LifeKnowledge® At Work
To advance the integration of LifeKnowledge through local teachers.
September 2008

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LifeKnowledge® Featured Articles

How LK Facilitates Balanced Classroom Instruction

Quality classroom instruction goes beyond the beloved e-Moments of LifeKnowledge. Read on to find out how Rebecca Carter of Virginia explains what balanced classroom instruction means to her.... Click here to learn more...

Precept in Action

LK Assists in Inquiry-Based Teaching

The education world can hardly talk about quality classroom instruction without mentioning inquiry-based learning, especially relating to all areas of science. Read this article to better understand inquiry-based teaching and how LifeKnowledge resources can help.

Featured Lesson Plan

Featured Technical Lesson: World Population

Click here to find out more about this lesson.

Convention Corner

Check out what's on tap for LK this year at the national FFA convention

Click here to find out more about this year's Convention.

Hot Tips

Active Listening for the Classroom - An Important Motivational Strategy

Where do our own active listening skills fit into quality classroom instruction? Click Here

LifeKnowledge News

Sponsor Remarks

And now a word from our partners... Click here

Comments & Success

Contact us with your comments, questions or LifeKnowledge success stories.

How LK Facilitates Balanced Classroom Instruction: Q & A with Rebecca Carter

LK: What are your tactics in keeping classroom instruction balanced with all the other pressures of an ag teacher, such as CDEs, SAEs and FFA?

RC: To keep the balance, I feel the key is to delegate responsibility through officers, students, parents and the community. This allows me to use the available resources in my class, school and community.

LK: What is quality classroom instruction and how does quality classroom instruction affect the three-circle model?

RC: Quality classroom instruction is when all students are actively participating or engaged in learning. Class instruction is the first and sometimes the key to the three-circle model because it is the first opportunity for students to be interested in agriculture and gain the basic knowledge needed to accomplish other tasks.

Author Information:
Name: **Rebecca J. Carter**

Occupation/location:
Agricultural Education Instructor,
Essex High School, Virginia

How long have you been in agricultural education?
10 years – middle school and high school for four years; just high school since then

Why did you want to become an agriculture educator?
I have been around ag all my life. I became a teacher because of my ag teacher and my FFA experiences.
College: Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Family:
Husband Mike (who I met when we served as Virginia State FFA Officers); son Aaron, 4 years old; daughter Annabelle, 1 year old

Since you started teaching, what is one way you have improved yourself?
I now try to facilitate learning, not just throw the information at the students. I am truly trying to teach to the whole student.

Favorite e-Moment? Why?
The funniest to watch the students do is the Karaoke Moment. They can just really get into the acting. The one I use the most is the Crayon Moment. Allowing the student to think of his/her own image and link it to information is huge for productive learning.

LK: How do you decide which areas take precedence in your classroom?

RC: If you are referring to the three-circle model, it depends on what is happening at that time. I try to link the instruction being given to a hands-on application or activity – for example, teaching forestry around the time we will be able to participate in the Forestry CDE.

LK: How does LK fit in? How does the use of LK affect your quality classroom instruction and balance?

RC: LK is incorporated in all that I do. To me, it is more than pointing out teachable moments; it's living them by example. So I try to be the best example for my students to see the appropriate behavior, responses, etc. LK is incorporated by itself to push students to develop their own best self. LK is also the way in which I facilitate learning. It is how I teach and present information and make it meaningful to the students. LK continuously helps as I am trying to draw the connection to real life and agriculture.

LK: In what ways does LifeKnowledge help you keep that balance?

RC: Well, when teaching specific concepts and trying to be the model for them, LK forces me to focus on what is important. It helps keep me grounded to what my purpose/goal is.

"LK is also the way in which I facilitate learning. It is how I teach and present information and make it meaningful to the students. LK continuously helps as I am trying to draw the connection to real life and agriculture."

LK: Let's look at classroom instruction beyond e-Moments; I think many of our LK users have really picked up on this strategy, but what else is there? Other than e-Moments, what do you think creates effective instruction?

RC: Effective instruction is engaging the students in a fun but thoughtful manner – taking what they know and linking it to a concept that they don't know so they will remember it. This is done through inclusive language, specific and effective directions, meaningful tasks/assignments and effective feedback.

