

CHINESE POPULATION GROWTH

READING PRACTICE SETS

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TOEFL iBT READING PRACTICE SET

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions. Give yourself 18 minutes to complete this practice set.

CHINESE POPULATION GROWTH

- 1 An increase in population has usually been accompanied and indeed facilitated by an increase in trade. One can hardly occur without the other. In the Western experience, commerce provided the conditions that allowed industrialization to get started, which consequently led to growth in science, technology, industry, transportation, communications, social change, and the like that we group under the broad term of development. However, the massive increase in population that in Europe was at first attributed to industrialization starting in the eighteenth century occurred also and during the same period in China, even though there was no comparable industrialization.
- 2 It is estimated that the Chinese population by 1600 was close to 150 million. The transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties in the seventeenth century may have seen a decline, but from 1741 to the outbreak of the great Taiping rebellion in 1851 the annual figures rose steadily and spectacularly, perhaps beginning with 143 million and ending with 432 million. If we accept these totals, we are confronted with a situation in which the Chinese population doubled in the 50 years from 1790 to 1840. If, with greater caution, we assume lower totals in the early eighteenth century and only 400 million in 1850, we still face a startling fact: something like a doubling of the vast Chinese population in the century before Western contact, foreign trade, and industrialization could have had much effect.
- 3 To explain this sudden increase in population, we cannot point to factors constant in Chinese society but must find conditions or a combination of factors that were newly effective in this period. Among these is the almost complete internal peace maintained under Manchu rule during the eighteenth century. There was also an increase in foreign trade through Guangzhou in southern China and some improvement of transportation within the empire. Control of disease, such as the checking of smallpox by variolation, an obsolete method of immunizing patients against smallpox by infecting them with substance from the pustules of patients with a mild form of the disease, may have been important. However, of most critical importance was the food supply.
- 4 Confronted with a multitude of unreliable figures, economists have compared the population records with the aggregate data for cultivated land area and grain production in the six centuries since 1368. Assuming that China's population in 1400 was about 80 million, the economist Dwight Perkins concludes that its growth to 700 million or more in the 1960s was made possible by a steady increase in the grain supply, which evidently grew five or six times between 1400 and 1800 and rose another 50 percent between 1800 and 1965. This increase of food supply was due perhaps half to the increase of cultivated area, particularly by migration and settlement in the central and western provinces, and half to greater productivity – the farmers' success in raising more crops per unit of land.
- 5 This technological advance took many forms: one was the continual introduction from the south of earlier-ripening varieties of rice, which made possible double cropping, i.e., the production of two harvests per year from one field. [A] New crops such as corn, or maize, and sweet potatoes as well as peanuts and tobacco were introduced from the Americas. [B] Corn, for instance, can be grown on the dry soil and marginal hill land of North China, where it is used for food, fuel, and fodder, and provides something like one-seventh of the food energy available in the area. [C] The sweet potato, growing in sandy soil and providing more food energy per unit of land than other crops, became the main food of the poor in much of the South China rice area. [D]
- 6 Productivity in agriculture was also improved by capital investments, primarily in irrigation. From 1400 to 1900, the total of irrigated land seems to have increased almost three times. There was also a substantial gain in farm tools, draft animals, and human fertilizer, or night soil, to say nothing of the population growth itself, which increased half again as fast as cultivated land area and so increased the ratio of human hands and of night soil available per unit of land. Thus, the rising population was fed by a more intensive agriculture, applying more labor and fertilizer to the land.

- Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 1? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
 - Commerce, industrialization, and development are common features of the Western experience.
 - Trade, industrialization, and development accelerated social change in Western societies.
 - Trade and industrialization brought about development in Western societies.
 - In Western societies, social change provided the conditions for development in a number of areas.
- According to paragraphs 1 and 2, which of the following is true of Chinese population growth between 1741 and 1851?
 - It coincided with the beginning of industrialization in China.
 - It prompted speculation about the actual number of people living in China in previous centuries.
 - It continued the steady growth in population of previous centuries.
 - It occurred in the absence of certain conditions generally associated with population growth.
- Paragraph 3 supports all of the following statements about eighteenth-century Chinese society EXCEPT:
 - It was troubled by frequent conflicts with foreign nations.
 - It improved its transportation system.
 - It experienced growth in international commerce.
 - It managed to prevent the spread of certain diseases.
- Which of the following questions about China's population growth does paragraph 4 answer?
 - Which figures relating to China's population growth were unreliable?
 - Why did Dwight Perkins assume that China's population in 1400 was about 80 million?
 - Where in China did most of the population increase take place?
 - What factors made China's population growth between 1400 and 1965 possible?
- The word **aggregate** in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - available
 - reliable
 - combined
 - recorded
- What can be inferred from paragraph 5 about the introduction of corn and sweet potatoes in China?
 - These crops required much more care than other crops.
 - These crops were consumed in limited quantities.
 - These crops permitted an expansion of the area used for farming.
 - These crops became available all over China within a short period of time.

7. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in paragraphs 5 and 6 as one of the strategies applied in agriculture?
- (A) The growing of two crops on the same field during the same year
 - (B) The improvement of systems to supply crops with water
 - (C) The application of increasing amounts of fertilizer to the land
 - (D) The reduction in the amount of human labor per unit of land
8. What purpose does paragraph 5 serve in the larger discussion about China's population growth?
- (A) It provides evidence of China's emerging foreign trade relations.
 - (B) It illustrates how the Chinese increased their food supply.
 - (C) It provides evidence of why population growth was most noticeable in the south.
 - (D) It shows how foreign crops gradually gained greater acceptance in China.
9. Look at the four squares [A-D] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Other developments addressed the problems of dry, sandy areas unsuitable for growing China's native crops.

Where would the sentence best fit?

10. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the **THREE** answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Over the centuries, China has experienced an extraordinary increase in its population.

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Answer Choices

- (A) Understanding the exceptional increase in China's population requires giving up commonly held assumptions relative to the phenomenon of population growth.
- (B) The economist Dwight Perkins applied a particular statistical method to determine the increase in China's population.
- (C) The sudden population growth in China started in its northern and southern provinces, and it spread rapidly to the central and western areas of the country.
- (D) Improved transportation management and enhanced disease control contributed to China's population explosion.
- (E) The increase in China's food supply, which affected population growth, was the result of technological developments in agriculture and capital investment.
- (F) A steady increase in foreign trade since the 1400s provided the conditions that were necessary for large-scale agricultural development.