

1. Match sentence starters 1-7 with pairs of possible endings a-g.

1 The global birth rate

2 These days we are at risk

3 Recently, there's been a lot of research

4 Scientists don't know what causes

5 Our country has invested billions

6 We still can't predict

7 We should invest more in exploring

a in developing solar power/in finding a cure for Alzheimer's.

b cancer cells to grow/climate change.

c future earthquakes/exactly how we will be affected by climate change.

d into identifying genes/into new sources of energy.

e has been falling steadily/has increased dramatically

f the bottom of the oceans/space.

g of running out of oil and gas/of getting more cancer.



2. Read the article. Does it mention any of the issues you discussed in Exercise 1?



Ask the experts about some of the biggest problems of our time

Can we feed everyone?



Although the global birth rate has fallen a lot since the 1960s (it's half what it was), the global population has been growing steadily over the last 50 years. By 2050, there may be over nine billion of us! As there are already problems with hunger in some parts of the world, we may be at risk of a global food crisis if the population continues to increase. However, scientists are already working on a number of solutions, including indoor farms in cities and meat grown in laboratories.



Can we find a cure for cancer?

Ever since US President Nixon began a 'war on cancer' in the 1970s, huge amounts of money have been invested in research to try to understand the cause of the disease and find a cure. While we know smoking dramatically increases the risk of getting cancer, scientists haven't actually discovered one single cause of all cancers. The latest idea is that cancers develop by chance, which may make finding a complete cure impossible. However, some hope that using genes to attack cancer cells will work. And scientists have been making good progress in helping people live with the disease-around 60 percent of people now survive over five years compared to less than 30 percent 50 years ago.

Can we produce more energy?



We've known for ages that we are running out of oil and gas, so we need to find other sources of energy. The use of solar power has grown dramatically, and it now provides almost 40 percent of Germany's electricity and 30 percent of China's. Scientists have also been exploring other ways to use the sun's energy, particularly for transport. One idea is to use sunlight to divide water (H₂O) into oxygen and hydrogen. The hydrogen would then be used as a clean fuel for engines.



3. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

1. The global birth rate is 50 percent lower than in the 1960s.
2. Scientists are developing ways to grow food without fields and land.
3. Scientists have shown that all cancer is caused only by smoking.
4. Treatment of cancer has improved a lot over the last 50 years.
5. More than a quarter of China's electricity comes from solar power.
6. Scientists have discovered how to use water as a fuel.