LK: What tips or traps have you discovered in your teaching career concerning classroom instruction?

RC: A trap for me is going back to my old way of teaching – just giving the information and not allowing the students to experience it and work through it. A tip is, if you hear yourself as a teacher talking too much, then you are not allowing the students to work through the information. If I find myself tired or working too hard, then I have not done my job correctly.

LK: Is there anything else on this topic or LK usage that you would like to share?

RC: LK is a frame of mind in some ways. It's realizing that learning does not have to go through a teacher. The teacher is just the guide or facilitator. LK is more than lessons, activities, language, directions, questioning – it's you being yourself and allowing yourself to bring out the best in every student in your classroom. It's all of the concepts of LK together that make them work.

If someone new is coming in, they just need to choose one piece of LK and try it on for a while – then slowly add the other pieces to complete the puzzle.

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LK Assists in Inquiry-Based Teaching

By Katy Wuthrick, Education Specialist, LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education

Inquiry-based teaching/learning, a hot topic in the education world, continues to bloom based on research and success using the method. With agricultural education linked to science education in so many ways, we also get bombarded with the latest and greatest ways of teaching science, which includes using inquiry methods.

But what exactly are you to think when this buzzword hits your inbox?

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines inquiry as: "1: examination into facts or principles; 2: a request for information; 3: a systematic investigation often of a matter of public interest."

When we link this definition to the student/teacher relationship, we find the following explanation at *Wikipedia.com*:

Inquiry-based learning or inquiry-based science describes a range of philosophical, curricular and pedagogical approaches to teaching. Its core premises include the requirement that learning should be based around students' questions. Pedagogy and curriculum requires students to work together to solve problems rather than receiving direct instructions on what to do from the teacher. Teachers are viewed as facilitators of learning rather than vessels of knowledge. The teacher's job in an inquiry learning environment is therefore not to provide knowledge, but instead to help students along the process of discovering knowledge themselves."

This is a great way to approach the new school year – by turning over a new leaf in teaching and helping your students as they learn through inquiry. Research has shown that this approach helps students retain information and enhances their ability to apply the information to a new situation.

We at the LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education have been utilizing inquiry-based learning since 1999, when we began developing the 257 LifeKnowledge lesson plans. Each lesson plan is focused around the idea of self-discovery. The lessons are scripted to help you be the facilitator of learning as your students accept the challenge head-on.

Inquiry-based lesson plans are often referred to as “facilitation plans,” helping teachers remember their role as the facilitator of learning rather than a continuous discloser of knowledge. The concept also helps educators structure lessons in a less rigid way, allowing students’ questions to drive the learning process without crushing its momentum.

All the tools available through LifeKnowledge Online facilitate this spirit of inquiry-based learning, helping the teacher be the facilitator to the world of opportunities in leadership, personal growth and career success.

Using phrases such as “think for yourself” and “use your idea to complete the activity,” the goal is for students to learn by doing. LK lessons help students discover their personal goals and leadership style. They offer opportunities for teachers to facilitate a student’s ability to take a lead role in an e-Moment, practice decision-making skills, lead a group discussion or build a resume.

Three steps in pursuing inquiry-based teaching:

1. Engage students with a question, event or phenomenon.
2. Explore ideas through hands-on experience; form and test hypotheses.
3. Analyze and interpret data; solve problems and create explanations for what they observe.

The following example is excerpted from LK lesson HS.81 - Decision Making in Groups:

Objective 2. Identify strategies for arriving at group consensus and decisions.

Think about strategies for arriving at group consensus and decisions. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with the class.

Ask the class the following questions:

How can a group arrive at consensus and make decisions?
What are strategies for decision making that you have used?
If the class were given the opportunity to take a field trip next Friday to anywhere at no cost to students, where would you like to go?

Allow the students time to discuss the options, attempt to develop consensus and make decisions about the field trip. In a moment, you’ll find the entire class discussing this field trip.

In order to participate, think about all of the decisions that need to be made regarding that field trip. In a moment, I’ll ask you to share those decisions and we’ll capture them on the board. After each one is listed, we will need to use consensus building to answer it. What questions are there?

Challenge the students to think of all angles and tasks associated with the field trip, making decisions on each.

