



Proficient | Exemplar Essay
Frankenstein and Bill Nye

The Pros and Cons of Genetic Engineering



Claim and Focus

A clear claim about the task is present (“Both sources show that we should be cautious applying technology, but that we should use the technology”). The essay maintains focus on analyzing the texts but may stray at times from developing the claim (“so what scientists are trying to do is completely legal”). There is a balance between the texts and the demands of the prompt are addressed.



Analysis and Evidence

The essay cites appropriate evidence to support its claim and explains how the evidence works to achieve the author’s message. Summary is balanced with analysis (“Her story urges caution concerning the dangers of men having too much scientific knowledge”). The writing demonstrates some reasoning and a basic understanding of the texts’ strategies (“Nye used academic reasoning to support cloning/genetic engineering”).



Organization

The essay’s transitions and structure make it clear and easy to follow (“Bill Nye first seems to think” and “Nye comes to the conclusion that the benefits”). The essay includes an introductory paragraph, as well as a concluding paragraph (“These must be carefully weighed by all of society in order to make informed decisions”).



Language and Style

The essay has an established, formal style that is maintained throughout. The essay uses mostly correct, varied sentence structure and generally uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary (“academic reasoning to support” and “Mary Shelley’s characters seem to warn us”). The writing may have a few errors, but they do not interfere with meaning.



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait ‘looks like’ in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

Frankenstein and Bill Nye



The Pros and Cons of Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering is a subject that attracts a lot of attention and controversy because of the unknown of how genetic engineering will affect human beings in the future. Whether it's a fictional story about creating life from death like everyone's favorite Halloween story Frankenstein, or a documentary from Bill Nye about the potential for improving the health of thousands of people who suffer from diabetes, people have a wide range of opinions about genetic engineering. Both of these sources develop a compelling argument for using the technology we have. In "The Eyes of Nye-Cloning" Nye used academic reasoning to support cloning/genetic engineering. Mary Shelley's characters seem to warn us that there may be unexpected consequences to man interfering with natural order. Both sources show that we should be cautious applying technology, but that we should use the technology. Mary Shelley addresses this issue in her novel Frankenstein when she says,

"Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption". She's saying that man fears death above most things, and anything that the scientist puts to work as a solution is eventually worth the time and effort. Her story urges caution concerning the dangers of men having too much scientific knowledge, but at the same time not knowing or recognizing the consequences of their actions.

Bill Nye first seems to think that the use of such technology is not good,

asking questions like “One side asks should we use this technology that can improve the lives of millions of people who are already here - people who have been struck with disease or injury? On the other side, the question is when does life begin?”, but he eventually changes his thoughts through discussions with analysts and scientists. Genetic engineering in the form of “therapeutic cloning” of the stem cells of human embryos can potentially be used to cure chronic medical conditions such as diabetes. It was stated that in the most states there are no laws against genetic engineering, so what scientists are trying to do is completely legal. While many argue that the use of human embryos or fetuses is morally wrong, Nye comes to the conclusion that the benefits far outweigh the possible negatives.

In conclusion, there are other pros and cons to the concept of genetic engineering. These must be carefully weighed by all of society in order to make informed decisions.