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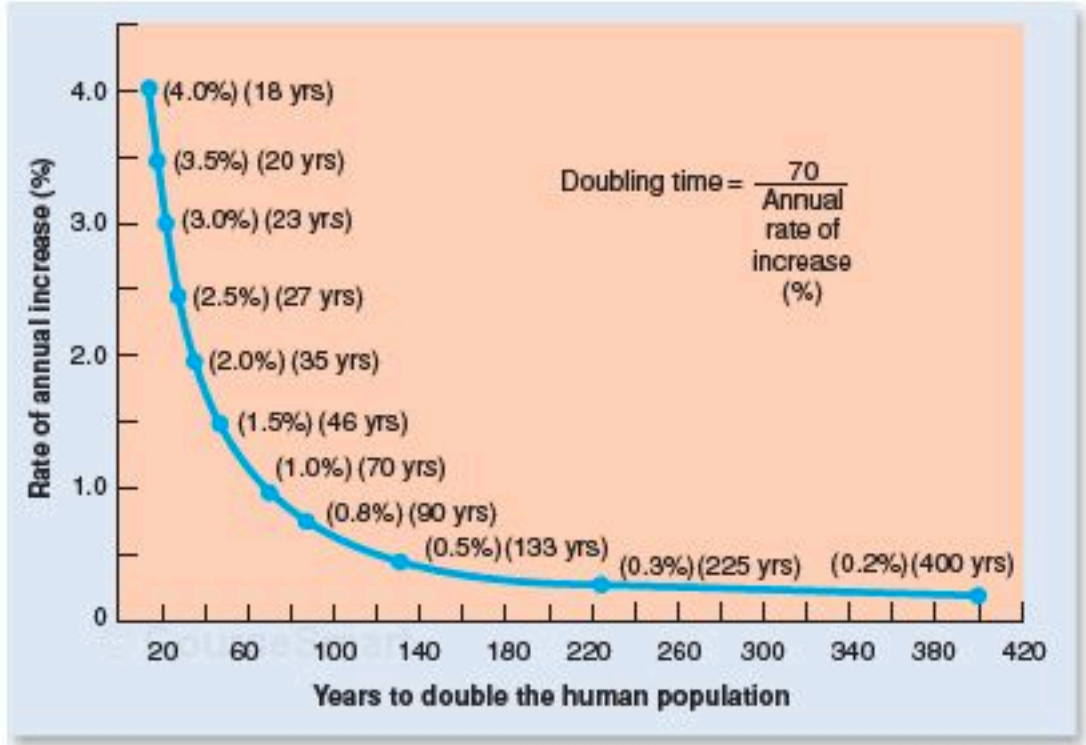
**FIGURE 7.10 The Historical Human Population Curve** From A.D. 1800 to A.D. 1930, the number of humans doubled (from 1 billion to 2 billion) and then doubled again by 1975 (4 billion) and is projected to double again (8 billion) by the year 2025. How long can this pattern continue before the Earth's ultimate carrying capacity is reached?

Source: Data from Jean Van Der Tak, et al., "Our Population Predicament: A New Look," *Population Bulletin*, vol. 34, no. 5 (December 1979), Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.; and more recent data from the Population Reference Bureau.

Indonesia, for example, decreased deaths caused by cholera. These advancements tend to reduce death rates while birthrates remain high. Thus, the size of the human population increases rapidly.

Let us examine the human population situation from a different perspective. The world population is currently increasing at an annual rate of 1.2 percent. That may not seem like much, but even at 1.2 percent, the population is growing rapidly. It can be difficult to comprehend the impact of a 1 or 2 percent annual increase. Remember that a growth rate in any population compounds itself, since many of the additional individuals eventually reproduce, thus adding more individuals. One way to look at this growth is to determine how much time is needed to double the population. This is a valuable method because most of us can appreciate what life would be like if the number of people in our locality were doubled, particularly if the doubling were to occur within our lifetime.

Figure 7.11 shows the relationship between the rate of annual increase for the human population and the number of years it would take to double the population if that rate were to continue.



**FIGURE 7.11 Doubling Time for the Human Population** This graph shows the relationship between the rate of annual increase in percent and doubling time. A population growth rate of 1 percent per year would result in the doubling of the population in about 70 years. A population growth rate of 3 percent per year would result in a population doubling in about 23 years.