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**For and
Against
GM Food**

- * **GM food has provoked heated public debate, exhaustive scientific discussion and widespread media coverage.**
- * **Supporters** claim that GM crops can give us *healthier food*, produced in a *more efficient, environmentally friendly way*. GM food can also contribute to *solving global problems* brought about by overpopulation. Proponents encourage biotechnology companies to invest in *research and development*, as they believe that GM crops will *boost the economy*.
- * **Opponents** express concerns about GM food in three categories: *environmental hazards, human health risks* and *economy*.

<u>Arguments FOR GM food</u>	<u>Arguments AGAINST GM food</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Altering genetic make-up is safe.</u> <i>Mutations</i> happen in nature, too, and are created by conventional farming methods as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Transgenic technology is unsafe,</u> because it creates unnatural organisms: it <i>crosses animal-plant boundaries</i>, which never happens in nature.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GM crops are more <u>extensively tested</u> for <i>safety, nutritional quality and allergens</i> than crops from traditional breeding programmes are. Engineered crops are <i>more reliable</i>, because the desired qualities can be selected with greater precision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As laboratory <u>testing of GM food is not as strict as testing medicine</u>, it may not detect all the effects of gene interactions and the influence of <i>transgenes</i>. Exhaustive further tests should be conducted by independent bodies, to evaluate the <i>toxicity</i> of GM food.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>GM crops benefit the environment:</u> they are used with their own brand of <i>herbicide</i>; they need <i>less pesticide</i>; and some crops are engineered to produce their own <i>insecticide</i>. The method is <i>friendlier to the environment</i> than traditional farming is, because <i>weeds and pests</i> can be controlled more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>GM crops harm the environment.</u> Farmers use <i>more chemicals</i>, because most crops tolerate herbicides and pesticides. Heavier doses of chemicals <i>contaminate our water and food supplies</i>. GM proteins, leaking into the soil, <i>considerably change the soil environment</i>. <i>Genetic contamination</i> of the environment can have a severe effect on <i>biodiversity</i> and the <i>food chain</i>. <i>Pest resistance</i> and <i>herbicide tolerance</i> might be <i>transferred to wild plants and weeds</i> by birds, insects or wind. The <i>genetic make-up</i> of wild flowers and insects that feed on GM crops might be <i>altered</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Non-food GM crops,</u> such as engineered biofuels, biodegradable starch-based plastic and industrial oils, <u>protect the environment.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Non-food crops may contaminate</u> food crops and have a harmful effect on <i>ecosystems</i>.

HOME EDUCATION

- Introduction**
- * **Educating children at home had been the norm until national systems of public education were established in the 19th century.** Children were often taught by their *parents*, or were instructed by *tutors* and *governesses* employed by well-to-do families.
 - * **In the 1970s, home education again became a viable alternative to attending school.** Since then, the number of children learning at home has steadily increased all over the English-speaking world. Schooling at home is *most prevalent in the United States*, but thousands of parents also in the *United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Western Europe choose to take full responsibility for their children's education* rather than delegate it to a school.
 - * **Homeschooling, the most flexible educational venue today, is likely to become even more widespread,** as more and more parents *work from home*, and a growing number of families can take advantage of *computer-assisted learning*, utilising the great variety of home-education and e-learning resources available on the Internet.
- Why Attend School at Home?**
- * **Children from all walks of life attend school at home these days. Homeschool families represent all income levels and classes of society, ranging from families with single parents or unemployed parents to traditional families with both partners working.** Family units of this diverse group have but one thing in common: *their children have never attended school, or they have been taken out of school*, because their parents feel that they can offer a more suitable education for their offspring at home.
 - * **Frequent reasons for choosing home education**
 - ▶ Parents are convinced that **schools cannot cater to children's special needs.**
 - ▶ They believe that **schools are unsuitable for a child** who *cannot conform* to classroom teaching and expectations, who has unusual *mental impairments* such as *dyslexia*, or who *has other special educational needs*.
 - ▶ They want to **protect their children from negative social impacts of the school environment,** such as *peer pressure, bullying and racial conflicts*, all of which may hinder children's development, lead to *school phobia* or a *loss of appetite for learning*.
 - ▶ **They are critical of, or diametrically opposed to the values that schools instil and represent.** Many of them feel that children should acquire *their parents' moral and religious codes*.