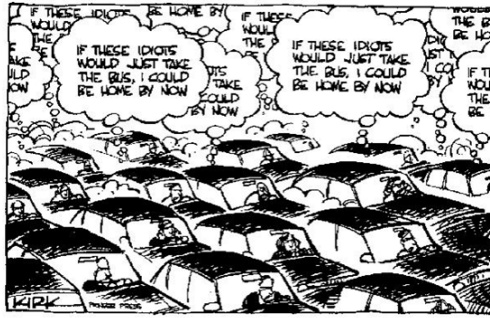


# THE TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS QUESTIONS

Adopted by K.Hoffman from B. Bodas



## Background

“The Tragedy of the Commons” by Garrett Hardin was published in 1968 in the journal *Science*. It quickly became one of the most referenced works relating to environmental science and is almost always required reading by undergraduate students majoring in a biological field.

## Directions

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. According to Hardin’s article there are some problems that have no scientific or technical solution. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
2. How does the game of tic-tac-toe demonstrate Hardin’s argument that the problem of overpopulation has no technical solution?
3. If resources are finite, and you as an individual or a member of a society use(s) a disproportionate amount of resources compared to someone else, would you be willing to give up some of your resources to support a larger population on the whole even if your standard of living might decline? Why or why not?
4. Is maximizing the population of humans something that you think the human race should strive to do? Why or why not?

5. Agree or disagree with the following statement, “the positive growth rate of a population is evidence that it has yet to reach its optimum”.
  
6. Which do think is more important, your individual freedoms or the common environmental good?
  
7. How does Hardin’s example of the herdsman and his mathematic justification (nearly +1 and fraction of -1) embody the tragedy of the commons?
  
8. Do you think access to common areas such as national parks (owned collectively by all citizens) should be open to everyone, all the time? Would your opinion change if the influence of the “crowd” actually diminished the parks natural resources or aesthetic value?
  
9. How does someone throwing their cigarette butt out of the car window demonstrate the tragedy of the commons in terms of pollution?
  
10. How can the concept of “mutual coercion” in effect help to sustain resources we are trying to utilize or exploit?
  
11. Agree or disagree with the following statement, “the necessity to abandon the freedom to breed” is required to maintain a high quality of life?