Provide the following information on the writing surface, and instruct students to capture the information in their notebooks. Use HS.81.TM.B to teach this portion of the lesson. Relate key terms given in student definitions to the definitions given below.

**Technical notes pulled out - Notes include information regarding making decisions using parliamentary procedure, a small group or a team leader.*

Think about strategies for arriving at group consensus. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively and share your ideas with the class.

Use a Newton Moment to review this portion of the lesson. Ask students to think of their best “why?” questions after being presented with a new idea, concept or process. Challenge students, one at a time, to share their questions, rapid-fire, and see if any of the other students can answer. If not, post the question on the board, but do not stop on it yet. Allow everyone to get their question asked, then go back to the ones that none of the students could immediately answer. See what questions can be answered now. Of those that are left, you can choose to answer or give them back to the class as an assignment or extra credit.

As you can see in this scripted LK lesson, the ability for students to guide themselves through the thinking and learning process involved in decision making is evident. LK techniques align with inquiry-based teaching, helping students stay engaged and remember life lessons as they apply to future leadership, personal growth and career success opportunities. Let LK resources help you stay on top of the curve in inquiry-based teaching.

For more information about inquiry-based teaching/learning, check out the National Science Teachers Association September publication that is focused on this topic.Click here.

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Featured Technical Lesson: World Population

By Brandie Disberger Southeast of Saline High School, Kansas

Take a look at how Disberger incorporates leadership education into her lesson on world population.
Lesson click HERE
Supplemental PowerPoint click HERE

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Convention Corner

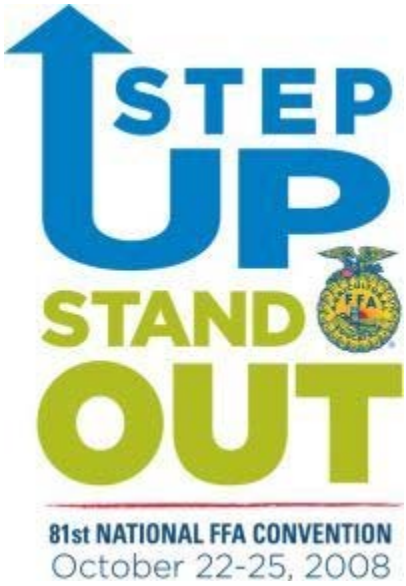
Check us out at the 81st National FFA Convention, October 22-25, 2008! The LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education will be located at Island KK, next to the interactive classrooms in the Career Show area at the Indiana Convention Center.

Share with you. Visit our booth to try the new LifeKnowledge Online powered by the Team Ag Ed Learning Center. See how LifeKnowledge Online's facelift and new tools can benefit you! Test-drive LifeKnowledge Online and discover the latest in leadership education for yourself!

Free products for you. Stop by the booth to sign up and win a free subscription to LifeKnowledge Online and other LK products. Each day we will be giving away more than $150 in LifeKnowledge products. It could be your lucky day with LK!

Share with us. Come to our booth and let us know how the LifeKnowledge resources are used in your classroom. This year at our booth, we will be recording your live testimonials and LK advice. Is there a way you use LifeKnowledge Online that is innovative and could help others? Come to our booth and tell us what is working for you in your classroom.

To reserve a time to record your personal testimony about LifeKnowledge or to talk about how you can contribute to LifeKnowledge At Work, e-mail Katy Wuthrick at kwuthrick@ffa.org or call 317-802-4304. Everyone's perspective can help us grow through professional development. What do you have to offer?



The LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education will be excited to see you at the national convention when the best and the brightest *Step Up and Stand Out*.

Time Saving Tips for Teachers

Active Listening for the Classroom – An Important Motivational Strategy

Always trying to get students to be attentive listeners? Let's turn the table and focus on our own listening habits to see how they could unintentionally set the stage for the dynamics in your classroom. Read Melissa Kelly's article on About.com to fine-tune your listening aptitude.

http://712educators.about.com/cs/activelistening/a/activelistening.htm

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What's New?

Sponsor Remarks

And now a word from our partners...

Without the generous sponsorship from our Founding and Supporting Partners, the LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education could not reach out to agriculture educators across the country and continue to provide products and services. In future issues of LK At Work, this sidebar will be filled with comments and quotes from our partners. We are currently in the process of collecting a Q&A from each of them, and we look forward to sharing their valuable insights. Check back next month to view Sponsor Remarks on various LK topics and the agriculture industry.

