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GLOBAL CIVILIZATION: PROGRESS OR COLLAPSE?

Word Generation - Unit 1.19

Focus Words

collapse | conceive | incline | intrinsically | nonetheless

Weekly Passage

Anthropologists and historians define a civilization as a complex society. Based on historical and archeological records, they define ancient societies such as the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Mayans as civilizations. Anthropologists and historians tell us that these societies had cities with governments. These societies also conceived of important discoveries and inventions that have continued to be valuable to other societies over the years.

Civilizations, however, rise and fall. There is debate about whether some civilizations are more advanced than others. Some think civilizations that hold the most power are intrinsically better. Others argue that when one civilization conquers another, as the Europeans conquered the Native Americans, it is not necessarily because they are more civilized. Some people suggest that more complex societies are inclined to have a higher standard of living than simpler societies. Nonetheless, easier access to more goods and services does not always mean higher quality of life.

In some ways, today's communication and transportation technologies have helped to create one unified global civilization. Some people think this contemporary civilization is still progressing. Recent years have brought major technological advancements and spread democracy to different parts of the world. Others think our civilization is beginning to collapse. Problems such as terrorism and environmental destruction are growing. What will be the fate of our civilization? Is our collective future looking brighter or darker?

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Discussion questions:

- ▶ What are some elements of a civilization?
- ▶ Why do some people think that some civilizations are intrinsically better than others?
- ▶ Why do some people conceive of access to more goods and services as being a characteristic of a strong civilization?
- ▶ When one civilization conquers another, does that show that the conquering civilization is intrinsically better?
- ▶ Is our civilization making progress, or is it about to collapse?

Unit 1.19 - Global civilization: Progress or Collapse?

Focus Word Chart (teacher version)

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes	
collapse	(v.) – to fall apart	collapse (n.) collapses collapsing collapsed			
conceive	(v.) – to develop; to think or believe	conceives conceiving conceived		concept conceivable inconceivable conception misconceive conceptual	deception inception reception
incline	(v.) - leaning toward (a belief)	incline (n.) inclines inclining inclined			decline recline
intrinsically	(adv.) - fundamentally; at the core		intrinsic		extrinsic extrinsically
nonetheless	(adv.) – however; even so				

Unit 1.19 - Global civilization: Progress or Collapse?

Problem of the Week

People who are **inclined** to think positively about global trends often point to the example of life expectancy. As scientists learn more about the causes and cures for disease, they help people live longer and healthier lives. Once, people were considered **intrinsically** past their prime at 40 or 50. Today, medical advances have changed the way we **conceive** of old age. Many people are living active lives, far from physical **collapse**, well into their 80s and beyond.



In today's global civilization, people travel more and diseases can spread quickly. **Nonetheless**, information about how to fight diseases also travels quickly. People around the world are living longer all the time and life expectancies are on the rise.

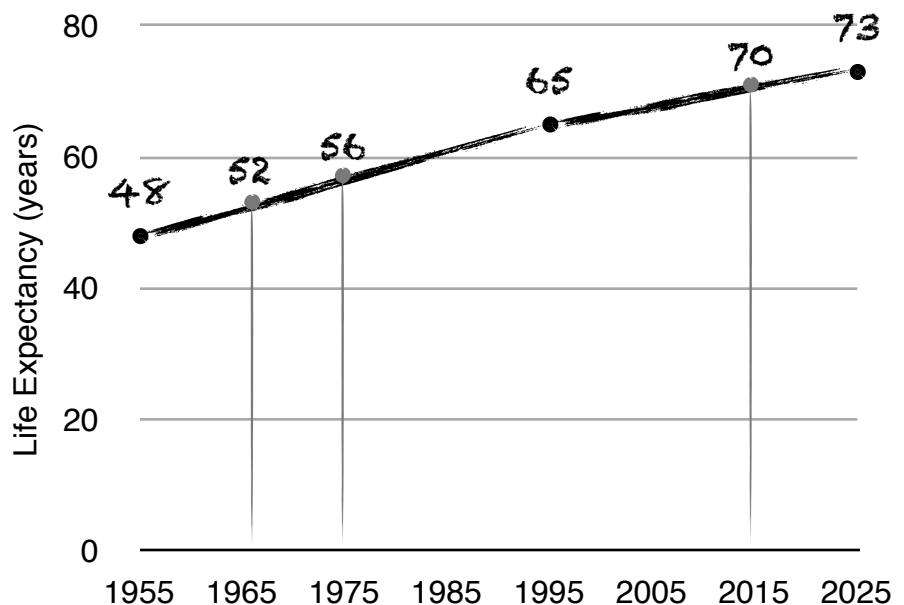
Average global life expectancy at birth in 1955 was 48 years. In 1995 it was 65 years. In 2025 it will reach 73.

