

2.6 Malthusian Theory

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 10 marks**

KEY WORDS malthusian theory 马尔萨斯理论 • neo-malthusians 新马尔萨斯主义者
• exponentially 指数式 • population pyramid 人口金字塔

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **Malthusian theory** 马尔萨斯理论 and its critics.

You must be able to:

- state Malthus’s argument about population and food
- explain the difference between geometric and arithmetic growth in his theory
- summarise how **neo-Malthusians** 新马尔萨斯主义者 update the idea
- give one criticism of Malthus

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Malthus’s argument

Thomas Malthus argued **population grows geometrically** (1, 2, 4, 8...) while **food grows arithmetically** (1, 2, 3, 4...), so population would outrun food and cause famine.

■ Neo-Malthusians

Neo-Malthusians extend the worry to all resources (water, energy, land) and a larger global population, warning of shortages and environmental limits.

■ Criticisms

Critics note Malthus underestimated **technology** — the Green Revolution raised food output hugely — and ignored that development lowers fertility.

2 Practice

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]

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

(a) Which updated theory is this? [1]

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

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Malthus argued that food supply increases [1]

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

3.2 The strongest evidence against Malthus is the [1]

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

3.3 Two students debate Malthus.

(a) State one factor Malthus underestimated. [1]

(b) Explain why some still find neo-Malthusian ideas relevant. [1]