

4th Grade Essay Topics

PLEASE READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.

You will have from December to early January to collect information and research your topics. You will be required to write your essay at that practice. You may bring any materials or research that you need, and you will have from 4-6pm to write your essay here at school. If you cannot make those days, a special day and time will be arranged for you, but it must be written at school.

4th Grade Essay Topics

Please choose **only one** topic, and pick a side. Write about whether you support the issue **or** you are against the issue, and explain why. You will be required to provide evidence and examples to support your opinion.

1. Genetically Modified Food

The issue: Should genetically modified (GM) crops continue to be produced and sold throughout the U.S.? Or do the potential dangers involved in the new technology pose too great a risk?

Supporters of GM foods say: GM crops are the logical next step in agriculture, and they have never been proven to be harmful to human beings. The next generation of GM crops could produce health benefits--such as vegetables with extra vitamins or fruit containing important vaccines and antibiotics--that would be immensely helpful to developing countries.

Critics of GM foods say: Interfering with the genes of plants could disturb entire ecosystems and result in unintended environmental and health consequences. Also, because the plight of developing nations is the result of far broader issues of social injustice, no amount of GM food could truly fix the problems there.

2. Hybrid Vehicles

The issue: Are hybrid cars, which run on both gasoline and electricity, a promising new technology that could ultimately help the environment? Or are the environmental benefits of hybrid cars exaggerated?

Supporters of hybrid vehicles say: Hybrid cars require less gasoline--and thus emit fewer greenhouse gases--than standard cars. If more people drove hybrids, the world would be cleaner and more habitable. Hybrid cars have also developed to the point where they are roughly the same price as standard, gasoline-powered cars.

Critics of hybrid vehicles say: There are many hidden environmental hazards associated with hybrid cars, such as the coal-burning power plants that generate the electricity used by hybrids. Hybrids barely solve the problems associated with gasoline-only cars because they themselves use gasoline. The recent popularity of hybrids has impeded new developments in non-emissions-producing transportation technologies, such as hydrogen fuel cells.

3. Metric System

The issue: Should U.S. businesses and government agencies be required to use the metric system? Or should conversion to the metric system--known as "metrication"--be voluntary?

Supporters of mandatory metrication say: The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that has not fully embraced the metric system, which is used by an estimated 95% of the world's population. Adopting the metric system would allow the U.S. business and scientific communities to more easily exchange products and ideas with the international community.

Critics of mandatory metrication say: The country's existing system of measurement--the "U.S. Customary System"--has served the U.S. well for more than two centuries. Officially adopting the metric system would not significantly benefit

the U.S. economically or otherwise. Also, the metrication process would likely cost the government several billion dollars, which would be largely paid for by taxpayers.

4. Forest Management

The issue: Is strategic logging in federally owned forests an effective approach to prevent wildfire damage? Or is wildfire control a guise for easing restrictions on commercial logging in U.S. national forests?

Supporters say: Strategic logging performed by the timber industry will allow federal agencies to better control the extent of wildfire damage that has afflicted the western U.S. in recent years. As a result, communities bordering woodlands will be safer and national forests will be healthier.

Critics say: Increased logging is motivated primarily by private interests, rather than a genuine desire to safeguard communities from wildfire and rejuvenate national forests. Allowing timber operations in federally owned forests will have an irreparable effect on the long-term health of U.S. woodlands.

