**Argumentative Writing in Science**

Using Controversial Topics

Many topics taught in science classes can be used to construct an argumentative essay. Students can write based on information from the text book or they can be given additional resources to read and use as evidence. A small selection of possible topics is presented below.

Chemistry

* Undersea manganese modules should/should not be mined.
* The use of helium for recreation purposes should/should not be banned.
* Water bottles that contain bisphenol A (BPA) should/should not be banned.
* Fluoride should/should not be added to Hawaii’s water supply.
* Chemicals that cause air pollution should/should not be regulated.
* Greenhouse gas chemicals should/should not be regulated.
* As ocean water becomes more acidic it will/will not effect the health of our reef ecosystems.
* Companies should/should not have to prove their chemicals are harmless before manufacturing.
* Plastic polymers should/should not be banned.

Physics

* The United States should/should not build a new larger particle accelerator.
* The State of Hawai`i should/should not build a new telescope on Mauna Kea.
* People should/should not only buy electric cars.
* The State of Hawai`i should/should not build a nuclear power plant.
* The United States should/should not develop nuclear fusion reactors.
* The United States should/should not store nuclear waste at a central location.
* Radiation from cell phones / blue tooth devices is/is not dangerous.

Biology

* Farmers should/should not be allowed to use human antibiotics in animal.
* Scientist should/should not clone animals.
* Scientist should/should not clone humans.
* Adults should/should not get a genetic test that reports their entire DNA.
* Parents should/should not be able to get a genic test that reports the entire DNA of their fetus.
* Killing sharks should/should not be banned in Hawai`i.
* Chocolate is/is not good for you.
* Countries should/should not be allowed to make and use DDT.
* Vaccines do/do not cause autism.

Earth Science

* Global climate change is/is not caused by human actions.
* Global climate change does/does not cause more severe storms / sea level rise.
* Genetically Modified Organisms are/are not safe for human consumption.
* The United States should/should not send people to Mars.

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A few templates

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| In the topic of \_\_\_\_\_, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. On one hand, some argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In \_\_\_\_\_ X states that \_\_\_\_\_\_. This implies that \_\_\_\_\_.  On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ contends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. From this perspective \_\_\_\_\_.  My own view is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_. This is important because |

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| In recent discussion of \_\_\_\_\_, a controversial issue has been whether \_\_\_\_\_\_. On one hand, \_\_\_\_\_ argues \_\_\_\_\_. In \_\_\_\_\_, X maintains that, “\_\_\_\_\_.” From this perspective, \_\_\_\_\_.  On the other hand, however, \_\_\_\_\_ argues that \_\_\_\_\_. In the words of Y, one of this view’s main proponents, “\_\_\_\_\_.” According to this view, \_\_\_\_\_. In sum, then, the issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.  My own view is that \_\_\_\_\_. For example, \_\_\_\_\_. Although some might object that \_\_\_\_\_, I would reply that \_\_\_\_\_. Ultimately what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_. |

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| In the discussions of X, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_. On one hand , \_\_\_\_\_ argues \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ contends \_\_\_\_\_.  Some argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. From this perspective \_\_\_\_\_. In \_\_\_\_\_ X states that \_\_\_\_\_\_. This lead to the conclusion that \_\_\_\_\_.  On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ contends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. According to this view, \_\_\_\_\_. In \_\_\_\_\_ Y, states, “\_\_\_\_\_.” This implies that \_\_\_\_\_. In sum, then, the issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.  My own view is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_. In addition there is the issue of \_\_\_\_\_\_. This discussion of \_\_\_\_\_ is in fact addressing the larger matter of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |