



World Vision

Population Conference Simulation



A supplementary
resource to
*Current Issues in
Global Population*

A teacher's guide and assessment tool
designed as a culminating activity for
Ontario Curriculum Grade 8 Geography topic,
Patterns in Human Geography

POPULATION CONFERENCE SIMULATION

Introduction

Help students integrate knowledge of global population issues with research and negotiation skills using the **Population Conference Simulation!** This culminating activity is designed as a follow-up to *Current Issues in Global Population*, an eight-page curriculum resource produced jointly by World Vision Canada and TEACH magazine.¹

The simulation is a modified jigsaw, and **works best with two or more classes** of geography students. Research is largely Internet based. The activities have been designed for the Ontario Grade 8 topic, *Patterns in Human Geography*. However, teachers in other jurisdictions should feel free to adapt the resource to their own needs. The package lays out the complete process for teachers, and includes checklists, research guides, rubrics and support materials.

Learning Outcomes

This learning strategy provides students with the opportunity to practise, develop and demonstrate the overall expectations identified for the Ontario Grade 8 Geography Topic, *Patterns in Human Geography*:

- identify and explain patterns in human geography (e.g. population distribution, population characteristics, settlement patterns, and urbanization) and describe how human activities are affected by these patterns;
- demonstrate an understanding of employment patterns and trends;
- use a variety of geographic representations, tools, and technologies to gather, process, and communicate geographic information.

Time Required

The completion of the complementary resource, *Current Issues in Global Population*, provides a general preparation for this activity. However, students will need time to gather information on their countries and their topics, and to develop country negotiating positions for the conference. Allow an appropriate amount of in-class and after-class time for this preparation and remember to allow time for Internet access.

The simulation itself is a half-day activity.

¹ Both this resource and the *Current Issues in Global Population* resource can be downloaded free from www.worldvision.ca/resources. They can also be ordered in hard copy for \$10 from this site or by calling 1-800-268-1650.

Synopsis

Two or more classes of Grade 8 students are divided in country teams.² There are five students on each country team, of which one is designated as the team leader.

Depending on the maturity of the students and timetables, students can either be teamed in countries across classes, or within their own class.

Each student (including the leaders) chooses a specialist topic. Teachers should ensure that each of the five specialist topic groups has at least one country team leader who will be able to present the recommendations of the topic group later in the simulation.

Prior to the day of the simulation, students meet in their country teams to do research and prepare to represent their country's interests at the conference. The backgrounder sheets supplied with this unit help in this process. Country leaders also prepare a one-minute statement on their country position to open the conference.

The conference day takes place in an appropriately formal location with students dressed professionally. After the opening presentations, students meet with other country representatives in specialist topic groups. They come up with population policy recommendations, using the questions on page 5 to stimulate discussion.

After a break, students reconvene in country teams to check progress and redefine negotiating strategies. The specialist groups then come together a second time to finalize their policy recommendations. Teachers should closely monitor the forming policy recommendations to ensure that they are realistic.

In the final stage of the conference, country leaders meet to compile and prioritize the recommendations while the other students watch a video tape of the proceedings. The activity ends with the leader's presentation and a press conference (visitors and teachers acting as members of the press).

Follow-up evaluation and assessment tools are included at the end of the resource.

² While it is possible for just one class to do the simulation, it will not be nearly as exciting. Numbers make the magic happen!

Actions Checklist

Preparation

- ❑ Obtain approval for the activity from your school administration.
- ❑ Book any off-site or on-site facilities required for the conference. A local community centre may have good facilities. Ensure an adequate sound system for plenary sessions and appropriate space for the five topic groups.
- ❑ Book a keynote speaker if desired. Someone who has lived overseas or a university student studying development may be good choices.
- ❑ Arrange juice, muffins, etc., for the break periods.
- ❑ Make or purchase nametags, folders and other supplies for the delegates.
- ❑ Book the school video camera. “Hire” a videographer from the local high school or another class.
- ❑ Decide on the country distribution and who will be on each country team. Each country team consists of five members, including a leader chosen by the teacher. The position of leader can serve as an enrichment experience for exceptional students. Non-exceptional, yet vocal and confident personalities may also do well.
- ❑ Book in-school field trips for the two joint sessions of the classes, if necessary.
- ❑ Book library/computer time for in-school research.
- ❑ Arrange for 3-4 keen junior students to act as pages for the day. Country members will need to communicate with their leaders and specialist groups may want to communicate with one another.

Process: (based on a three week period)

DAY 1

- ❑ First joint session: introduce the idea of the conference package to the participating classes. This can be done as an in-school field trip or outside of the regular school day. Announce the country groupings and the selected leaders.
- ❑ Have each team assign members to the five specialist topics – one student per topic. Give each student an information package (pages 6 to 12 of this resource).
- ❑ Announce date of one other joint session in the week prior to the summit.

