

## **SUMMER ASSIGNMENT PART 1**

### **The Tragedy of the Commons**

By Garrett Hardin

**Summary:** Hardin's article is one of the most important and provocative essays of our generation. It was written in 1968, at the dawn of the environmental movement in the United States. For the first time, the scientific press saw an argument that some problems are beyond science's ability to solve. Hardin suggests a fundamental problem in the self interest of individuals compared to society as a whole. For him, the "commons" represents any commonly held natural resource: food, land, water, air, etc.

The author states that overpopulation belongs to a class of problems for which no technical solution exists. People are constantly trying to find a way to avoid the evils of overpopulation without sacrificing the privileges they currently enjoy.

**Please type out (12pt Times New Roman, double spaced) answers to all ten questions. Your answers should be CLEAR, DETAILED, and WELL THOUGHTOUT.**

#### **What Shall We Maximize?**

1. Are the world's resources finite or infinite? Give 3 examples to support your answer.
2. Is it possible for everyone to agree on what is in "the common good"? How should we make decisions that concern natural resources?

#### **Tragedy of Freedom in a Commons**

3. Why will the herdsman always choose to add another animal to the herd?
4. Give 3 other examples, from the essay or your own that illustrate the author's thesis that private choice abuses public resources.

#### **Pollution**

5. Give an example at home, at school, and out in the community about our tendency to "foul our own nest" while expecting someone else to bear the responsibility for cleaning it up.

#### **How to Legislate Temperance?**

6. The author states that because conditions change, we have resorted to large bureaucracies to help administer law, rather than relying on absolutes. Do you think this helps or hurts the situation? Does it help people take responsibility for their actions?

### **Freedom to Breed is Intolerable**

7. How are natural populations self limiting? The article uses birds as an example.

### **Conscience is Self-Eliminating**

8. The author uses the principles of natural selection to argue that people with consciences will be eliminated over time. Explain.

### **Mutual Coercion Mutually Agreed Upon**

9. The author uses the idea of taxation as a coercive device. It makes certain behaviors more and more expensive to continue. Give 3 examples of how this policy is used to regulate behavior today.

### **Recognition of Necessity**

10. "Freedom to Breed Will Bring Ruin to All." Some countries penalize or tax births after a certain number or offer tax relief for people who volunteer to have fewer children. Some people have proposed cutting off welfare benefits to women who have a second child. Others support mandatory sterilization of drug addicts or other groups that are "unfit". What do you think? What steps would you propose to help solve the problem of overpopulation?

THIS ARTICLE MAY BE FOUND ONLINE:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full>

## SUMMER ASSIGNMENT PART 2

**Please type out (12pt Times New Roman, double spaced) answers to 2 of these 3 questions. Your answers should be CLEAR, DETAILED, and WELL THOUGHTOUT. Use reliable internet sources to help answer these questions. Feel free to incorporate diagrams. As always, cite your sources!**

1. Where does **your** (LONG ISLAND) drinking water come from? Write a detailed paragraph from source of the water to the treatment of the water.
2. Where does **your** (LONG ISLAND) electricity come from? Provide at least three MAJOR ON ISLAND sources. For example the burning of coal would be a great answer for many regions of the world, but not for Long Island.
3. What happens after the Department of Sanitation picks up your garbage? You should discuss at least two viable options and then determine what happens to garbage from most of the Town of Hempstead.