



21ST CENTURY ISSUES WORKSHEET

One of the most significant factors of our time is the *speed* at which things now change. And each of these changes poses new, often troublesome, questions. Here are some examples:

- ▶ *In 1930, there were 2 billion people on the planet Earth, a total that had taken about 250 million years to attain. Today, there are about 6 billion people, and by 2025, there could be as many as 10 billion people living on Earth. Can the world hold all of us?*
- ▶ *Between 1988 and 2000, the body of knowledge doubled four times. Students graduating in the year 2000 will have been exposed to more information in a year than their grandparents were in a lifetime. Can we process that much information?*
- ▶ *Right now, we are losing between 50 and 100 species of animals a day, but by 2020, the numbers might well grow to thousands of species every day. What will this mean?*
- ▶ *Meanwhile, after 10,000 years of natural reproduction, with relatively few opportunities to manipulate the process, we now have the capability to invent life itself. Is this a good or a bad thing?*

In this research exercise, your assignment is to select one area of change that you believe will have a significant impact on the future of the world. Some examples of change areas are: new technologies, population growth or redistribution, environmental challenges, lifestyle, knowledge and communications, and so on.

Remember that some changes may yield both good and bad results.

Using the resources available in your library, see what you can learn about your selected topic: What were things like 100 years ago? How have they changed since then? What do you predict will happen in the future?

Then complete the back of this worksheet.

▶ *Selected topic (describe briefly):*

▶ *What were things like 100 years (or more) ago?*

▶ *How have they changed since then?*

▶ *What do you think will happen in the future, and why?*

a) In the short term (less than five years):

b) In the medium term (5 to 20 years):

c) In the long term (more than 20 years):