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Join the LifeKnowledge mailing list and get the LifeKnowledge At Work newsletter delivered straight to your email inbox.
You can also sign up for other great FFA e-Publications.

Author Information:

Name:
Brandie Disberger

Occupation/location:
Agricultural Education Instructor, Southeast of Saline High School, Kansas

How long have you been in agricultural education?
8 years

Why did you want to become an agriculture educator?
I wanted to work with youth interested in agriculture, and this was the best fit for that! Plus, the positive impact FFA had on me made me want to provide a similar experience for others.

College:
Kansas State University

Family:
Husband Bill Disberger

Since you started teaching, what is one way you have improved yourself?
Attending the Delta Conference and other teaching enrichment activities provided by the National FFA Organization have allowed me to improve my teaching skills.

Favorite e-Moment? Why?
Eyewitness Moment is my favorite e-Moment. It can be used as a preview, review or to reinforce additional learning.

Favorite teaching memory:
My favorite teaching memory happens every time I get into a Suburban to take students to an event. It is in this time that I get to know the students on a personal level. We laugh, talk and share experiences. Whether we win or lose, the memories are the most valuable possession they keep. This time is unlike any other time teachers spend with students.

Impact of World Population Growth on Agriculture

By Brandie Disberger
Southeast of Saline High School, Kansas

Objectives:
As a result of this lesson, students will

1. Draw the world population graph
2. Discuss social changes that have impacted the graph
3. Track the change in the population over 10 minutes
4. Discuss impacts of world population on agriculture and vice versa.

Background:

- Lesson of 8th grade Agriculture Explorations unit, "What is agriculture?"
- LifeKnowledge Precepts:
  MS 57: Finding Opportunities to make Positive Change
  Objective 1

Logistical Information: 90 minute block class
Tools, Equipment and Supplies:
Computer w/Internet access, http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html
Calculators
Copies of Worksheet
Copies of Quiz

Before the class enters,

- *place five different colored markers around the room*
- *place a card with this definition under one student's chair:*
  - *Change Agent – someone or something that can lead the change.*
- *place a card with this definition under another student's chair:*
  - *Change Agents lead the change in the change process, the steps used to make a successful change.*
- *Set up the computer to the census website before class if possible.*

Contextual Set:
Dial back your brains to yesterday…What did we discuss?

Elicit Responses: U.S. Commodities

Today we will explore change in the world around YOU starting with the population. Be ready to think into the past and discover new concepts.

Interest Approach:
LK Integration CHANGE
Imagine living in 1906…what would you wear? Eat? How would you travel? What about the people around you?

Life as a teenager has certainly changed over the last 100 years, and so has the population. Let's take a look.

e-Moment: Go Get It Moment
Make sure there are five different colored markers around the room.

Open your eyes and look around. There are five different colored markers around you. When I say Go, search high and low for the markers. When you find one, report to the front of the room. If you do not find a marker, return to your seat. Go!

Draw an axis on the board for a line graph.

Where have you seen this before?
Response: Math class

What are the names of the parts of the axis?
Response: Label X horizontal and Y vertical

Volunteers…draw a line graph that represents how you believe the world population has changed over the last 500 years. If you don't know, you can guess.

Whose do you think is the closest to the actual population growth?

Take a student vote.

Now that you have guessed the population growth, let's see what the experts say…

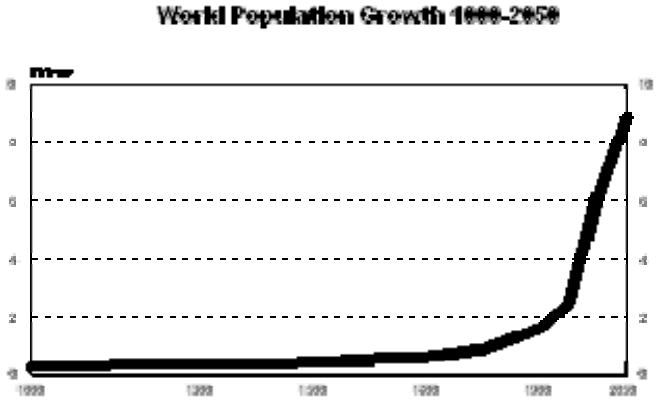
Reveal the correct answer after a drum roll by the class.

