

Developing supporting arguments

Sometimes you don't know what *else* to say; just adding more examples seems insufficient to develop your ideas. Development takes some hard thinking and imagination. The writer below is stuck and doesn't know what else to say after adding some examples:

More money should be set aside for the research into adult stem cells because all the stem cell therapies now being used have come from adult stem cell research. Adult stem cells are used in bone marrow transplants and to treat or cure spinal cord injuries, heart damage, Parkinson's disease, and leukemia.

She needs more development, so she starts asking herself some questions like the ones below:

Brainstorming Questions	Brainstorming answers
What is similar?	Adult stem cells are <i>similar</i> to embryonic stem cells because they both can be "reprogrammed" to become many kinds of tissue = induced pluripotency. The funding question is <i>similar</i> to when you have a new invention that works, and you invest a lot of money in developing it—like faster computer chips or better solar cells. In general, you put your money where you will get a return on your investment.
What is different?	Adult stem cells are <i>different</i> from embryonic stem cells because they don't change to different tissues as easily. Adult stem cells are more easily controlled in the lab while embryonic cells are unpredictable & can cause tumors and growth of wrong kind of tissues Adult stem cells are not as controversial, while many consider embryonic cell research morally and ethically controversial
Who would benefit?	Patients would benefit because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would save money. They wouldn't have to pay drug companies for patented "products" derived from embryos. • They are safer because there's no threat of rejection or risk of cancer. Taxpayers would benefit because tax dollars that fund this research would almost immediately produce useable therapies.
Who would suffer?	Drug companies would not be allowed to patent a patient's own stem cells, so would not be able to claim ownership and profit by selling cells back to the patients Patients suffer if they have to pay for the anti-rejection drugs needed with embryonic cells Makers of anti-tissue rejection drugs might lose sales if we don't use embryonic cells

The writer ends up with a *lot* more ideas to develop her point:

Besides being practical, adult stem cell treatments are safer and cheaper for patients, who do not experience tissue rejection or have to take expensive anti-rejection drugs because they are using their own cells. It also benefits taxpayers, whose money funds much of the research, because they would see useable results much sooner. While both adult and embryonic stem cells can be "reprogrammed" into many different kinds of tissues, adult cells are more easily controlled in the lab, while embryonic cells have often produced unpredictable and tumor-like growth. Plus, since the source of many embryonic cell lines is abortion tissue, embryonic stem cell research is drawn into the ethical and moral controversy surrounding abortion. The losers would be the drug companies, which could lose profits, because they would not have the right to patent our cells in order to sell them back to us.

Brainstorming questions to help you develop ideas

If you are stuck for how to develop your ideas more fully, try brainstorming with some of the questions below:

Type of inquiry	Questions
To compare or contrast, ask...	What is similar? How is it similar? How similar is it? What is different? How is it different? How different is it?
To find causes or effects, ask...	What are the general causes? What are the general results? What are the specific causes in this case? What are the specific results in this case? What if it were different? What would be the results? Could there be unintended results?
To examine my experience and the experience of others, ask...	Is it possible? Is it probable? Has it happened before? Is it likely to happen in the future?
To consider different points of view, ask...	What do others think about this? What is the opposite view?
To consider a counterexample, ask...	What if it were different? What might cause it to be different?
To judge if something is good or bad, ask...	Is it good? What makes it good? Is it right? What makes it right? Is it bad? What makes it bad? Is it wrong? What makes it wrong?
To consider the benefits or burdens, ask...	Who would benefit? In what way? Who would suffer? In what way? Do the benefits exceed the burdens?
To evaluate the practicality or possibility of something, ask...	Will it work? What needs to happen to make it work? What are the possible consequences? What are the probable consequences? What are the possible side effects? What are the probable side effects? Is it desirable? Is it undesirable?

You can also use brainstorming questions to clarify your thoughts on a topic. For example, if you are prompted to write on whether the American Dream is attainable, or whether it is just a myth, you could start by asking these questions:

What is different from the American Dream (comparing and contrasting)?	<i>Socialism is different because most people are not permitted to rise above the circumstances they are born into.</i>
Could there be unintended results of believing in the American Dream (asking about effects)?	<i>If people seek material gain at any cost, they might take advantage of others to get what they want, showing greed and exploiting the weak.</i>
Has the American Dream come true before? Is it likely to come true for others in the future (examining other people's experience)?	<i>My grandfather came to America and started a business with very little money. Now, regulations make start-ups so costly that it's a lot harder to start and run a business.</i>

After brainstorming, this is the claim this writer decided to make:

The American Dream is not dead yet. Even though greed is part of human nature, and regulations impede entrepreneurs more than ever, we still have many opportunities at every socio-economic level to work, make money, choose wisely, and have a better, more educated, and secure life.

Contributed by Rosemary McKeever



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