

Deforestation

□ Introduction □ This assignment is based on Key Idea 2: Problems can arise when one group □ pursues its own interests to the detriment of others. □ Deforestation in the Amazon has led to conflicting interests in the Amazon □ region. Potentially it can affect societies worldwide through global □ warming. □ In this assignment, I will agree or disagree with the following

hypothesis: □ □ 'Deforestation in the Amazon benefits some people at the moment. It also □ causes problems for other people, both in Brazil and the rest of the world.' □ □ In order to draw up a conclusion to the hypothesis, I will be looking at □ the different types of developments, which have already taken place in □ Brazil and also, the different reasons as to why Brazil should be developed □ and why it shouldn't. □ I will conclude my assignment by analysing the evidence that I have □ gathered. □ □ Since the 1960's, several types of developments have taken place in the □ Amazon rainforest. Brazil has the largest foreign debt of any developing □ country at over \$100 billion. If this debt were ever to be repaid, a vast □ amount of money would be needed. This money would be available if Brazil □ developed its rainforest. □ Many foreign loans and multinational investments were taken out by □ Brazil during the 'Brazilian Miracle' of the 1960's and '70's in which □ large-scale projects made Brazil into a modern industrial nation. This □ 'miracle' left Brazil with enormous debts. Although this created thousands □ of jobs, the gap between the poor and rich continued to grow. □ Despite the fact that Brazil now has a trade surplus, the interest payments □ on the loans are forever increasing, and there is no way that Brazil can □ reduce its debt - unless the rainforest is developed. □ In Brazil, there is a huge inequality between the rich and the poor - 1% of □ the population owns 45% of the land. □ Large areas of the Amazon rainforest have been destroyed as governments □ have tried to develop it to make Brazil a better country. □ Some estimates suggest that a fifth of the Amazon rainforest was cleared □ between 1960 and 1990. It is also estimated that approximately 7.5 million □ hectares of rainforest are being cut down each year. □ This is extremely unlikely to be replaced. The Amazon rainforest is in □ extreme danger.

Developments such as deforestation are proving to be a huge □ problem. □ □ Developments that have taken place □ □ Numerous types of developments have taken place in the Amazon rainforest. □ The aim of this is to bring wealth to the area by using its natural □ resources. □ A large amount of iron ore, gold, copper, bauxite and other minerals have □ been discovered in the rainforest. Mining companies have cut down trees to □ get to these deposits. An example of this is the Carajas Iron Ore Project; □ this is what led to highway building. □ A lot of new roads have been built in the

rainforest for transport and commuting. The longest is the Trans-Amazonian Highway, a 5300km (3300miles) long road, built across Brazil from east to west. Other major highways, which were built, are the Belém-Brasília Highway (from Brasília to Belém) and the Northern Perimeter Highway. An unlimited water supply and ideal river conditions have led to the development of many hydro-electric power (HEP) stations. Over 125 new HEP dams are built. One main example of an HEP dam is the Tucuri Dam. The reservoirs behind the dams flood large areas of the forest. Vast areas of the forest have been bought have been bought by multinational companies for cattle ranching. These companies have burnt down the forest and replaced the trees with grass.

For and Against Developing the Amazon

The Amazon rainforest has had many kinds of developments such as mining, farming, cattle ranching etc. and they have resulted in things for better and for worse for the rainforest. All of those developments cause deforestation. Although developments in the rainforest have brought many benefits such as providing jobs for people, developments are doing more harm than good. Mining projects such as the Carajas Iron Ore Project are involved in the felling of trees. The Carajas Iron Ore Project cost over 62 billion US dollars. It is believed that it holds the world's largest iron-ore reserves. It also has bauxite, manganese and copper. This has caused deforestation and has led to the building of roads and railways for carrying goods from the Amazon to ports etc. HEP stations were built in the Amazon. The Tucuri Dam is an example of one. It is the largest hydroelectric scheme in the world. Billions of dollars were spent on this and over 2,500km² of rainforest had to be flooded. Over 8,000 people lost their homes and thousands of animals died. Due to this, Malaria has increased as mosquitoes breed in the water of the reservoir. Deforestation in the Amazon rainforests affects forest farmers (Indians) because their land is lost. They use the land they live on to survive and deforestation takes away their homes. This also affects landless poor farmers in the same way as they are told to leave the land, leaving them with nowhere to live. During the last 400 years, developers have almost completely destroyed the way of life for the Amazon Indians. It is believed that approximately 5 million of them were living in the Amazon Basin before the arrival of the developers - Europeans. Now, there are less than 200,000 Amazon Indians. Inequality has not been reduced by the development of the Amazon. The indigenous people are able to live successfully in the forest without destroying it, as they have done for hundreds and thousands of years. Without the forest, they are nothing. The majority of the Brazilians were not given fertile land, therefore pushing them to migrate. Apart from the 'rubber barons', most people gained lasting wealth from the 'Rubber Boom' of the

1880's. The rubber tappers and the indigenous people hated the ideas for the government's development programme for the Amazon region. It would have destroyed their livelihoods. So far, most of the attempts made at developing the Amazon to gain lasting wealth, have been useless. All have harmed the way of life of the native Indians. The rainforest is used for ranches for cattle. Cattle ranchers are for deforestation because then, they will have more land to ranch on. Development affects the 'hamburger chain boss'. He gains from deforestation as cattle ranchers gain and cattle are killed for beef. As more trees are cut down, more land is available for cattle ranching and so cheaper and beef is available. This makes their chain of restaurants popular and more affluent from beef burgers. Scientists are affected because due to deforestation, valuable plants, which could have been used to find new drugs and medicines, are lost. These plants could save the lives of millions of people all over the world, but are lost as a result of the destruction of the rainforests. Environmentalists want to preserve plants and animals in the rainforest, but cannot as deforestation causes rare plants and animals to die. Brazilian politicians want to develop and sell land, so, deforestation is good for them as they get to sell the land and develop it. This way, they can pay off the debts for their country by exporting beef and selling land. A lot of land in the rainforest was given to landless peasants by the government. These landless peasants, together, have managed to clear millions of hectares of rainforest and are still doing so today. As these peasants milk the soil dry, the soil becomes infertile, so, peasants have to move elsewhere, clear more land and start again. In this way, large amounts of the rainforest are lost forever. Source J is against development in the Amazon. It talks about the burning of trees which release carbon dioxide which can lead to Global Warming. Cattle ranching in the Amazon increases the build up of methane, a gas which can lead to Global Warming. The burning of trees to quickly clear land for ranching, increases the build up of carbon dioxide, another gas that can lead to Global Warming. Global Warming occurs when there is an increase in the Earth's temperature. This is due to the use of fossil fuels and other industrial processes, leading to a build up of 'greenhouse gases'. Carbon dioxide and methane are two of the four greenhouse gases. In the Amazon, mass cattle ranching increases the build up methane, a gas which can lead to global warming. The burning of trees to quickly clear land for ranching, increases the build up of carbon dioxide, another gas which can lead to global warming. All this will eventually affect every single thing on this planet. An excess build up of carbon dioxide causes a rise in temperature in the Earth's atmosphere. This rise in temperature will cause the polar ice caps to melt, causing a rise in

sea level, as mentioned in Source J. This will cause problems for those living on low-lying land, especially in Bangladesh. Those living in Bangladesh are always experiencing floods, as the country lies on the delta of the River Ganges. Floods in Bangladesh are frequent, and nearly always kills some, while making thousands homeless. The floods are disastrous, and cost a lot of money. If global warming increases (by the deforestation of the Amazon), Bangladesh will eventually become totally flooded, and thousands will die. The country will be totally subdued in water, and will not be seen above sea level, as it is already quite low lying. Being a poor society as it is, Bangladesh would not be able to cope with an increase in global warming. Other predicted effects of Global Warming include an increase in storms and hurricanes in tropical areas, and a decrease in rainfall in most of the world's major cereal growing areas. This will increase inequality as the MEDC's will be able to cope with disasters like floods, droughts or decreases in food production, but the LEDC's won't. Source D suggests that development is needed in the Amazon because the riches there need to benefit Brazil and the people. It states that there are plenty of minerals in the Amazon that could be extracted and exported to benefit Brazil's economy, and the people of Brazil. This is vital because Brazil needs to develop its resources to increase its GNP. Source I is against development. This source is about the world's oxygen supply and that 'between a third and half of the world's oxygen supply comes from the trees in the rainforest and that one quarter of the world's fresh water comes from the Amazon Basin.' If the rainforest was destroyed, both reserves would be lost and the whole world would suffer due to a small amount of people who wanted to develop the Amazon. Source H is for development in the Amazon stating that development can pay off Brazil's world debt by building in the rainforest or selling parts of it. The argument for development is that Brazil needs to pay off its debts or else, as a country, it won't be able to progress further. The entire world can lose out from deforestation as the oxygen levels are reduced, medicines are taken away, and many other factors, which affect us!