Summary of Content, Instructional Sequence, Activities and Strategies

Objective 1: Draw the world population graph

When you hear the word Search, locate your notebook and pen and scribe the population graph on your notes for today.

this



in

to

Place your finger on the area where there is a significant change. Label change.

Change is not only in population but your life as well. How many of you have experienced a significant change in your life?

Think of something you would like change. Who will share?

Elicit responses; select one to focus on.

e-Moment: *Go Get It - Place a card with this definition under one of the student chairs.*

Will the person with a white index card under their chair please come forward to reveal some important information to the rest of the class about a change agent?

The card reads: ***Change Agent – someone or something that can lead the change.***

Thank you!

Who or what would be the change agent in our scenario?

Now that we have determined our change agent, we will identify the population change agent. Think about what may have caused the change in the population graph you drew; next, we will determine the change agent.

Elicit responses.

Objective 2: Discuss social changes that have impacted the population.
e-Moment: Me, You, Us.
When you hear Go, find a piece of paper, fold it into fourths like this, and title the sections Me, You, Us, Summary. You have 30 seconds – Go.

Demonstrate this as you give directions.

Next, under the "Me" section, answer the following question with statements, drawings, etc. What "change agents" do you believe have made the world population change so drastically over the last 25 years? You have 30 seconds to brainstorm your answer to this question. Begin.

Time the 30 seconds.

Time is up. Move to the "You" section. With the person sitting closest to you, compare your thoughts and write new ideas in the "You" section. You have two minutes. Go.

Time the 30 seconds.

Next, you will discuss with another group for two minutes. Combine both groups' ideas and place them in the "Us" section. Go.

Time the 30 seconds.

Finally, on your own, summarize the information you have gathered, selecting the three top reasons you have found for the population change and place this personal summary in the "Summary" section. Go.

Time the 30 seconds.

Who would like to share their thoughts?

Elicit responses.

Thanks for really using your thinking caps to collaborate ideas. Now, let's look at what the data says….

Population change Agents

1. Trade revolution
   The trade revolution allowed us to circulate goods among people, spreading the wealth of foods, medicine, etc.
2. Agriculture revolution
   The agriculture revolution increased yields and strengthened farming practices so each farmer could produce more.
3. Medical advancements
   Medical advancements increased the number of infants born alive, increased the life span and increased the quality of life.

Were any of your responses close? If so, pat yourself on the back!

We have looked at the population growth and why, but how fast does it really grow? We will track the change next.

Objective 3: Track the population change over 10 minutes.
Set up the computer to the census website before class if possible.
http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html

If we were to move toward making the change, and use the change agent, what might the timeline look like?

Elicit Responses

Change happens all around us, some fast and some slow. The population first changed very slowly and now changes very rapidly. Let's take a look.

As a class, we will track the changes in the world population for the next 10 minutes. Who will volunteer to run the computer? Who will be a timer? We will refresh the computer on the world pop clock every minute for the next 10 minutes. I will read out loud the number that should be listed under the following columns: "actual time" and "world population."

Track changes for 10 minutes. This activity goes quickly. Be sure to read the numbers as soon as they come up on the computer. If students do not get the all of the information, tell them we will catch up later. Complete a worksheet yourself so you can help students get all of the information after the 10 minutes are up.

What surprised you? Is it a constant change? You will learn more about this information as you complete the worksheet in the next 15 minutes. You may use a calculator.

Wow, the population is growing very rapidly. This increase affects everything around us, including agriculture. Let's take a look.

Objective 4: Impact of world population growth on agriculture.

We have noticed the rapid change in population; agriculture has to respond to the change in order to meet demands.

e-Moment: Go Get It
Place a card with this definition under one of the student chairs.

Will the person with a white index card under their chair please come forward to reveal some important information to the rest of the class about the change process?