DAYS 2-10

- ❑ Study *Current Issues in Global Population*. Assign relevant readings on the subject.
- ❑ Assign an appropriate amount of in-class and out-of-class time for students to conduct research on their country and complete the backgrounder information sheets.
- ❑ Encourage the passing of notes between classes.

DAYS 11-14

- ❑ Hold one final joint session.
- ❑ Ensure that all participants understand their roles.
- ❑ Remind everyone to dress professionally on the day of the session.
- ❑ Make sure that your student videographer understands how to operate the camera, and that you have enough tape!

Country Distribution

Note: This activity works better with larger groups. If doing this activity with only one class, ensure that there are at least five countries, distributed through the following regions. It is important to have a mixture of aid donor and recipient countries, and as wide a range as possible of religious and cultural beliefs. We recommend the United States over Canada as a first representative for North America because of the sheer size of the American economy and American involvement in world affairs. However, if more than five countries are at the conference, be sure Canada is included.

Geographic Region	Suggested Countries:
North America	United States, Canada, Mexico
Europe	Italy, Germany, France
Africa	Sudan, Zambia, Ghana, Ethiopia,
Latin America and South America	Brazil, Guatemala, Columbia
Asia	India, China, Indonesia

POPULATION CONFERENCE SIMULATION

Students' guide and assessment tools

Welcome to the (simulated) **International Conference on Population!** Your team of five students will represent a country at this conference where you will negotiate global population policies to guide the world for the next 10 years.

Each of the five team members will be assigned a specialist topic regarding population policy. Before the conference, students will research information on their country and specialist area. You will work with team members to come up with a country negotiating position.

In the conference itself, students will negotiate population policy agreements with topic specialists from other countries. Your task is to represent your country in negotiations and, together with the other students, come up with population policies that all countries can agree to AND that are realistic and sustainable.

Key questions for negotiations:

- In your specialist area, what are the main population issues?
- What policies do we recommend to deal with these issues?
- Will the policies promote sustainable development?
- Do they respect human rights? Are they environmentally sound?
- Are these policies realistic -- can they be followed through? At what cost? (Remember that four other specialist groups are also making recommendations)
- Are my country's cultural and social circumstances taken into account?
- Who will pay for implementing the new policies?
- Will the policies be enforced, and if so, how?

After the simulation, students use the tools found in the *Assessment and Evaluation* section of this resource to complete self and peer assessments, as well as write a one-paragraph reflection on the process and product of their experience. Note that a "mini-portfolio" of best works from the complimentary resource *Current Issues in Global Population* is included.

Conference Day

The Population Conference Simulation will be held at

_____.

Sample Agenda	
8:15 to 8:30	Reception
8:30 to 9:15	Formal Introductions Keynote Speaker (if available)
9:15 to 9:25	Leaders state concerns regarding population policy: one minute each.
9:25 to 9:55	Specialist Committees: students meet in topic groups for initial discussion and negotiation on population policy regarding their topic. (Videographer drifts between committees, capturing the debate in progress throughout the morning)
9:55 to 10:10	Refreshments
10:10 to 10:20	Country Meetings: students return to country groupings to discuss progress and redefine negotiating strategies.
10:20 to 11:00	Specialist Committees: students reconvene in topic groups for final negotiations. Each specialist group is responsible to write a brief <i>Policy Recommendation</i> , succinctly prioritizing their proposals for co-operative action by all countries on their issue.
11:00-11:30	Leaders meet: leaders compile and summarize the proposals into an <i>Action Statement</i> . Other students view video of morning sessions.
11:30-12:00	Closing Statements and Press Conference: leaders present the <i>Action Statement</i> . Visiting students and teachers can ask questions as members of the press. The conference ends with an “Official Conference Photo.”

Specialist Topics:

Below are the five recommended specialist topics and some examples of issues that might be discussed under each topic. The five topics and the issues to be discussed may be adapted by teachers to meet curriculum requirements. Much of the background information on these topics will be acquired in completing the backgrounder sheet, next page. Note that the list below is a guide to help students get into their topics – they do not need to deal with every issue listed here – nor are students restricted to these issues.

Population Policy and the Environment

- deforestation
- water scarcity or abundance
- pollution and waste management
- availability of natural resources

Population Policy and Health Care/Education

- infant mortality and death rates
- access to basic medical care
- access to control over reproductive health
- literacy rates and access to education

Population Policy and Cultural/Social Factors

- culturally or religiously desired family size
- role of women in society
- government provision of basic services
- availability of old age security

Population Policy and Land Use Patterns

- agricultural land use patterns
- land ownership issues
- problems of urbanization
- population density

Population Policy and Poverty Alleviation

- degree of poverty or wealth in the country
- external debt owed
- access to technology
- employment and unemployment patterns

"Backgrounder" Student Research Guide

Use a separate paper for answers. Following the questions are some suggested Internet sources.

