

Genetic Testing Writing Assignment

As you read about various issues in newspapers or magazines, you are presented with different points of view. The more well read you are, the better you are able to formulate your own opinion on an issue. Your task is to find and read at least two current articles on the topic of genetic testing. A current article is identified as one that was written in the last year. Also try to find articles with a Canadian focus. You could also certainly read or view more articles on the topic to increase your understanding. Once you have completed your readings, you are to express your point of view in a Letter to the Editor, that could appear in a place like *The Winnipeg Free Press* or *The Globe and Mail*.

Before you begin:

- a) Consider what you have been learning in class about Genetics, and particularly the issues raised in the "Gene Genie" video. What are your responses to some of the issues raised?
- b) Become familiar with academic search engines (such as Google Scholar), which likely lead to reputable, research-driven articles. Also, find a simple citation tool (such as citethisforme.com) to properly reference all of the articles you find.
- c) As you read over the various articles that you find, take note of the statements that elicit a response in you. Consider arguments you might make with each article. You may want to summarize the arguments briefly before refuting or reacting in the letter.
- d) Look at sample letters to the editor from various newspapers. Consider what makes them powerful (or not).

Drafting the letter:

- a) Have a strong opening. You must catch the editor's attention in order to be published. Put your introduction and main claim in the first paragraph.
- b) Be persuasive. You are trying to convince someone of your point of view by reacting to the material in the articles you read. Refer to points from those articles in your letter and reference appropriately.
- c) Make your points clearly and concisely. There is little space in most newspapers for letters; the briefer you are, the more likely your letter will be published. Make your letter 200 – 300 words in length.
- d) You may use rhetoric to make your point. A rhetorical question is asked for effect with no answer expected.
- e) Have a strong ending by leaving your readers with the most important thought.

Resources :

The following websites contain information about genetic testing and inherited conditions and disorders. They may contain some ideas for you to get started.

Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (www.cagc-accg.ca)

Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (www.cysticfibrosis.ca)

Huntington Society of Canada (www.hsc-ca.org)

Canadian Hemophilia Society (www.hemophilia.ca)

Sickle Cell Association of Ontario (www.sicklecellontario.com)

Canadian Society for Mucopolysaccharide and Related Diseases (including Tay-Sachs) (www.mppsociety.ca)

The Genetic Science Learning Centre website <http://gslc.genetics.utah.edu> contains a section called the Genetic Disorder Corner. Information on genetic disorders, their causes, genetic screening and the role of genetic counsellors is provided in tutorials and interactive animations.

*How you'll be assessed:***Research**

- _____ 5 submitted two current articles dealing with the issue
- _____ 3 key statements were highlighted
- _____ 3 material from each article is used/reacted to in the letter
- _____ 2 material used is referenced in the letter (the author or article title is referred to)

Drafting Format

- _____ 3 followed guidelines (length, typed, proper referencing, layout)
- _____ 2 attention was paid to content, organization, style and mechanics

Expressing Your Opinion

- _____ 2 introduction and main claim are in the first paragraph
- _____ 2 clear point of view is expressed
- _____ 3 evidence is given from that point of view
- _____ 3 points are made clearly and concisely
- _____ 2 has a strong ending and leaves the reader with the most important thought

Total /30

Due in one week.