

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay

PLEASE READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.

You will have from December to early January to collect information and research your topics. You may bring any materials or research that you need, and you will have from 4-6 pm 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.

### 5<sup>th</sup> 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 answers.

#### 1. Water Quality - Bottled Water

The issue: Is bottled water harmful to the environment and a waste of consumers' money? Or does it present a convenient, healthy alternative to tap water?

Critics of bottled water say: Bottled water is seldom cleaner or healthier than tap water. It is subject to less stringent regulations and not held to as high a standard as tap water. Additionally, millions of gallons of oil are required to package and ship bottled water each year, making it bad for the environment.

Supporters of bottled water say: Bottled water is more convenient to drink than tap water, especially when people are out of the house and do not have easy access to running water. Bottled water companies have recently made great strides in reducing the environmental impact of their products, and now contribute only minimally to industrial pollution each year.

#### 2. Returning to the Moon

The issue: Should the U.S. attempt to return to the moon by 2020, or is such a goal unrealistic and unimportant, in light of budgetary concerns and other, more pressing domestic matters?

Critics of returning to the moon say: NASA is underfunded, making plans to return to the moon unrealistic. There is greater potential for scientific discovery in sending unmanned satellites deeper into the solar system and beyond.

Supporters of returning to the moon say: The human race faces a variety of long-term dangers on Earth that may be alleviated by eventually colonizing other worlds, starting with the moon. Additionally, there are many potential benefits to be gained from exploring the moon, including the potential for new sources of energy and scouting ideal locations to erect a deep-space telescope.

### 3. Marcellus Shale/Natural Gas & Hydrofracking

The issue: Is hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, a safe way to extract natural gas, a much needed energy resource? Or could it contaminate drinking water and cause other environmental damage?

Supporters of hydrofracking say: There is no proven case of hydrofracking contaminating drinking water, and the process is perfectly safe. Natural gas can revive local economies, reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and provide a cleaner-burning fossil fuel. Further regulation is unnecessary and will only prevent an opportunity for the U.S. to develop an alternative energy source and create jobs.

Critics of hydro-fracking say: The chemicals used in fracking fluid are toxic and pose a danger to public health if they contaminate drinking water reserves or leak out of wells. Oil and gas companies are not being honest with the public about the dangers of hydrofracking, and the federal government should apply much stricter, nationwide regulations to ensure that hydrofracking does not cause widespread health problems that could plague the public for generations.

### 4. Wildlife Relocation

The issue: Should endangered or threatened animal species be transplanted from one continent to another in order to ensure the species' survival? Or would relocating wildlife to new habitats negatively impact both the local environment and the animals themselves?

Supporters of wildlife relocation say: In recent centuries, humans have caused widespread environmental destruction that has led to the extinction of many wildlife species. In order to avoid future species losses, people should transport endangered animals to areas where they can be adequately protected. Adopting an "activist" approach to environmental conservation will help create a healthier planet by maintaining high biodiversity levels.

Critics of wildlife relocation say: Many past attempts at transplanting wildlife from one continent to another have harmed both the environment and the animals. Relocating endangered species is fraught with risk because humans cannot be sure of how animals will react once they are released into a new ecosystem. Environmental conservationists should focus on preserving wildlife in its native environment.