*The card reads: Change Agents lead the change in the **change process**, **the steps used to make a successful change**.*

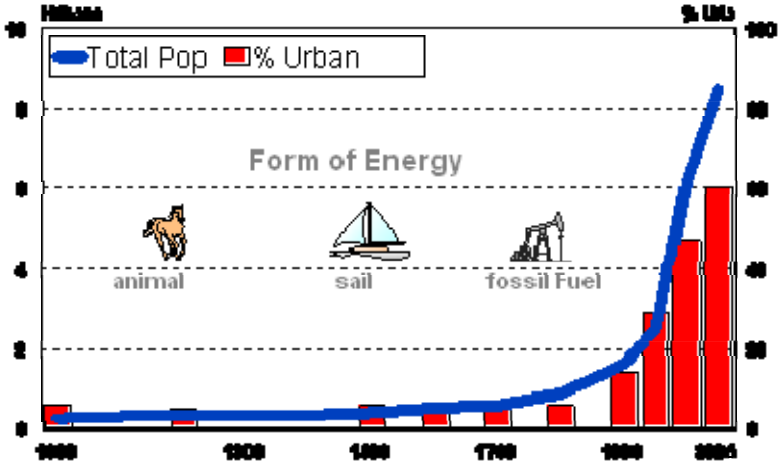
Thank you!

What steps would we take to make the change we have been discussing? How long would it take?

Elicit responses

One might think that with this type of increase in the population, we should all be starving. Anyone hungry out there? With this type of increase in population, how are we able to feed everyone? We have experienced the change process to adapt.

Worldwide, the form of energy has changed with the increase in population, allowing us to produce more.



Do you believe the United States raises more or less food products than they consume? Why or why not?

Elicit responses

The United States produces significantly more food than is needed. Why do you think this is so?

Elicit ideas from the students…lead them to the following on the board…

Change Agents in U.S. Agriculture

1. *Technology advancements (discuss examples, increased yields, hybrid seeds, machinery efficiency)*
2. *Fertile soil*
3. *Favorable growing conditions*

Agriculturalists led the change process and the United States took steps to be competitive.

How can you lead the process of change?

LK Integration:
We have planned a change as a class – now let's apply this concept of change in your life.

In your notes, write the word "change." Next to it, explain something you would like to change. Next, write "change agent." How can you be the change agent or who could be the change agent? Next, write "change process." How will you be proactive to make this change happen?

We started today by looking at the change in the world population, the change agents that caused it and the impact on U.S. agriculture. Using all of the information from today, we will be investigators preparing a report of the new information.

e-Moment: Eyewitness news report.

Each student will summarize the information we went over today about the world population and can research more data to support their point. They will create a 30-second summary in the form of a news report about the data. Depending on time and the students, they can just give the news report to the class or work with a partner to interview each other.

How many of you watch the news? What are the reporters' stories like?

Elicit answers: short, informative, based on research, some interviews, etc.

During the next 10 minutes, summarize the information we discovered into a 30-second summary or news report, much like you would see on TV. When I say GO, you may utilize the computers to research more information to prove your points. What questions do you have? Go!

Allow for at least 10 minutes; if working well, an extension of time could be earned by the students.

Who would like to share their reports?

Share and discuss ideas from the news reports as a class.

Think in your mind the change you are experiencing right now. What is your change agent? What is your change process? I challenge you to make it happen before I see you again.

Unit 1 – What is Agriculture

Lesson 2: Impacts of World Population

Name_____

Directions: Use the U.S. Census Bureau World Population Information on the Internet, http://ww.census.gov/ipc/www/world.html, to answer the following questions.

Minutes	Actual Time Listed at the Web Site	World Population	Population Change During the Last Minute
Start			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
Total increase in World Population During Previous 10 Minutes (add values in 4th column)			

Key Questions:

1. Does the population change the same amount during each of the 10 minutes?

2. Assuming a constant rate, how much would you expect the world population to increase in 1 day? (total increase in world population during previous 10 minutes x 6 x 24)

3. How much would you expect the population to increase in 1 year (365 days), assuming a constant rate?

4. If you assume that the population of the world increases at the same rate, what will the population be in 20 years?

5. List some variables that could cause your 20-year prediction to be inaccurate.

6. Why do you think the ability to predict the world’s population is important?

Unit 1 – What is Agriculture

Lesson 2: Impacts of World Population

Name_____

Directions: Complete the following questions on this paper.

