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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

## Preparation

* Download the Debate Prep Worksheet
* Download the Debate Rubric

## Purpose

In this activity you will be asked to apply what you have learned about acceleration by examining whether or not rates of innovation can keep up with rates of acceleration. Understanding this will help you to better predict the state of our world in the future.

## Practices

### Claim testing

A good debater backs up their own assertions with support, and demands their opponents do the same. Remember to use the language of claim testing as you prepare to debate.

### Preview

Humans have been around for about 250,000 years, and for almost all of that time the rates of innovation and of human population growth were very slow. The pace of these rates picked up with the advent of agrarian civilizations about 12,000 years ago, increased even more as the Industrial Revolution began to reorganize society about 250 years ago, and really took off in the past century. It is staggering to realize that, after nearly a quarter million years of foraging and eleven millennia of farming, we have moved from the first steam engine to the Internet age of information in just a bit more than two centuries. Also, in just the past 100 years the population has shot up from 1.6 billion to 7.9 billion, almost a 500 percent increase! Of course, all of this innovation and increase in population has come with both positive and negative results.

Thus far innovation has kept pace with acceleration and population growth, but how long can that last? Agriculture is confronting the stress of climate change. Researchers forecast much more severe weather patterns in decades to come, including more extended droughts, stronger hurricanes, more flooding, and milder winters that could increase insect populations, among other problems. There is no doubt that accelerated growth and innovation have served us well in the modern world, but will we continue to innovate rapidly enough to stay ahead of what might be an imminent worldwide catastrophe, or have we created a Frankenstein monster that is impossible to control?

## Process

Your teacher will divide your class into two “position” groups. One group will argue that innovation can keep up with acceleration, and the other group will argue that it cannot (PG 1—Here’s the plan; PG2—We’re doomed!) As in any debate, you may be assigned to defend a position with which you do not actually agree. You don’t need to agree with the position, though you need to understand the perspective of those that do. Use the Internet and course materials to help you in your research.

Questions your group should consider:

* What are some of the problems we face as a result of our success in creating the modern world?
* How could these problems be addressed, if at all? What might happen if we do not address these problems?

Each group will spend 20 to 30 minutes preparing their position. Everyone in the group will work together to identify material to support the group’s position, and to create a list of arguments that other groups might use to argue against your group. One or two of your team members might each work on the opening and closing statements while the rest of the group is conducting research; however, the entire group should edit these statements. As a team, decide who will be reading your group’s opening statement, rebuttal, and closing statements. While listening to the presentation of other groups, be sure to take for your rebuttal of the other teams’ opening statements.

Use the Debate Prep Worksheet to help you prepare for the debate. Don’t forget to review the Debate Format table so you are aware of how much time you have for each section of the debate. It’s also helpful to look at the Debate Rubric as you prepare since this will help ensure that you meet all debate criteria. This is also what your teacher will use to grade your performance.

## Debate format

1. Opening statements
   * Each group will read their opening statement for the debate.
2. Groups meet to prepare rebuttals
   * Groups will spend 10 to 15 minutes preparing a rebuttal of the other groups’ opening statements.
3. Rebuttals
   * Each group will read their rebuttal in response to the other groups opening statement.
4. Groups meet to modify closing statements
   * Each group will take 5 to 10 minutes to revise their closing statements to account for the other group’s rebuttals.
5. Closing statements
   * Each group will read their closing statement for the debate.

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| **Opening statement** |  | |
| **Points to support our position** | | **Possible counterpoints** |
|  | |  |
| **Closing statement** |  | |