1. Student name and country:
2. Specialist Topic:
3. Background Information About Your Country

Demographics:

- current population
- population growth rate
- birth and death rates
- U5MR – under five mortality rate
- life expectancy
- age structure of population
- literacy rate

Economy:

- gross domestic product (GDP) per person
- GDP growth rate
- employment patterns
- unemployment rate
- how big is the external debt compared to exports
- access to technology (see www.undp.org/hdro/info.htm)

Environment and Land Use:

- importance of agriculture
- main sources of income
- urban/rural split
- main environmental concerns

Religious and Social Factors:

- main religious and cultural practices
- type of government (democracy, dictator, military, monarchy)
- gender equity (see www.undp.org/hdro/wompar.htm)
- availability of basic social services

5. Based on what you know about your country and your specialist topic, what population policies do you recommend your country pursue at the conference?

Suggested Internet sources:

The CIA World Factbook, www.odci.gov/cia/publicatons/factbook/index.html. A good general source for information on the economic and social situation in a country.

- UNICEF, www.unicef.org, click on Statistics. Good information on health and education.
- The United Nations Development Program has detailed charts in its Human Development Report, www.undp.org/hdro/, see Statistics.
- The Population Reference Bureau web site offers a more advanced search. Go to www.popnet.org, and search through the listing of web sites for the specific information needed.

Assessment and Evaluation

Description	Due Dates	Value
<p><i>Current Issues in Global Population</i> – portfolio of best completed activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one completed graph from "Population Growth" or "Environmental Limits" • full paragraph answer to one of the "Demographic Trends" questions • full paragraph answer to one of the "Population Policy Today" questions 		
Attendance at joint session #1		
Attendance at joint session #2		
Completed backgrounder research guide		
Performance in Conference (see assessment rubric)		
Self-evaluation form (develop a rubric with your class to ensure that they understand what is required of them)		
Group “Pie” evaluation (see assessment and evaluation)		
One page formal written reflection on the process and product of the conference.		

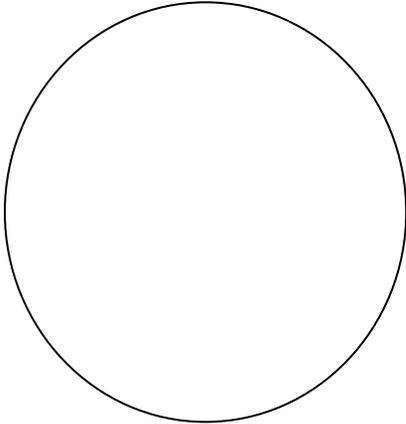
Assessment Rubric for Cairo Conference Performance

Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Understanding Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates an understanding of the terms describing population characteristics • demonstrates an understanding of the correlation between population characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify a few simple characteristics (wealthy versus poor, low birth rate versus high) - has a limited understanding of correlation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify several characteristics and use those characteristics to argue for his/her country's position - has some understanding of correlation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify most characteristics and correlations, and use those characteristics to argue for his/her country's position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrates sophisticated understanding of characteristics and correlations, and applies understanding fully in the conference to advance his/her point.
<p>Inquiry/Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses appropriate vocabulary • formulates questions that synthesize various sources of information and points of view • locates relevant information from a variety of sources • analyzes, synthesizes, and evaluates data to make predictions • communicates the results of the inquiry for specific purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rarely uses appropriate vocabulary - asks few to no questions, or questions show little to no evidence of synthesis - obtained information for background sheet with significant teacher assistance - makes predictions only with teacher assistance - rarely communicates to group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - occasionally uses appropriate vocabulary - asks some questions, shows some evidence of synthesis from more than one source or more than one point of view - obtained information for background sheet with some teacher assistance - makes predictions with some teacher assistance - sometimes communicates to group with clarity and precision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often uses appropriate vocabulary - asks generally good questions, demonstrates ability to synthesize information - obtained information for background sheet with very little teacher assistance - makes predictions with very little teacher assistance - usually communicates to group with clarity and precision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - almost always uses appropriate vocabulary - consistently asks questions which indicate a high degree of synthesis of multiple points of view and information sources - obtained information for background sheet without assistance - makes predictions without teacher assistance - almost always communicates to group with clarity and precision
<p>Applying Concepts and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compares the characteristics of developed and developing countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify a few simple characteristics (wealthy versus poor, low birth rate versus high) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify several characteristics and use those characteristics to argue for his/her country's position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to identify most characteristics, and use those characteristics to argue for his/her country's position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrates sophisticated understanding of characteristics, and applies understanding fully in the conference to advance his/her point.

Peer Evaluation

COUNTRY TEAMS:

Instructions: Divide the circle below into sections according to how much you feel each member of your **country team** contributed to your success. Write the first name and last name initial of each member in the pie.



SPECIALIST COMMITTEES:

Instructions: Divide the circle below into sections according to how much you feel each member of your **specialist group** contributed to your success. Write the first name and last name initial of each member in the pie.

