

Study Guide for the Australian Collaboration Fact and Issue Sheet

LIVING STANDARDS, ECONOMIC GROWTH & ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE

FOR REVIEW

1. What is economic growth?
2. What are the two broad views about the relationship between economic growth and the environment?
3. How is GDP measured? Why can't this economic indicator be used as a measure of welfare or wellbeing?
4. As resources are finite, what is the potential impact of unlimited economic growth on the world's biosphere?
5. Explain Ehrlich's equation $I = P \cdot A \cdot T$. What is the implication of this equation for economic growth?
6. What has been the trend in environmental intensity in resource use in Australia over the last 50 years? Why has this trend developed?
7. What are the three things required for the development of a constructive environmental policy response? How are these reflected in urban air quality?
8. What could be the economic impact of significant cuts in greenhouse emissions?
9. Is it necessary to change our values to achieve sustainability? Why?
10. Do you agree with the three major implications stated by the writer?

FOR DISCUSSION

11. *The Limits to Growth* publication was criticised by economists who argued that market forces would respond to increasing scarcity? Why do you think that market forces have not succeeded in making economic growth sustainable?
12. Why is economic growth an aim for most economies? Should economic growth be pursued at all costs? What are your reasons?
13. How can the rate of economic growth be increased? When the rate of economic growth is increased, are living standards always improved as a result of the growth?
14. Class Debate: Debate one or all of the topics below:
 - (i) Economic growth is necessary to remove poverty.
 - (ii) It is acceptable that the environment is damaged in achieving economic growth.
 - (iii) Economic growth and environmental protection are often irreconcilably opposed.
15. Discuss how each of the following impacts on resource management issues and strategies:
 - (i) an increase in GDP per capita.
 - (ii) improved efficiency in production.
 - (iii) improved technological capacity.
 - (iv) a more democratic political system.

FOR RESEARCH

16. An economy is made up of individuals, all of whom make decisions every day about the use of resources. While an individual on his/her own does not have a significant amount of power, the collective decisions of all individuals can be very powerful. Use the Internet sites of the Department of Environment of the Australian Government, your State Government and your local Council, as well as those of organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, to research the following:

- (i) What actions can I, as an individual, take to make economic growth more sustainable and to reduce my environmental footprint?
- (ii) How do/could the following policies impact on sustainability?
 - (a) The requirement by the South Australian Government for a 5c refundable deposit on all drink containers such as bottles and cans.
 - (b) The phasing out of the traditional light bulb in favour of the fluorescent light globe.
 - (c) The Queensland Government's aim to phase out electric hot water systems in favour of gas and solar systems.

With your class, pool all the ideas that you have found from your research. Choose 10 of these ideas, perhaps the 10 most frequently listed ideas.

Complete a Diamond Ranking Strategy to clarify your values.

A. Using your top 10 ideas, put the number of the statement that you regard as *most important* in the top box of the diamond.

B. Now put the number of the *least important* statement in the bottom box of the diamond.

C. Next put the numbers of the next two most important statements on the second level.

D. Continue until all statements have been ranked.

Students should then compare and discuss their results so that they will also be aware of the perspectives and values of others.