



Cambridge International AS & A Level

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

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Paper 1 Written Examination

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INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has 4 pages. Blank pages are indicated.

The following documents consider issues related to quality of life. Read them **both** in order to answer all the questions on the paper.

Document 1: adapted from *Can South Korea Make More Babies?* An article by Lee Jong-Wha, published in 2016 in 'Project Syndicate'. The author is Professor of Economics and Director of the Asiatic Research Institute at Korea University. He served as Chief Economist at the Asian Development Bank and was also a senior advisor for international economic affairs to former President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea.

South Korea is facing major challenges. The total fertility rate (the number of children per woman) is 1.24. This is one of the lowest in the world. It is below 2.1, the level needed to maintain a population. As a result, the population is aging fast. The fertility rate was over 6 until 1960. But, as South Korea's economy advanced, and more women started working, the fertility rate dropped to below 2 in the 1980s.

Initially, falling fertility rates were an economic blessing. Households saved more and invested in children's development. In 2015, the college enrolment rate for women hit 81%, compared to 6% in 1980. Economic growth has been weakened by the reduction of the working-age population. In addition, fewer people in work means less tax is paid into the public pension system.

South Korea's government has introduced policies aimed at boosting fertility rates. These include more paternity leave, and childcare facilities for large families. But these policies may not solve the problem because there are economic reasons why South Koreans delay having children, or do not have them at all.

One reason is the cost of education. In 2015, South Korean parents spent almost 7% of their disposable income on private tutors for their school-aged children. Parents also pay an absurdly high price for children's college education, the highest among OECD countries. That limits how many children parents can afford to raise.

For many young South Koreans, marriage is not economically possible nowadays, because of high housing costs and youth unemployment, even among university graduates. The number of weddings in South Korea dropped from 435 000 in 1996 to 302 800 in 2015. In a country where 98% of children are born to married couples, this affects fertility rates.

Gender inequality and a lack of affordable, high-quality childcare cause many South Korean women to stop working after marriage or childbirth. While men work long hours, women take responsibility for family care. Men accounted for 5.6% of those who took parental leave in 2015. Though the new government measures aim to boost this share, it will not be enough. Many women do not wish to leave their jobs. In a recent Federation of Korean Industries survey, 38% of the single female respondents said that they do not want children, mostly because they might struggle with work or lose their jobs. Only one-third responded positively to the government's program for promoting fertility.

Allowing the migration of foreign housekeepers and caregivers could be very helpful. South Korea is cautious about offering permanent residency to foreigners. But in advanced economies, where market services for childcare and households are available, educated women tend to have more children. In Singapore, families often hire live-in maids from neighboring countries, including the Philippines and Indonesia, to take care of housework and childcare. Foreign talents fill the population gap and sustain the economy.

South Korea's government must introduce a comprehensive policy to raise birth rates. Women need greater support, so they do not have to choose between career and family. The key is to provide accessible childcare, more flexible work arrangements and to build a more accepting corporate culture. Population change is inevitable. But if South Korea creates an environment in which families can live and work happily, those families will grow larger.

Document 2: adapted from *Falling Fertility: The Impact of Declining Birth Rates*, by Michael Sliwinski, published in 2015 on 'Law Street Media', a media platform covering law and public policy. The author is a graduate of Ohio University, with a Bachelor's in History, and a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Master's in International Policy.

What is the fuss about the birth rate? What does it mean for America? What do we need to consider about population growth in future?

A recent report by the National Center for Health Statistics gave good news for America's population growth. The birth rate increased by 1% – the first increase since 2007. Growing birth rates are important for a nation. The data revealed that most women giving birth were older, aged 30–44. The birth rate in women aged 20–24 continued to fall. Having a baby after the age of 40 still has potential health risks. However, older women are often healthier, better educated, and more prepared financially and mentally, so these risks are reduced.

Low birth rates usually indicate a country's level of development. In many developed countries, the birth rate is below replacement levels, at 1.5 or lower. Why is this happening and why is it important? One common characteristic of these countries is the improved status of women. Education is a major factor. Women who continue education, as in Japan, have fewer babies. In Eritrea, where education is lacking, the birth rate is 4.6.

Low birth rates can have a dramatic impact on immigration. In countries with low birth rates like Japan or Germany, immigration is needed to maintain population size. Additionally, many of these countries have an older population and immigration can provide younger people. They are needed to pay for the benefits enjoyed by older citizens as they retire. So, countries with low birth rates must accept immigrants or find new ways to increase their populations naturally.

Many countries already have plans to deal with falling birth rates. In Japan nearly USD 30 million has been set aside for encouraging young, single people to get married. The Russian government gives couples up to USD 12 500 for having a second child. Many European countries provide maternity benefits, generous leave or childcare. The US is unusual as it does not guarantee maternity leave and only provides small tax breaks to women having children. This may be why older, more financially secure women are the ones having more children in the US.

Technology plays a greater role in the birth rate each year. In the US, fertility treatments accounted for 1.5% of all births in 2013. Private companies are involved. Both Apple and Facebook will pay to have their female workers' eggs frozen. These women can use their frozen fertilized eggs to have children at an appropriate point in their career. Some people praise this as the answer for women who want a career and a family.

It is difficult to manage population size. National and private efforts to address this issue show how important it is. However, it has been predicted that the growing global population is unsustainable and that we are headed for disaster. Equally, people are concerned about not having enough children and the dangers that would present to society. In future the concern may change from how many people we can feed, to whether or not we have enough people to help feed them.

Right now, the issues and solutions are unclear.

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