1. Draw a line graph of the world population growth from the year 1000 to 2000.

2. Why has it changed so much in the last 100 years? List at least two of the four reasons we discussed.

3. When you tracked the world population over 10 minutes, did it change the same amount each minute? Why or why not?

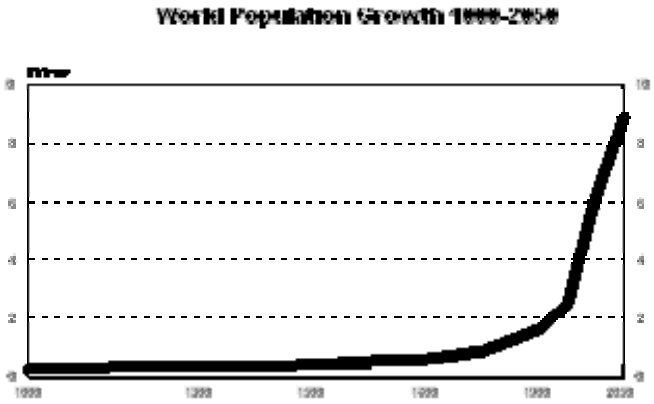
4. Along with the increase in population and agriculture production, this also changed in the world view. What was it?

5. Does the United States raise more or less food than we consume?

Evaluation w/Answer Key

Answers:

1.



2. 1. Trade Revolution
   2. Agriculture Revolution
   3. Industrial Revolution
   4. Medical Advancements

3. The change is consistent over each minute, but if they did not refresh at exactly one minute, population change may vary.

4. Energy Fuel Sources have changed

5. More

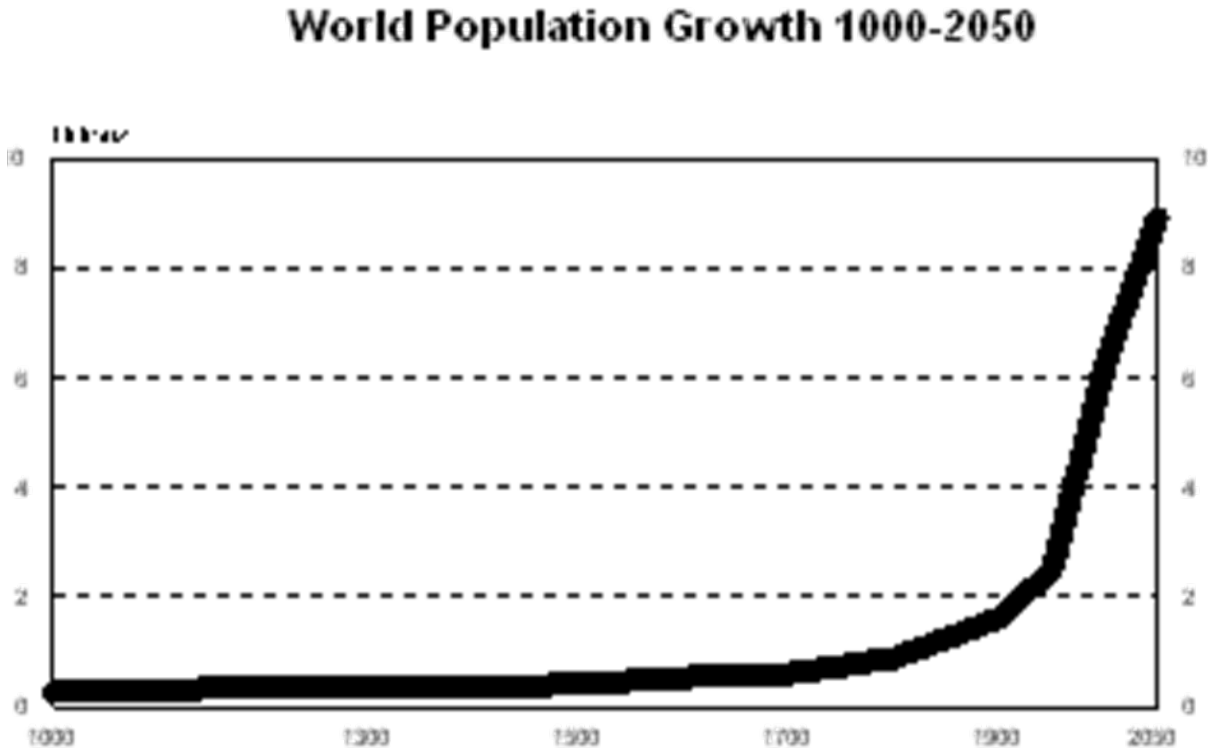
Overhead Masters/Printed Copy of PowerPoint slides

What is Agriculture?

