

“The Tragedy of the Commons” Discussion Questions

1. What does Hardin mean by a "technical solution" to a problem?
2. What does Hardin mean by a “dilemma” with “no technical solution”?
3. What does Hardin mean that you can't maximize two variables simultaneously?
To what two variables is he referring in the case of population growth?
4. Hardin argues that the earth's resources are finite. What does he mean by this?
5. What is "good"? How is "good" determined in nature?
6. Do you agree with Adam Smith that decisions reached individually will necessarily be the best for an entire society?

7. What does Hardin mean by a "commons"?

8. What is the "tragedy"?

9. What does Hardin mean by "freedom in a common brings ruin to all"?

10. What does Hardin mean that morality is "system sensitive"? Give an example.

11. Hardin argues that controlling the breeding freedom of humans cannot be done by an appeal to conscience. Do you agree?

12. What does Hardin mean by "mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon"?

Note: These questions are modified from those found on the following website:
<http://employees.csbsju.edu/SSAUPE/biol116/Ecology/tragedy.htm>

