UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Duration : 1 ½ hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This paper contains ONE question and comprises EIGHT printed pages, excluding the cover page.

2. You are not allowed to bring in materials or a dictionary to the examination.

3. You may use page 4 to plan and organize your ideas for the essay.

4. Write your essay on the lined pages provided in this booklet.

5. Use a pen for this test. You are not allowed to use a pencil.

Name of Student: _______________________________________

Identity Card / Passport number: ____________________________

Examination venue: ___________________ Seat number: _________

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This examination assesses your ability to write in response to a prompt based on a given text.

Write an expository essay of about 400-450 words to a university lecturer in response to the following question:

*As population increases, resources become limited. What can developing countries do to prevent the Malthusian catastrophe?*

You are required to use information from the text to support your ideas.

You have to acknowledge information taken from the text using proper academic conventions.

You will be assessed on sophistication and sufficiency of ideas, use of information from the reading text, clarity and logical development of ideas, and language fluency and accuracy.

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**New Limits to Growth Revive Malthusian Fears**

Now and then across the centuries, powerful voices have warned that human activity would overwhelm the earth's resources. Each time, there were new resources to discover, new technologies to propel growth. Today the old fears are back. Although a Malthusian catastrophe is not at hand, the resource constraints foreseen are more evident today. Steady increases in the prices for oil, wheat, copper and other commodities are signs of a lasting shift in demand as yet unmatched by rising supply.

As the world grows more populous, it also is growing more prosperous. The average person is consuming more food, water, metal and power. Growing numbers especially in China and India are stepping up to the middle class, adopting the high-protein diets, gasoline-fueled transport and electric gadgets that developed nations enjoy. The result is that demand for resources has soared. If supplies do not keep pace, prices are likely to climb further, economic growth in rich and poor nations alike could suffer, and some fear violent conflicts could ensue. Some of the resources now in great demand have no substitutes. In the 18th century, England responded to dwindling timber supplies by shifting to abundant coal. But there can be no such replacement for arable land and fresh water. The need to curb global warming limits the usefulness of some resources - coal, for one, which emits greenhouse gases that most scientists claim contribute to climate change. Soaring food consumption

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1 “Malthusian catastrophe” is a return to subsistence-level conditions as a result of population growth outpacing agricultural production.
stresses the existing stock of arable land and fresh water. Some economists contend that the world cannot sustain this level of growth without new technologies.

Some constraints might disappear with greater global cooperation. Where some countries face scarcity, others have bountiful supplies of resources. New seed varieties and better irrigation techniques could open up arid regions to cultivation that today are only suitable as hardscrabble pasture; technological breakthroughs, like cheaper desalination or efficient ways to transmit electricity from unpopulated areas rich with sunlight or wind, could brighten the outlook.

In the past, economic forces spurred solutions. Scarcity of resources led to higher prices, and higher prices eventually led to conservation and innovation. Whale oil was a popular source of lighting in the 19th century. Prices soared in the middle of the century, and people sought other ways to fuel lamps. Kerosene, a cleaner-burning alternative was developed. By the end of the century, whale oil cost less than it did earlier.

A similar pattern could unfold again. But economic forces alone may not be able to fix the problems this time around. Societies as different as the U.S. and China face stiff political resistance to boosting water prices to encourage efficient use, particularly from farmers who have obtained it free in the first place and in many developing nations, food-subsidy programs create scenarios where rising prices are unlikely to spur change.

One danger is that governments, rather than searching for global solutions to resource constraints, will concentrate on grabbing share. China has been funding development in Africa to gain access to timber, oil and other resources. India, once a staunch supporter of the democracy movement in military-run Myanmar, has inked trade agreements with the natural-resource rich country. The U.S., European Union, Russia and China are all vying for the favor of natural-gas-abundant countries in politically unstable Central Asia. Competition for resources can become obnoxious.

The world can adjust to dwindling oil production by becoming more energy efficient and by moving to nuclear, wind and solar power, although such transitions can be slow and costly. There are no substitutes for water, no easy alternatives to simple conservation. Despite advances, desalination remains costly and energy intensive. Climate change is likely to
intensify water woes. A growing taste for meat and other higher-protein food in the developing world is boosting demand and prices for feed grains. There are literally hundreds of millions of people who are making the shift to protein, and competition for food worldwide is a new reality.

New technology could help ease the resource crunch. Advances in agriculture, desalination and the clean production of electricity, among other innovations, would help. Perhaps consumers will eventually have to change their behavior. The world’s traditional definitions and measures of economic progress – based on producing and consuming ever more – may have to be rethought.

In years past, the U.S., Europe and Japan have proven adept at adjusting to resource constraints. However, history is littered with examples of societies believed to have suffered Malthusian crises: the Mayans of Central America, the Anasazi of the United States and the people of Easter Island. Those societies, of course, lacked modern science and technology. Still, their inability to overcome resource challenges demonstrates the perils of unbridled optimism.

Adapted from:
