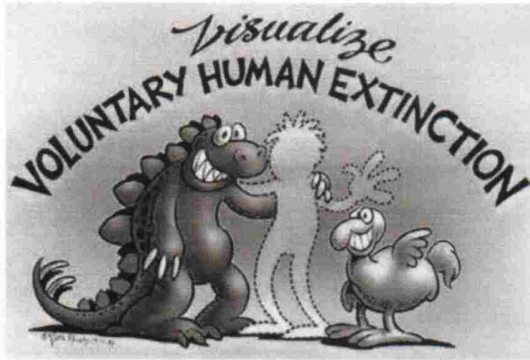


## VHEMT

### Preparation:

Read document 1, and look at the pictures for this session. What is/are the connection(s) between these documents? Give your opinion on what they describe.

#### Document 1. About the Movement.



#### Q: What is the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement?

VHEMT (pronounced vehement) is a movement not an organization. It's a movement advanced by people who care about life on planet Earth. We're not just a bunch of misanthropes and anti-social, Malthusian misfits, taking morbid delight whenever disaster strikes humans. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Voluntary human extinction is the humanitarian alternative to human disasters.

We don't carry on about how the human race has shown itself to be a greedy, amoral parasite on the once-healthy face of this planet. That type of negativity offers no solution to the inexorable horrors which human activity is causing.

Rather, The Movement presents an encouraging alternative to the callous exploitation and wholesale destruction of Earth's ecology.

As VHEMT Volunteers know, the hopeful alternative to the extinction of millions of species of plants and animals is the voluntary extinction of one species: Homo sapiens... us. Each time another one of us decides to not add another one of us to the burgeoning billions already squatting on this ravaged planet, another ray of hope shines through the gloom.

When every human chooses to stop breeding, Earth's biosphere will be allowed to return to its former glory, and all remaining creatures will be free to live, die, evolve (if they believe in evolution), and will perhaps pass away, as so many of Nature's "experiments" have done throughout the eons.

It's going to take all of us going.

#### Q: Are you really serious?

We're really vehement.

Many see humor in The Movement and think we can't be serious about voluntary human extinction, but in spite of the seriousness of both situation and movement, there's room for humor. In fact, without humor, Earth's condition gets unbearably depressing -- a little levity eases the gravity.

True, wildlife rapidly going extinct and tens of thousands of children dying each day are not laughing matters, but neither laughing nor bemoaning will change what's happening.

We may as well have some fun as we work and play toward a better world.

Besides, returning Earth to its natural splendor and ending needless suffering of humanity are happy thoughts -- no sense moping around in gloom and doom.

#### Q: Do Volunteers expect to be successful?

VHEMT Volunteers are realistic. We know we'll never see the day there are no human beings on the planet. Ours is a long-range goal.

It has been suggested that there are only two chances of everyone volunteering to stop breeding: slim and none. The odds may be against preserving life on Earth, but the

decision to stop reproducing is still the morally correct one. Indeed, the likelihood of our failure to avoid the massive die off which humanity is engineering is a very good reason to not sentence another of us to life. The future isn't what it used to be.

Even if our chances of succeeding were only one in a hundred, we would have to try. Giving up and allowing humanity to take its course is unconscionable. There is far too much at stake.

The Movement may be considered a success each time one more of us volunteers to breed no more.

**Q: Does VHEMT have any enemies?**

After we've seen a few hundred TV dramas where the good guy kicks the bad guy's butt, it's tempting to look at the real world with this same knee jerk, zero-sum mentality. We might look for an enemy to attack when championing our righteous cause, but in reality our enemy doesn't have a butt to kick.

In the end, the real "enemies" are human greed, ignorance, and oppression. We can achieve more by promoting generosity, awareness, and freedom than we can by vainly kicking at a buttless foe.

Great progress will be made toward improving the quality of life on Earth by countering greed with responsibility, ignorance with education, and oppression with freedom.

Instead of meeting the bad guys in the street at high noon and shooting it out, why not invite them into the saloon to work things out?

**Q: What is the official position of VHEMT?**

Since the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement isn't alive with a brain or a mouth, it can't take positions or have opinions. It can't get into arguments, tell people what to do and think, nor get punched for doing so.

Voluntary human extinction is simply a concept to be added to existing belief systems, not a complex code of behavior to live by. No committee of Movement shakers decides what position everyone else should take.

