

Beckhams a 'bad example' for families

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

family planning

debate

taboo

role model

issue

1. If you are a _____, your behaviour is a good example for other people to follow. (para 1)
2. A _____ is a discussion in which people or groups give different opinions about a subject. (para 1)
3. A _____ subject is something that people do not talk about because it is shocking. (para 2)
4. _____ is controlling the number of children you have by using contraceptives. (para 2)
5. An _____ is a subject or problem that people discuss. (para 2)

birth control

birth rate

child benefit

selfish

carbon emissions

policy

6. A _____ is a plan by the government. (para 3)
7. _____ is the practice of avoiding becoming pregnant or the methods used for this. (para 3)
8. _____ is money given by the government in some European countries to all families with children to look after. (para 4)
9. _____ people think only about themselves and don't care about other people. (para 4)
10. _____ are carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere produced by vehicles and factories. (para 5)
11. The _____ is the number of births in a particular place or year. (para 7)

2 Find the information

Look in the text and answer these questions as quickly as possible.

1. How many children do David and Victoria Beckham have?
2. What is the world's population today?
3. What was the world's population in 1930?
4. What will the world's population be by 2050?
5. Which country has the fastest-growing population in Europe?
6. Which country has a one-child policy?

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Tracy McVeigh
17 July, 2011

- 1 David and Victoria Beckham were happy when their new daughter was born. But some people say that the birth of their fourth child makes them bad role models who are damaging the environment. The world's population is now about seven billion, and some people want a public debate in the UK about how many children people should have.
- 2 The Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas says that discussing family size in the UK is a taboo subject. Lucas said: "We need to have a much greater public debate about population, about improving family planning or reducing the gap between rich and poor. We do not discuss this issue so most people don't think about the growth of the world's population in recent years. In 1930, the world's population was about two billion. Today it is about seven billion, and by 2050 it will probably be nine billion."
- 3 Lucas says that it is interesting that public figures, environmental groups and non-government organizations in general do not want to discuss population. And now it's become a taboo issue. It is very difficult to discuss this subject because of the terrible results of China's one-child policy and of other attempts at birth control. But, she says, if an issue is a taboo subject that no-one talks about, it is very difficult to find solutions.
- 4 Simon Ross of the Optimum Population Trust wants the UK government to give child benefits only for the first two children. "This is a big issue," he says. "Family planning is cheap, but many people don't use it correctly and there are lots of accidental pregnancies. Having one or two children is fine but three or four is just selfish."
- 5 "The Beckhams are very bad role models with their large family. Why try to reduce your carbon emissions and then increase them 100% by having another child?" he said. "England has a lot of people living in a small space and it has the fastest-growing population in Europe. In 15 years we'll have an extra ten million people here."
- 6 Zoologist David Attenborough said people having lots of babies was damaging the planet. He thinks every country should control its population. "Fifty years ago there were about three billion people on Earth. Now there are almost seven billion – almost double – and every person needs space. There cannot be more people on this Earth than we can feed," he said.
- 7 China's one-child policy has made the debate more difficult and people don't want to criticize birth rates in poor countries. But some people say that it is the populations of the developed world who use most of the world's resources.
- 8 Lucas said the Green Party was not afraid to discuss the subject because it was so important. "The lesson we can learn from China is that trying to control population growth is dangerous for personal freedom," she said. "We must encourage birth control and reduce poverty."
- 9 Lucas believes that strong policies are needed to reduce the huge gap between rich and poor. She says that the UK, as a richer country, has different population problems from countries in the developing world. In poor countries, people have lots of children because they are poor. "It's an important issue for both rich and poor countries – this is a debate which is important for everyone," she says.

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make sentences about the text.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Some people say the Beckhams are bad role models ... | a. ... is important for everyone. |
| 2. People in the UK don't discuss family size ... | b. ... there will never be a solution. |
| 3. If people don't discuss the problem, ... | c. ... because they have four children. |
| 4. Many people believe that trying to control population ... | d. ... as countries in the developing world. |
| 5. Richer countries do not have the same population problems ... | e. ... is bad for personal freedom. |
| 6. The question of population growth ... | f. ... because it is a taboo subject. |

4 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- probably it billion nine will be
- is it very solutions find difficult to
- one having two or fine is children
- Europe the population growing fastest- in
- rich the and gap huge between poor

5 Two-word expressions

Match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. child | a. planning |
| 2. role | b. freedom |
| 3. family | c. debate |
| 4. birth | d. benefits |
| 5. public | e. control |
| 6. personal | f. model |

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6 Word-building

Complete the table.

	adjective	noun
1.	free	
2.	poor	
3.	pregnant	
4.		globe
5.		accident
6.		environment

7 Discussion

Should we limit the number of children people can have? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. role model
2. debate
3. taboo
4. family planning
5. issue
6. policy
7. birth control
8. child benefit
9. selfish
10. carbon emissions
11. birth rate

2 Find the information

1. four
2. about seven billion
3. about two billion
4. nine billion
5. England
6. China

3 Comprehension check

1. c
2. f
3. b
4. e
5. d
6. a

4 Chunks

1. it will probably be nine billion
2. it is very difficult to find solutions
3. having one or two children is fine
4. the fastest-growing population in Europe
5. the huge gap between rich and poor

5 Two-word expressions

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. e
5. c
6. b

6 Word-building

1. freedom
2. poverty
3. pregnancy
4. global
5. accidental
6. environmental