

ESSAY KIT  
What you need to  
write a persuasive  
essay

# Should We Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth?

## Scientists plan to clone an extinct animal. What could POSSIBLY go wrong?

**I**magine that you have a time machine. You step in, crank the dial to 25,000 B.C., and *poof!* you disappear.

When you step out, you find yourself face-to-face with the most enormous creature you've ever seen. At 11 feet tall, it towers over you. It has shaggy hair, a sloped back, a long, powerful trunk, and sharp, curved tusks that extend out to an impressive 13 feet. The animal weighs six tons—about as much as a school bus. This behemoth is a woolly mammoth.

Woolly mammoths died out around the end of the last Ice Age, about 10,000 years ago. Pretty soon, though, you might be able to see an actual living woolly mammoth, and you won't need a time machine to do it. A team of South Korean, Russian, and Japanese scientists say they can bring back one of these prehistoric creatures using a process called cloning.

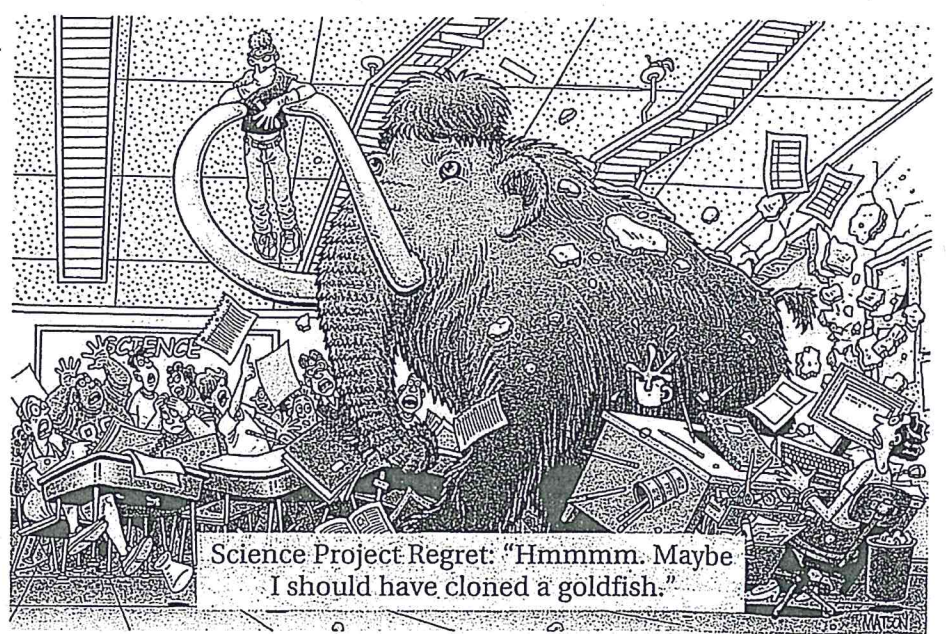
### Mammoth Concerns

Over the past 15 years, scientists have cloned a number of species, including goats, dogs, and cats. Cloning a woolly mammoth, however, will be a lot harder.

First, scientists will harvest cells from the remains of a woolly mammoth discovered in Siberia, a very cold region of Russia. They will use the cells to produce an embryo. That embryo will be placed in the womb of an elephant. About 22 months later, she will give

birth to a baby mammoth.

One scientist says they could produce a mammoth as soon as five years from now, but there are many challenges ahead. Cloning efforts often fail, and cloned animals tend to have serious and sometimes gruesome health problems. Many suffer painful birth defects and die within days or even minutes of being born. If successful, however, the mammoth project would be an amazing scientific achievement.



Not everyone is convinced that it's a good idea, though. The planet has changed dramatically since the time of the mammoths; their habitat no longer exists. A cloned mammoth would have to live its entire life in captivity—where it would surely be subjected to constant tests. Is it fair to bring an animal into the world to be a research subject—a curiosity, basically—that could never live freely with others of its kind?