Most Volunteers subscribe to the philosophy embodied in the motto "May we live long and die out", but if someone doesn't want to live long that's their business. Really, the only action required for becoming a VHEMT Volunteer or Supporter is not adding another human being to the population. A couple could conceivably be expecting and decide to become VHEMT. That new human would be the last one they produced. VHEMT Supporters are not necessarily in favor of human extinction, but agree that no more of us should be created at this time.

Volunteers are so diverse in religious, political, and philosophical views that it would be divisive to begin formulating official Movement positions. Beware of dogmas. We speak with our own voices.

**Q: When and how did VHEMT start?**

Roots of VHEMT run as deep as human history. Potential for a voluntary human extinction movement has been around for as long as humans have.

When Ice Age humans hunted animals to extinction, at least one of the Neanderdunces among them must have grunted in bewilderment. As the Fertile Crescent became a barren desert, and the Cedars of Lebanon were sacrificed for temples, someone must have thought, "this bodes ill." When Romans fueled their empire by extracting resources from near and far, surely someone remarked, "Humanus non gratis," or words to that effect. *Someone* had to get the idea that the planet would be better off without this busy horde.

Someone, that is, besides the middle-eastern god, Yahweh/Jehovah/Allah. Tradition tells how, in prehistoric times, this creator-god realized his mistake in making humans and was going to flush us from the system, but in a weak moment he spared one breeding family. Oops! (Genesis 6: 1-22).

The Story of Atrahasis, an earlier Sumerian myth recorded in Babylonian text, tells of multiple gods conspiring to rid Earth of the bothersome creatures they had molded out of



clay. One sneaky god warns a human to build a boat before the flood, and the rest is our history.

We call The Movement VHEMT, but it's undoubtedly been given other names throughout history. None have been recorded, as far as we know.

There must be millions of people around the world who are independently arriving at the same conclusion. A large portion of today's Volunteers were vehement extinctionists before they learned of the title "VHEMT".

The true origins of The Movement can be found in the natural abundance of love and logic within each one of us. Our in-born sense of justice guides us to make the responsible choice.

**Q: Who is the founder?**

No one person is the founder of VHEMT. Les U. Knight gave the name "Voluntary Human Extinction Movement" to a philosophy or worldview which has existed for as long as humans have been sapient. It's an awareness which has been arrived at independently in many places throughout history, but had become lost amid societies' pronatalism. Like millions of other people, Les followed a simple train of logic, guided by love, and arrived at the conclusion that Gaia would be better off without humans. He could be considered the finder, having identified The Movement by giving it a name, though each of us finds the truth for ourselves.

Although Les has become known internationally as a spokesperson for The Movement, no one can speak for all VHEMT Volunteers. There is no official position on issues beyond what is implied in the name of The Movement.

**Q: We have children. Can we still join?**

Today's children are tomorrow's destiny. Our children have the potential for achieving the awareness needed to reverse civilization's direction and begin restoring Earth's biosphere. Most could use our help in realizing their full potentials.

Naturally you're welcome to join, and you won't be alone. When people gain the VHEMT perspective, they decide to add no more to the existing human family. They don't pressure their children to give them grandchildren and might encourage them to make a responsible choice with their fertility.

There is no reason to feel guilty about the past. Guilt doesn't lead to positive solutions. Being VHEMT has nothing to do with the past. It's the future of life on Earth that Volunteers want to preserve.

**Q: Are some people opposed to VHEMT?**

At first glance, some people assume that VHEMT Volunteers and Supporters must hate people and that we want everyone to commit suicide or become victims of mass murder. It's easy to forget that another way to bring about a reduction in our numbers is to simply stop making more of us. Making babies seems to be a blind spot in our outlooks on life.

The idea of all of us voluntarily refraining from procreation is often dismissed without much consideration. These examples are considered elsewhere at this site:

- "People are going to have sex, you can't stop that."
- "It's a human instinct to breed."
- "But I just love babies."
- "Some of us should reproduce because we're better than others."
- "Humans are a part of Nature."
- And so on.

However, if any of us thinks about the situation long enough, and makes the effort to work through those socially-instilled blocks to clear thinking, we will arrive at virtually the same conclusion: we should voluntarily phase ourselves out for the good of humanity and planet.

