

Exercise walk-through

2.6

Malthusian Theory

AP Human Geography

Malthus: assumptions and critique

Argument	Reasoning
Malthus, 1798	Population could grow exponentially , while food grew linearly ; population could exceed food supply.
Technology critique	Higher yields, improved transport and agricultural innovation can change the assumed food trajectory.
Neo-Malthusians	Extend resource concerns to water, soil, energy and environmental limits.

Neo-Malthusians extend resource concerns beyond food. Food access also depends on income, distribution and conflict. An assumed growth curve is not an observed universal law.

Resource explanation: attempt and evaluation

Original scenario: harvest output rises, yet some households cannot afford food. A drought also reduces the town's water supply.

Explain why increasing output challenges a fixed linear-food assumption. Explain why it does not prove that every resource constraint or food-access problem has disappeared.

Resource explanation: worked evaluation

Observation	Inference and missing evidence
Harvest output rises	A fixed linear-food assumption may fail if technology changes yields. Compare production with population and consumption.
Households cannot afford food	Food exists but access is unequal. Investigate prices, income and distribution before blaming total output.
Drought reduces water	Water can constrain production or settlement even when harvests elsewhere rise. Examine local supply, demand and alternatives.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State Malthus's central claim about population and food supply. [2]

2.2 State one reason Malthus's prediction has not come true for the world as a whole. [2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

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2.1

- population grows faster (geometrically) than food (arithmetically); so population outstrips food, causing famine

2.2 State one reason Malthus's prediction has not come true for the world as a whole.[2]

2.2

- technology/the Green Revolution raised food output far beyond his estimate; fertility also fell as countries developed

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A modern writer warns that a growing population will exhaust fresh water and energy.

(a) Which updated theory is this?

[1]

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[1]

(a)

- neo-Malthusian

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A modern writer warns that a growing population will exhaust fresh water and energy.

(b) State how it differs from Malthus's original focus. [1]

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(b) State how it differs from Malthus's original focus. [1]

(b)

- it extends the concern from food to all resources/the environment

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Malthus argued that food supply increases

[1]

☐

- A geometrically
- B arithmetically
- C exponentially
- D not at all

3.2 The strongest evidence against Malthus is the

[1]

☐

- A population pyramid
- B Green Revolution's rise in food output
- C sex ratio
- D distance decay effect

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Malthus argued that food supply increases

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- ☐ A geometrically
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3.1 B

- food grows arithmetically (1,2,3,4) in his theory

3.2 The strongest evidence against Malthus is the

[1]

- ☐ A population pyramid
B Green Revolution's rise in food output
C sex ratio
D distance decay effect

3.2 B

- technology (Green Revolution) massively raised food supply

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 Two students debate Malthus.

(a) State one factor Malthus underestimated.

[1]

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(a)

- technological progress in agriculture

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 Two students debate Malthus.

(b) Explain why some still find neo-Malthusian ideas relevant.

[1]

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[1]

(b)

- some resources (water, fossil fuels, arable land) really are finite and under pressure