

Overconsumption:

Rapid increases in the sheer number of people on the planet are causing big problems. But there's another, equally serious, people problem: over-consumption. Increased demand for some products and more efficient ways to take resources have led people to consume fossil fuels, forests, minerals, water, and other resources at a much higher rate than those resources can be replaced. Some resources, like fossil fuels, take millions of years to form and can never be replaced in our lifetimes. In addition, most of those resources are being used by people in industrialized countries, like the United States, to support a standard of living that many experts believe is not sustainable. In other words, it cannot last for long.

Overconsumption is a situation where resource use has outpaced the sustainable capacity of the [ecosystem](#). A prolonged pattern of overconsumption leads to inevitable environmental degradation and the eventual loss of resource bases. Generally the discussion of overconsumption parallels that of overpopulation; that is the more people, the more [consumption](#) of raw materials to sustain their lives. Currently, the inhabitants of the developed nations of the world consume resources at a rate almost 32 times greater than those of the developing world, who make up the majority of the human population (5.5 billion people).