VHEMT is naturally in opposition to involuntary extinction of any species, as well as any efforts encouraging human extermination. There are presently concerted efforts supporting both of these horrors. For example:

- Production and use of weapons.
- Toxin production, such as petrochemical and nuclear.
- Exploitation of natural and human resources.
- Promotion of reproductive fascism.
- And so on.

The above could be called the Terrorist Human Extermination Movement (THEM), but that's labeling and encourages a "Them or Us" attitude.

VHEMT is opposed to what these people are doing, but it's doubtful any would bother to return the favor. Really, there isn't much point in opposing a voluntary movement which harms none and benefits all.

#### Q: How do I join?

Being VHEMT is a state of mind. All you have to do to join is make the choice to refrain from further reproduction. For some, this is an easy decision to make. For others, it's a moot issue. But for many, joining The Movement means making a monumental personal sacrifice.

The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement is not an organization, so no membership dues go to officials in offices. We are millions of individuals, each doing what we feel is best.

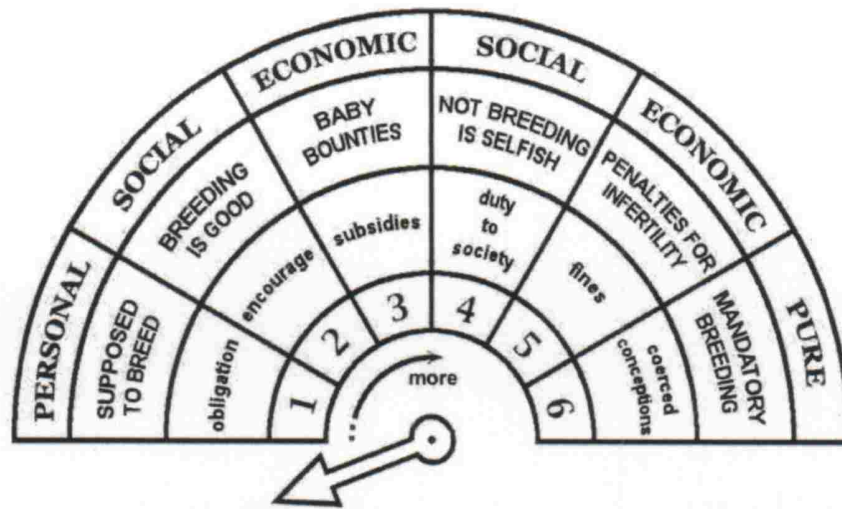
<http://www.vhemt.org/aboutvhemt.htm>

#### Document 2.



Document 3.

## BREEDING PRESSURE GAUGE



<http://www.vhemt.org/biobreed.htm>

### In class :

#### 1. Vers la synthèse :

Répondez aux points 6 et 7 de la méthodologie. Partagez vos informations en petits groupes.  
Rédigez une introduction.

#### 2. Debate :

In small groups you will discuss the topic of VHEMT.

### Follow-Up work:

#### 1. Watching/Listening:

Watch the video and answer the following questions

<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/videos/focus-earth-no-more-children.html>

- What is the best way to save the planet?
- There is voluntary human extinction and ..... human extinction. Which one is best?
- Is the movement popular or not? Give some details.
- What did Nina Paley do to prove her commitment to the movement?
- What do storks deliver? Tick all the elements mentioned in the video:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> toys	<input type="checkbox"/> diapers
<input type="checkbox"/> suburban sprawls	<input type="checkbox"/> bikes
<input type="checkbox"/> malls	<input type="checkbox"/> SUVs
- What is Paul Murtagh's opinion on the subject?



## 2. Synthèse:

- Lisez le texte suivant.
- Quel est le lien entre le document 1 et celui-ci ?
- Rédigez un plan détaillé qui synthétisera le document 1 et le texte de Boris Johnson.

### **"Global over-population is the real issue"**

By Boris Johnson

25 Oct 2007

*The Telegraph*

It is a tragic measure of how far the world has changed — and the infinite capacity of modern man for taking offence — that there are no two subjects that can get you more swiftly into political trouble than motherhood and apple pie.

The last time I tentatively suggested that there was something to be said in favour of apple pie, I caused a frenzy of hatred in the healthy-eating lobby. It reached such a pitch that journalists were actually pelting me with pies, and demanding a retraction, and an apology, and a formal denunciation of the role of apple pie in causing obesity.

