

A Report Card for the Planet

www.Worldof7Billion.org/Wall_Chart

Introduction:

Since people have inhabited the planet, we've been altering the world around us in order to make communication and transport easier, food and water more plentiful, and our lives healthier and happier. Due to advances in all of these areas, we've been able to grow to a family of over 7 billion members. We've come a long way in our ability to live longer, produce more and travel the globe, but with the world getting ever more crowded, it's important to think critically about the progress we've made. How are we really doing? Are we all equally benefitting? Do our successes have any drawbacks? How can we continue to make changes to our world in a sustainable way?

In this activity, students will write and discuss a “report card” for the planet to explore the progress that we’ve made, the challenges we still face and the steps we can take to improve our “grades” to better our future.

Procedure:

1. Direct students to our website, ww.Worldof7Billion.org/Wall_Chart to view the poster.
2. If this is the first time students are viewing the poster, they should spend some time reading through the text on both sides of the poster and interpreting the charts and graphs.

Pass out the Student Worksheet.

3. Tell students that they will be using the information on the poster (both sides) to decide whether the environmental and quality of life indicators listed on the worksheet show increase or decline since 1800.
4. **In the “Status” column, students should write an ↑ for indicators that show an increase and a ↓ for indicators that show a decrease.** You may want to remind students that they should be thinking about each indicator on a global scale.
5. After students complete the worksheet, briefly go over the answers as a class and then give each student a set of “Reporting Cards.”

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the population growth rate has slowed overall but remains high in less developed countries?
2. What indicators do you think might be affected as the economies of developing countries grow?
3. The median age in developed countries is higher than in less developed countries. Why might this be? What problems do you think a country with a large elderly population might face?
4. What might contribute to the decrease in arable land per person that we've seen over the years?
5. Are there any indicators on the report card that are connected to each other (as one goes up, so does the other and vice versa)?

A Report Card for the Planet: Student Worksheet

Use the poster "A Quick Trip to 7 Billion" (see website) to decide whether each indicator has increased (↑) or decreased (↓) over the past 200 years. Write the appropriate arrow in the "Status" column.

Note: While not all of these indicators are listed directly on the poster, there is enough information for you to infer the status based on the information provided.

Indicator	Status (↑,↓)
Life Expectancy	
Total Fertility Rate	
Child Mortality Rate	
Population Growth Rate	
Birth/Death Rates	
Urban Populations	

Median Age	
Carbon Dioxide Emissions	
Atmospheric Concentration of CO2	
Number of Cars in the World	
Meat Consumption and Livestock Population	
Paper/Paperboard Consumption	
Dead Zones in the Oceans	
Ecological Footprint	
Chronic Water Shortages	
Average Years of School	
Internet Use (# of users)	
Mobile Cell Phone Subscriptions	
Lifetime Risk of Maternal Death	
Access to Improved Water and Sanitation	
Prevalence of Under-nutrition	
Childhood Immunizations in Least Developed Countries	
The Global Wealth Gap	
Acres of Arable Land Per Person	
World Fertilizer Consumption	
Women in Political Leadership	