Today you will write your last argument essay using documents in this class.

DIRECTIONS:
Answer the question in the box below based on your current knowledge and information from the documents provided to you by your teacher. As you read closely and analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and the author's point of view. Be sure to do all of the following before you attempt to answer the question and write your essay.

1. Read the question below and think about what you may already know about the topic.
2. Analyze each document provided to you carefully, underlining key phrases and words, as well as, taking notes that might help answer the question below.
   \( \text{(NOTE: You may write on each document and take notes of important information.)} \)
3. Determine the main idea of each document and think about how it might contain information that relates to the question in the box below.
4. Based on your own knowledge and the information in the documents, develop a claim (thesis) statement that directly answers the question.
5. Gather any relevant information from the documents as evidence to support your claim (thesis) statement. Organize your thoughts into a graphic organizer.
6. Write a well-organized essay supporting your claim (thesis) statement. Be sure to write your essay in a logical sequence that will make sense to the reader.
7. Include information obtained from the documents, as well as, your own knowledge. Be sure to cite each document that you use in your essay. (Doc. A, Doc. B, etc.)

\[ \text{Question – China's One – Child Policy: Was it a good idea?} \]
China’s One-Child Policy: Was It a Good Idea?

In 1949, after a civil war that had lasted more than 20 years, Mao Zedong and his Communist revolutionaries won control of China. Mao’s revolution was based on the communist ideal of a classless society in which workers control the government.

At this time, China was a poor country, having slogged through years of war, disease, and natural disaster. Its population was the largest in the world and growing. How would China feed and clothe all of its people? Against the recommendations of some of his advisors, Chairman Mao called for couples to have even more babies. “Of all things in the world,” said Mao, “people are the most precious.” More people, Mao thought, would mean more workers, and more workers would mean a stronger China. Birth control was discouraged.

One of Mao’s early goals was to catch up economically with richer countries like the United States. To this end, people across the country were forced to abandon farming and help create an industrial China. This movement, called The Great Leap Forward, included a program to build backyard furnaces for making steel. But with too many furnaces replacing farms, China faced food shortages. A devastating famine killed an estimated 30 million people.

As a result of this disaster, Mao changed his mind about population and birth control and in the late 1960s introduced the slogan “Late, Long and Few.” The idea was for couples to marry late, wait a long time before having children, and then, when they did have kids, have only a few. Marching behind this banner, China cut its fertility rate in half between 1970 and 1979. But even then, Communist Party officials feared that China’s population, now close to one billion, was growing too fast. Their solution was a government program called the one-child policy.

In general terms, China’s one-child policy limited Chinese couples to one child each. However, there were exceptions. First, the policy only applied to Han Chinese, an ethnicity that makes up about 90 percent of the population. It did not apply to minority ethnic groups, who were permitted two or even three children. Second, the policy was not absolutely fixed. The Party worried that there would soon be more old people than young people in China. This possibility convinced the Party to allow urban residents who were single children themselves to have two kids. Also, the policy was not evenly enforced. In some places couples who broke the one-child law had to pay large fines or were punished with forced sterilization and abortions. In other places, couples had two or even three children without paying any penalties.

Finally, in 2015, the Chinese government abandoned the one-child policy in favor of allowing all couples to have two children. Had the program been worth it? This Mini-Q contains six documents. The documents cannot tell the whole story, but they do provide an introduction. Read the documents and answer the question before us: China’s one-child policy: Was it a good idea?
China's One-Child Policy Mini-Q

Document A


China's Population

Estimates for years after 2010 are based on United Nation's mid-level projections. Numbers are rounded to the nearest million.

*MChina's One-Child Policy begins
Even before its inception, the one child policy was questioned for its necessity and its enormous social costs. At the time of the policy’s announcement [in 1980], China had already achieved a remarkable fertility reduction, halving the number of children per woman from 5.8 in 1970 to 2.7 in 1979. The one child policy, critics warned, would forcefully alter kin relations for Chinese families, and result in accelerated aging. . . . To enforce a policy that is so extreme and unpopular for families who relied on children for labor and old age support, physical abuses and violence would be inevitable. . . .

China’s one child policy may have hastened a fertility decline that was already well in progress, but it is not the main force accounting for China’s low fertility today. The claim by Chinese officials that the one child policy has helped avert 400 million births simply cannot be substantiated by facts. Most of China’s fertility decline occurred prior to the one child policy. In countries without a forceful and costly policy as China’s, birth rate has declined with similar trajectories and magnitude.

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*The fertility rate is the number of children the average woman has in her lifetime.*
Li Tianhao has just given birth to a baby boy blessed with his mother’s nose, his father’s mouth and an impressive ability to sleep through even the loudest disturbance. It is a skill the newborn will be fortunate to maintain as he has been born in Henan, the most crowded province in the world’s most populous nation.

Yet he will probably grow up alone. Although Henan last year became the first province in China to register its 100 millionth resident – giving it a population bigger than any country in Europe – it also claims some of the greatest successes in taming demographic growth through its family planning policies.

This has not happened by accident. Henan is one of the most environmentally stressed areas of China with a quarter of the water and a fifth of the land per capita compared to the already low national average.

Senior family planners say this justifies rigid restrictions. “The large number of people has put very big pressure on all resources, especially water,” said Liu Shaojie, vice director of the Population Commission in Henan. “Over 30 years of effort, we have put in place a systematic procedure for controlling the population. That has eased the impact on the environment. We are doing glorious work.”

This policy was initiated primarily for economic and education reasons, but it is increasingly cited as an environmental blessing. According to Liu, the population controls have kept sulfur dioxide emissions down by 17.6% and reduced water pollution by 30.8%. Without the one-child policy, he says, the average person in Henan would have a third less land and a quarter less forest.

Note: Sulfur dioxide is released by coal-burning power plants. It is a major cause of asthma and bronchial infection and is a big contributor to China’s poor air quality.
Document D


Perhaps the biggest beneficiaries of the one-child policy have been urban singleton daughters. Their parents' only treasure, since the 1980s single daughters in China's cities have enjoyed privileged childhoods little different from their male counterparts. . . . With no brothers to compete for their parents' attention and resources, . . . these teens have been socialized to value educational and career success and provided the resources with which to achieve it. [Anthropologist Vanessa] Fong argues that this generation of urban singleton girls has been empowered to challenge some of the . . . gender norms that have long dominated Chinese life. . . . In cities such as Shanghai and Dalian young women today enjoy a marriage market that favors brides and a job market with attractive opportunities earmarked for "feminine" applicants. Indeed, some of the hottest and best paying jobs in today's globalizing social service economy (bilingual secretaries, public relations, fashion models) are open exclusively to young women with good looks and sex appeal. . . . For these young women, the one-child policy seems to be a real blessing.
The one-child policy has unquestionably caused fertility to decline more rapidly than it otherwise would have . . . and has therefore played a significant role in China’s demographic transition . . . explaining up to one-quarter of its per capita GDP growth in the last three decades. . . .

With that rapid GDP growth has come better nutrition, rising levels of education, longer life expectancies, and higher living standards for the vast majority of Chinese people. . . .

This is not to deny the substantial, and in many cases immeasurable, costs of the policy. . . . Aside from the obvious economic costs of having more dependents and fewer workers in the population, the policy places a huge burden on single Chinese children at the bottom of the resulting “4-2-1” family structure (four grandparents, two parents and one child).

Even more consequential is the dramatic rise in China’s sex ratio at birth, the costs of which will be borne by an estimated 30 million or more Chinese men who will be looking for a wife in 2030 but unable to find one. The one-child policy—in combination with a traditional preference for sons and widespread access to ultrasound technology to detect gender* since the mid-1980s—is at least partly to blame.

Other significant emotional costs result from not being allowed to determine your family’s size, being coerced into terminating second pregnancies, or giving birth to a second child who is not allowed to enroll in school or to access the healthcare system.

*Ultrasound technology enables doctors and parents to see a picture of the fetus when it is in the mother’s womb. Some Chinese parents choose to abort fetuses that ultrasound shows to be female.
The high cost of the one-child policy is felt deeply by Beijing resident Xiao Xuan, an only-child daughter of a college professor and shopping mall manager. Xiao, 22, says she was blessed with all the attention and resources showered at her from childhood.

Still, she says, she had a mostly lonely childhood. "I used to cut myself on my wrist after being yelled at by my mom and dad because I didn’t know who I should talk to or turn to," she says. "I was like that for almost two years, but I am very tough so I made it through."

"I hate to say it but the one-child policy should partly be blamed for some social issues of youth today," she adds. "It's been a ridiculous government interference on family issues."

She wished she had a brother or a sister to share all the attention.

Note: An internet survey of 7,000 Chinese only children between the ages of 15 and 25 found that 58 percent admitted to being lonely. A majority also described themselves as being selfish. However, many enjoyed being the "sun" around which the family revolved. (Source: NPR, November 24, 2010.)


A. J. Song

"I really appreciate [being the] one child, especially from the countryside," admits 23-year-old A.J. Song, whose parents are from the Gelao minority in Guizhou province.

"My parents, they give me everything. I’m the center of attention in the family. My mother has seven brothers and sisters; my father has six brothers and sisters. Most of my parents’ brothers and sisters have two kids. They are all very jealous about me being the only child," he says.

Other Chinese research finds advantages to being an only child: They tend to score higher on intelligence tests and are better at making friends, according to Chinese studies.

Song agrees, saying he believes only children care more about their friends. He says the extra investment parents make in an only child is significant.

"If I had a sibling, I probably wouldn’t be who I am now. Probably I’d still be in my small village, getting married and having kids. If you have more kids in your family, probably they’re lacking in education, lacking food, lacking any kind of support, no matter emotional or financial. Basically, everybody is going to be average."