There are also concerns about the elephant mother. For one thing, she would have to endure the stress of frequent testing during her pregnancy. Plus, elephants form very close bonds with their young. The death or removal of a baby mammoth would be tragic for its mother.

### Into the Present

Cruelty isn't the only issue that critics are raising. Many people wonder why millions of dollars and countless research hours should be spent attempting to resurrect a species that went extinct thousands of years ago instead of trying to save the thousands of animal species that are endangered today.

Still, cloning a woolly mammoth would be an exciting learning opportunity—a chance to bring the ancient past into the present. Then again, maybe scientists should focus on inventing a time machine instead. Then we could see any extinct creature we wanted! ☺

## What Do You Think?

**Should scientists clone a woolly mammoth?**

Use evidence from the article to support each side of this debate. Write the information on the lines below.

**YES**

THAT WOULD BE SO COOL.

1 It would be an  
incredible scientific  
achievement.

2

3

**NO**

FRANKENSTEIN MUCH?

1

2

3

**EXAMINE POINTS ON BOTH SIDES—AS WELL AS YOUR OWN BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES.** Decide what you think. State your opinion in one sentence below. This can become the thesis statement for an argument essay on this topic.

GET THIS  
ACTIVITY  
ONLINE

**TAKE THIS ACTIVITY FURTHER! WRITE AN ESSAY USING OUR SCOPE TEMPLATE.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Per: \_\_\_\_ Class: SWW

### Write an Argument (Persuasive) Essay

**Learning Goal:** I can write to persuade others to believe and act on my ideas.

**Directions:** Follow the steps below to plan an essay explaining your opinion on whether or not scientists should clone an extinct animal.

#### STEP 1: SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE

Let readers know a little bit about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your opinion of the issue. It is a brief summary of the issue. In this case, the controversy over cloning a woolly mammoth.

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#### STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

Should we bring back the woolly mammoth? Consider what you read in the article as well as your own opinion. Check the box next to the point of view you will support in your essay.

**YES**                       **NO**

#### STEP 3: WRITE YOUR HOOK

After you have explained to the reader what the issue is, you will need to write a hook to “hook” the reader’s attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay. You can do this in several ways. Choose one:

- 1. ASK A QUESTION:** Ask the reader if they think it’s a good idea for scientists to experiment with nature in this way. Just because they can do it, does it mean they should?
- 2. START WITH A SURPRISING FACT:** Use a fact from the article that will shock the reader.
- 3. ANECDOTE:** An anecdote is a very short, but true story. You can use a positive or negative result of the cloning of other types of animals to set up your opinion on the issue.

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#### STEP 4: WRITE YOUR THESIS

The thesis is where you tell readers what the essay is going to be about. The thesis is a clear, strong statement of the choice you made in **STEP 2**. The rest of your essay will support your thesis.

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**STEP 5: FIND YOUR SUPPORT**

Which of the items on your "Yes" and "No" T-chart support your opinion? List them here.

What are other points that support your opinion? **LIST 3 TO 5 SUPPORTING REASONS.**

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**STEP 6: ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE**

If you said, "yes, scientists should clone the woolly mammoth", explain why someone would disagree with you. If you said, "no, scientists should not clone the woolly mammoth", state reasons why others would disagree.

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**STEP 7: REBUTTAL**

Restate your thesis in **STEP 4**. This tells the reader that even if someone disagrees with you, you are sticking to your opinion.

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**STEP 8: CONCLUSION**

Use 2-3 sentences to remind your reader of your main points in **STEP 5**. Then finish with a strong sentence. You can do this in several ways:

1. Refer back to your hook.
2. Finish with an important quote from the article.
3. Leave your reader with an inspiring thought.

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**STEP 9: WRITE YOUR ESSAY**

Now that you have all your planning done, you are ready to start writing. You can now move on to transferring this information to binder paper in an essay form. Your essay may be 3 to 5 paragraphs.

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