Part 1: practice

Read the passage and then answer the questions which follow

On October 12th 1999, the world's population reached the huge figure of six billion. Although many welcome the new additions to the human family for their potential contributions, others fear that a growing population could tax the world's resources.

It took all of human history for the world's population to reach one billion in 1804, but only one hundred and fifty six years for it to reach three billion by 1960. That figure had doubled by 1999, having taken only thirty-nine years to do so. Current demographics mean the population could soon expand rapidly, as there are over a billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who will eventually makes decisions about the size and spacing of their families. This will determine how many people are on the planet by 2050 and beyond. Added to this is the fact that people today live longer and healthier lives that anyone else in history. If we ignore the danger now, a worst-case scenario would be where the world population reaches twenty-seven billion by 2150 and continues to grow.

Although birth rates in North America and Europe have fallen below the replacement level of two per family, women in many developing countries continue to have five to seven children. The equivalent of a city the size of San Francisco is added to the population every three days. Conversely, data shows that in developed countries, the number of people over age sixty already outnumbers children under fifteen. Therefore the population problem needs to be looked at on a global scale, not just in Third World countries.

1. The main idea of the passage is that

a) There are not enough children being born in developed countries.
b) The size of the population is a worldwide problem.
c) There are a higher percentage of people aged over sixty.
d) Women in Third World countries have too many children.

2. According to the passage, some people are worried because

a) an increasing population may strain the planet's resources.
b) They are unsure what these new additions can contribute.
c) The birth rate in North America has fallen below two children per family.
d) The population doubles by the size of San Francisco's population every three days.

3. What will the people aged between 15 and 24 have to decide?

a) Whether they want to live a longer and healthier life.
b) How many children they are going to have and when.
c) If they want to have between two and seven children.
d) Whether to have children.

4. Why was the passage written?

a) To encourage readers to think about population growth.
b) To inform readers about the continuing population growth.
c) To warn people how quickly the population is growing.
d) All of the above.

5. According to the author, the birth rate in North America and Europe has

a) gone down
b) remained stable
c) increased
d) overtaken that in developing countries.

6. Why does the writer use the example of the size of San Francisco?

a) To indicate that San Francisco has aging population.
b) To show how over-populated that city is.
c) To emphasize how quickly the population is growing.
d) To explain that there are more people living there aged under fifteen.

7. What does the author state is the problem in developed countries?

a) There are more children under fifteen than people over sixty.
b) There are more women than men.
c) There are more pensioners than teenagers.
d) Women have too many children.