

Text Structure and Language Features: Example 2

Text Structure - Discussion

GENETIC ENGINEERING

Language Features

Statement of issue

There is increasing debate as to whether genetic engineering should be allowed outside the laboratory. Both supporters and opponents of genetic engineering have put forward powerful arguments to support their cases.

Use of present tense is predominant

Case for - arguments elaboration

Supporters of genetic engineering argue that New Zealand must allow experiments outside the laboratory. They claim that if our small country wants to keep pace with science in the twenty-first century, we cannot afford to keep GE in the laboratory. They argue that we need to produce genetically modified food products such as milk and fruit in order to keep a competitive market edge in the world.

Use of word chains to build topic information, e.g. Genetic engineering, experiment, laboratory, risks

Use of relating verbs, e.g. There is increasing debate.

Arguments, elaboration

Furthermore, it is argued that medical science must be allowed to experiment with embryo research to search for cures for diseases such as cancers and neurological disease and hereditary conditions.

Use of saying and thinking verbs, e.g. believe, claim

Use of passive voice, e.g. must be allowed,

Use of modality, e.g. should, can

Arguments, elaboration

In addition to this, geneticists believe that other industries such as forestry would also benefit from better quality trees produced as a result of genetic experimentation, and that we could also eradicate pests like possums from our native forests without using poisons if we could use GE to control them.

Use of general nouns, e.g. diseases

Use of technical language, e.g. hereditary conditions

Use of adjectives, e.g. environmental, animal

Case against - arguments elaboration

Opponents claim, however, that there are too many risks in GE. They believe that genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, could cause environmental damage which could never be undone. They are concerned that creating crops that are resistant to one pest will threaten other species and disrupt the food chain.

Use of detailed noun groups, e.g. Supporters of genetic engineering

Use of adverbial phrases, e.g. in the laboratory

Use of conjunctions to build point and counterpoint, e.g. as to whether, if, however, while

Arguments, elaboration

They are very concerned that we may create new diseases with medical experiments. In addition, they believe that mixing human and animal genes could expose humans to risks we cannot imagine.

Use of text connectives to structure argument, e.g. furthermore, in summary

Use of evaluative language, e.g. powerful, enemies of humanity

Conclusion - includes summary and recommendation

In summary, then, while GE may hold the key to cures for the diseases which are the enemies of humanity, and may also be the key to improved food production, the costs and risks to the environment may be too great. The laboratory door may need to stay locked for the meantime.

Use of persuasive language, e.g., costs are too great

Use of beginning of sentence to focus reader's attention, e.g. Opponents claim however,

Use of empty subject, e.g. There is increasing debate.

Use of compound and complex sentences