A lifeboat has no single leader or authority structure, just as the earth has no single leader. “Lifeboat ethics” require that the inhabitants of the boat prevent people from coming aboard since it would cause the boat to capsize and kill everybody. In Hardin’s view, each wealthy country is an individual lifeboat that can save its inhabitants only if it does not share its resources with others or allow others to come aboard. The capsizing of a lifeboat corresponds to the kinds of catastrophic events (war, famine, plague, societal collapse) that, according to Malthus (p. 324), would be the natural result of unchecked population growth.

Present an argument for or against Hardin’s view of immigration (letting people come use a country’s resources) or humanitarian aid (bringing resources to those in need).

*Whichever side you take, you need to address the counter-argument to your position. See RW p. 611, BH p. 142, and the Classical Argument handout (also in our TRACS Resources folder)

---

**Prompt Guidelines and Tips:**

If your essay agrees with Hardin’s views, you must tie in support from

*examples, research, or other convincing points.* Your essay is expected to

*be well-organized and well-supported.*
You will likely address the counter-arguments in a separate paragraph before your conclusion.

If your essay disagrees with Hardin’s views, it might want to do so along these lines:

Opponents of population control often argue that the overwhelming catastrophe that Malthus predicted in 1798 and that Hardin predicted in 1974 has not occurred, despite populations having grown at about the expected rates.

Or, you may want to prove that wealthy people and nations have a duty to provide food to those in danger of starvation. Consider backing up your claims with the positions of Jesus (p. 315), Gandhi (p. 332), or Muhammad Yunus (p. 369).

In disagreeing with Hardin, you will set up the counter-argument to your paper after your introduction, in the narration section (see the Classical Argument handout). Also see other resources in the * section on the front of this paper.