
Degrowth

Videos:

“Degrowth: Is it time to live better with less? | CNBC Explains”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia8u5P0KbPQ> (6:35 minutes)

“Degrowth: How to Make the World Poorer, Polluted and Miserable”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WocRUpAqLsM> (6:07 minutes)

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. What is degrowth?
3. In the CNBC video, Sam Meredith talked about GDP. What is GDP? Is it a good metric for a country's quality of life? Why/Why not?
4. In the Stossel video, Johan Norberg said: “Growth is most important for people who have the least.” What did he mean by this?
5. Sam Meredith said that degrowth proponents argue “there's an urgent need for us to learn how to live better while producing less.” What do the proponents mean by this?
6. Johan Norberg said that the risk of dying from climate-related natural disasters has drastically declined since the 1950s. What did Norberg attribute this decline to? Did this information surprise you? Why/Why not?
7. Sam Meredith said that some proponents of degrowth urge wealthy countries to reduce inequality, potentially with a Universal Basic Income. What is a Universal Basic Income? How is it relevant to degrowth?
8. Johan Norberg said: “Growth is not really about money. It's about opportunity.” What did he mean by this?
9. Sam Meredith said that under a system of degrowth, low-income countries “should continue to grow their economies in a sustainable way.” What does this mean? Do you think degrowth would help or hurt low-income countries? Why?

10. Johan Norberg said: “Albanians are a quarter as rich as Swedes, and that shows in everything from life expectancy and child mortality to working conditions.” Do these examples affect your opinion of economic growth? Why/Why not?
11. Sam Meredith said: “Leading proponents of [degrowth] have also stressed that degrowth does not call for a reduction in personal income.” Do you think personal incomes can be sustained if production decreases? Why/Why not?
12. John Stossel said: “[W]hen people get richer, then they can afford to care about protecting nature.” What did he mean by this? What examples did he give as evidence?
13. Sam Meredith said that according to a global survey, most people perceive climate change as the biggest threat to their country. Do you agree with that perception? Why/Why not?
14. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
15. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
16. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
17. What else would you like to learn about this topic?
18. For more on this topic, see the following Both Sides of the Issues pairings:
 - a. [Can Capitalism Save the Environment?](#)
 - b. [Can Socialism Save the Environment?](#)
 - c. [Climate Change vs. Economic Growth](#)