent, self sufficient which will lower the pressure on the energy system, making it less vulnerable. Surely we will not be able to produce the same amounts of energy, at least from the start, but on the other hand huge losses due to handling can be avoided. The oil doesn't have to be transported half way around the world, requiring very big and expensive machinery. The yields from algae will constantly keep rising compared to fossil fuel where we take out of our reserves. Think about our crops, how we have revolutionized our yields, in a short time, due to, among other things, plant-breeding. If algae become our energy crops, we will soon see a breeding-program, working with hardiness, growth rate, oil content etc.

Modern agriculture is based on fossil oil, by producing solid nitrogen with the Haber-Bosch method. This has given rise to big yields but also a tremendous loss of minerals and nutrients, to our ponds, rivers and eventually the sea. Therefore it would be a good idea to use the sea, to regain fertilizer. The problem is its salt content and that it's difficult to use a specific area to cultivate, but once the market is there, with the farmers and the rest of society, we will find a solution; it's only a matter of time.

Hopefully we will see two lines of production, the relatively small production on the farm, for the farmer's needs and local consumption, and a few big corporations with huge tank cultivations and sea plantations. It is very important that these two lines cooperate, we cannot have a situation where the small producers are crushed by the big ones, it would be fatal to total production. The state has a big responsibility.

The fossil fuels are somehow endless, which creates a bad habit of gluttony. When oil becomes an annual crop, just like wheat, a different mentality will emerge and being able to produce yourself, far more people will be concerned and involved with the production and development will boost.

The social benefits of having a stable energy production must not be over-seen. Today's unhealthy fossil oil consumption is something that poisons people's lives, making them constantly aware of doing something immoral.

Self-sufficiency will help prevent global energy crisis and conflicts. Every country must take responsibility for its own actions and well-being, this way the world will develop into a better place.