□□□Evaluation of Sources□□Source I is from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), so, it is obviously against deforestation. This source is factual and tells me about the world's oxygen and water. As it is written by the WWF it may be biased, as it does not tell us the good, that developments in the Amazon do. However, as it is a factual source based on 'investigations' I think it is reliable and has valid and interesting points when arguing against development in the Amazon. Source D is written from a Brazil 2000 video in 1996. This source is for developments. This source states that the 'enormous range of minerals in the Amazon', are 'cash' for Brazil, and would benefit everyone. It is saying that

developing the Amazon would provide Brazil with these marvellous reserves and might improve the standard of living. This source is biased as it is somebody's opinion and is not factual. In someone's opinion, the mineral reserves of Brazil will benefit all of Brazil. Not everyone would agree with this as we have already found out about all the people who have not benefited. This source is unreliable as it was written in 1996, about the year 2000. How would people four years ago have known what was going to happen today? Although this is an unreliable source, it has an excellent argument for development. Source J is written by the WWF. This source may be biased as it is by the WWF, but again is factual. It tells us about how developments cause Global Warming, which affects the rest of the world. I think that this source is trustworthy and reliable as it only tells us facts, not opinions. Source H is from the World Development Report 1990. This source is suggesting that Brazil needs to pay off its world debt, and, to do so, developments need to be taken place. This source has little information in it, but this information is conclusive. It says that Brazil's world debt is well over \$100 billion, the highest foreign debt of any developing country, this was in 1990. Today, 10 years on, it may have changed; therefore, this source is weak and unreliable as it is so old.

Conclusion

In conclusion to my assignment, I've decided to agree with the hypothesis. So far, all the developments which have taken place in Brazil have meant the felling of trees and destroying the Amazon Rainforest. All of these developments have made the rich landowners and business people richer. This is because they buy and sell the land and make money from the profits made. All these developments have made the poor farmers and peasants poorer, thus, creating more inequality. This is because their land is lost and destroyed. They are left with nothing. Even though all the profits made are supposed to go towards paying off the country's debts, you have to spend money to make money, and, since Brazil has no money of its own, the money has to be borrowed, which adds to the country's debt. These developments in Brazil are creating a 'vicious circle'. Brazil will forever be in debt, no matter how much money is made from developments. Although Brazil benefits from these developments in the short-term, in the long-term, Brazil is going to make a huge loss. Inevitably, the planet will suffer due to Global Warming creating an ever-increasing climate. This will lead to the already poor, less developed countries and societies finding it more and more difficult to survive. All these developments mean exploiting the Amazon's natural resources, which can never be made up. In reality, exploiting and developing Brazil's natural resources will inevitably increase inequality, as it is Brazil's rich who will benefit greatly, with the poor hardly benefiting at all. I do not see any

point in coming up with ideas for so-called 'developments, □if they are going to destroy something as valuable as the Amazon. Destroying □the Amazon Rainforest does not seem like a development to me.□All over the world, the increase of Global warming and the increase in □climate as a result, is putting vast amounts of pressure particularly on □those societies who are less able to contend with difficulties. These are □mainly the poor people in Bangladesh, and those people who are living on the □frontier of the ever-advancing Sahara Desert.□Reducing inequality in Brazil would be greatly difficult, I think to go □about doing this, the Amazon Rainforest needs to be re-planted, and this □would benefit the majority.