Option 1: Plot the points of the data given above, and connect the three points with a line to show change. (We're assuming that life expectancy increased at a constant rate between 1955 and 1995, and between 1995 and 2025.) Using your graph, determine the approximate life expectancy in the following years:

1965 _____

1975 _____

2015 _____



Students receive a blank graph. This is a sample of what a student could do.

Option 2: Plot the points of the data given above. What was the average increase per decade in life expectancy between 1955 and 1995? What was the average increase per decade in life expectancy between 1995 and 2025?

Answer: 4.25 years, and $2\frac{2}{3}$ years

Math Discussion Question: Some people who are **inclined** to be optimistic think that people will continue to lead longer and better lives than the generations that came before them. Some people who are **intrinsically** pessimistic believe that longer, better lives will mean more strain on the environment, leading to **collapse**. What do you think? Can you **conceive** of a future where the growing human race lives peacefully and sustainably? Many people are working on ways to build a sustainable future by switching to renewable energy and consuming fewer resources. Will these efforts work? Or are we headed for collapse **nonetheless**?

Global civilization: Progress or Collapse? Debating the Issue



I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Our civilization is making progress. We have made major technological advancements that lead to higher quality of life for our citizens.

B Our civilization is making progress because we inspire people to create democracies around the world.

C Our civilization is about to collapse. We try to make progress, but there is an increasing amount of terrorism and destruction nonetheless.

D Our civilization is about to collapse. Access to more goods and services has not led to higher quality of life for many people in this country.

E _____

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

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» Students may have difficulty connecting to this issue on a personal level. Ask them if they think one form of government is intrinsically better than another. Are democracies intrinsically better, more complex civilizations? Is the United States right to try to spread democracy in places like the Middle East? Or are there intrinsic problems in our own society that will lead us, and the nations we attempt to conquer, to collapse?

» Some students may need help defining their position on the weekly topic. Here are some examples:

I think it's more accurate to say...

That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?

I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .

Let me share something from the reading that will help us...

Unit 1.19 - Global civilization: Progress or Collapse? Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Professor Seemy's class joined Professor Kahn's class for a debate about the future of the world. Each student decided whether to join Group Negative or Group Positive. Group Negative argued that global civilization was near **collapse**, pointing to pollution, nuclear weapons, and other threats. The opposing side, Group Positive, agreed that these threats were serious. **Nonetheless**, they said, it was **inconceivable** that our world would end.

Professor Kahn noticed that, in general, the students in Group Positive seemed more **inclined** to be positive. She had read that **intrinsically** positive people have better long-term health than negative people. Was Group Positive healthier?

Question:

Will negative students be out sick more than positive students?

Hypothesis:

Negative students will be out sick more than positive students.

Materials:

- ▶ Group Negative, a group of intrinsically more negative students
- ▶ Group Positive, a group of intrinsically more positive students

Procedure:

1. Ask students to join group Negative if they think that the world's future will be bad, or to join group Positive if they think the future will be good.
2. Keep track of the number of sick days for Group Negative.
3. Keep track of the number of sick days for Group Positive.
4. Calculate the total number of sick days for each group.

Data:

Sick days for Students (Negative vs. Positive)	
Group P	18
Group N	23

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

Supported

What evidence supports your conclusion?

Answer: As a group, the more positive students had five fewer sick days than the more negative students.

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Real Research

-This 2009 article in Time magazine reported that optimistic women live longer. The article also summarized other research suggesting a link between optimism and good health.

Park, A. (2009, March 5). Study: Optimistic women live longer. Time.com. Retrieved on October 13, 2009 from <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1883402,00.html>

How would you make this a better experiment?

Encourage students to consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, whether the experiment can be repeated by other scientists, data collection and recording systems, and other potential explanations for the outcome. Students should understand that these simple experiments represent the beginning of an exploration, not the end. If time permits, have students suggest how the experiment could be strengthened, emphasizing the use of the target words in the discussion.



Writing Prompt

Is our civilization making progress, or is it about to collapse?

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

Focus Words

collapse | conceive | incline | intrinsically | nonetheless

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Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.

A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.