Impacts of the world population

How has the world population changed over the last 1000 years?

- Any ideas??
- The Answer is…



Change

- Change Agent – Someone or something that causes change.
- What would you like to see changed?
- Who could be the change agent?

What were the change agents that made the population change so drastically?

- 1. Trade Revolution
  - Introduced new foods from the Americas including corn and potatoes
- 2. Agriculture Revolution
  - Increase in yields due to advancements
- 3. Industrial Revolution
  - Made new goods available through transportations etc.
- 4. Medical Advancements

How does the population change in 10 minutes?

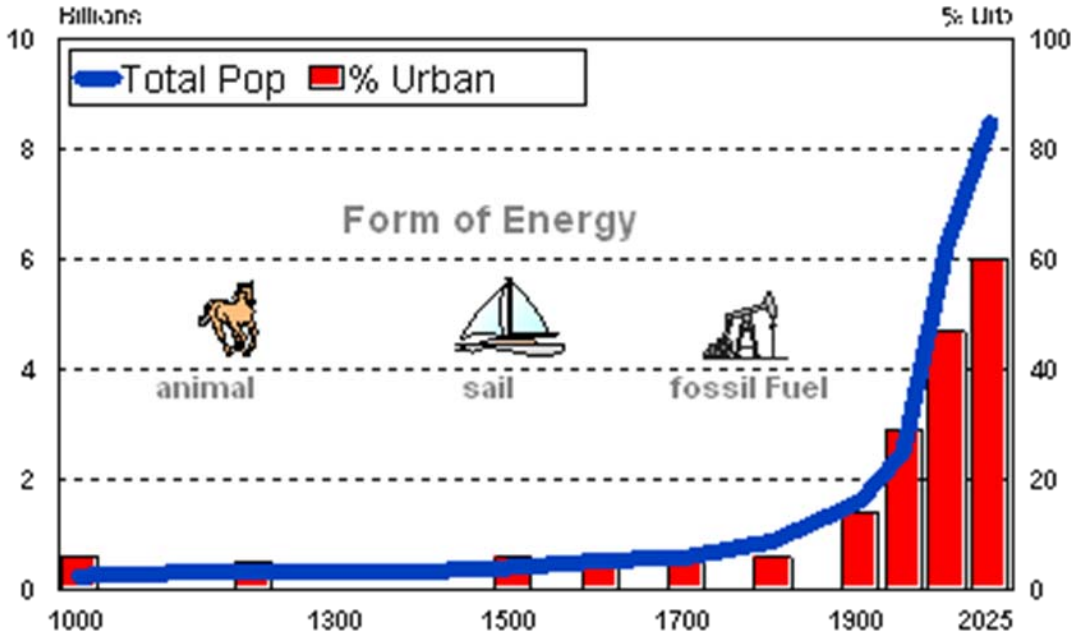
- Visit http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html
- Track the population for 10 minutes using the refresh key
- What surprised you?
- Complete the data on the worksheet.

Change

- Change process – Steps to make a positive change
- What process would we go through to make this change?

Why are we not starving?

- World wide the type of fuel has changed with the increase in population and agriculture production



What about in the United States?

- Do we raise more or less food than we consume?
  - Answer: MORE
- Why?
  - Fertile Soil
  - Favorable growing conditions
  - Technological advancements
    - Increased yields
    - Hybrid seeds
    - Machinery efficiency

Change

- What would you like to change in your life?
- Who will be the change agent?
- What steps would you take in the change process?

What do you know?

- Eyewitness news report
  - Summarize the information in a 30 second news report
  - You may research new data to add to this information
  - You will have 10 minutes
  - You may work with a partner who will interview you. (however, you each need to prepare your own report)
  - What questions are there? GO!

Change

- By next class period, begin the process to make your positive CHANGE!