As for motherhood — the fertility of the human race — we are getting to the point where you simply can't discuss it, and we are thereby refusing to say anything sensible about the biggest single challenge facing the Earth; and no, whatever it may now be conventional to say, that single biggest challenge is not global warming. That is a secondary challenge. The primary challenge facing our species is the reproduction of our species itself.

Depending on how fast you read, the population of the planet is growing with every word that skitters beneath your eyeball. There are more than 211,000 people being added every day, and a population the size of Germany every year.

As someone who has now been travelling around the world for decades, I see this change, and I feel it. You can smell it in the traffic jams of the Middle East. You can see it as you fly over Africa at night, and you see mile after mile of fires burning red in the dark, as the scrub is removed to make way for human beings.

You can see it in the satellite pictures of nocturnal Europe, with the whole place lit up like a fairground. You can see it in the crazy dentition of the Shanghai skyline, where new skyscrapers are going up round the clock.

You can see it as you fly over Mexico City, a vast checkerboard of smog-bound, low-rise dwellings stretching from one horizon to the other; and when you look down on what we are doing to the planet, you have a horrifying vision of habitations multiplying and replicating like bacilli in a Petri dish.

The world's population is now 6.7 billion, roughly double what it was when I was born. If I live to be in my mid-eighties, then it will have trebled in my lifetime.

The UN last year revised its forecasts upwards, predicting that there will be 9.2 billion people by 2050, and I simply cannot understand why no one discusses this impending calamity, and why no world statesmen have the guts to treat the issue with the seriousness it deserves.

How the hell can we witter on about tackling global warming, and reducing consumption, when we are continuing to add so relentlessly to the number of consumers? The answer is politics, and political cowardice.

There was a time, in the 1960s and 1970s, when people such as my father, Stanley, were becoming interested in demography, and the UN would hold giant conferences on the subject, and it was perfectly respectable to talk about saving the planet by reducing the growth in the number of human beings.

But over the years, the argument changed, and certain words became taboo, and certain concepts became forbidden, and we have reached the stage where the very discussion of overall human fertility — global motherhood — has become more or less banned.

We seem to have given up on population control, and all sorts of explanations are offered for the surrender. Some say Indira Gandhi gave it all a bad name, by her demented plan to sterilise Indian men with the lure of a transistor radio.

Some attribute our complacency to the Green Revolution, which seemed to prove Malthus wrong. It became the received wisdom that the world's population could rise to umpteen billions, as mankind learnt to make several ears of corn grow where one had grown before.

And then, in recent years, the idea of global population control has been more or less stifled by a pincer movement from the Right and the Left. American Right-wingers disapprove of anything that sounds like birth control, and so George W. Bush withholds the tiny contribution America makes to the UN Fund for Population Activities, regardless of the impact on the health of women in developing countries.

As for the Left, they dislike suggestions of population control because they seem to smack of colonialism and imperialism and telling the Third World what to do; and so we have reached the absurd position in which humanity bleats about the destruction of the environment, and yet there is not a peep in any communiqué from any summit of the EU, G8 or UN about the population growth that is causing that destruction.

The debate is surely now unavoidable. Look at food prices, driven ever higher by population growth in India and China. Look at the insatiable Chinese desire for meat, which has pushed the cost of feed so high that Vladimir Putin has been obliged to institute price controls in the doomed fashion of Diocletian or Edward Heath.

Even in Britain, chicken farmers are finding that the cost of chickenfeed is no longer exactly chickenfeed, and, though the food crisis may once again be solved by the wit of man, the damage to the environment may be irreversible.

It is time we had a grown-up discussion about the optimum quantity of human beings in this country and on this planet. Do we want the south-east of Britain, already the most densely populated major country in Europe, to resemble a giant suburbia?

This is not, repeat not, an argument about immigration per se, since in a sense it does not matter where people come from, and with their skill and their industry, immigrants add hugely to the economy.

This is a straightforward question of population, and the eventual size of the human race.

All the evidence shows that we can help reduce population growth, and world poverty, by promoting literacy and female emancipation and access to birth control. Isn't it time politicians stopped being so timid, and started talking about the real number one issue?

### **Homework:**

Rédigez une synthèse du document 1 vu en classe et du texte de Boris Johnson.