One of today’s most controversial subjects is nuclear or atomic power. In the past, fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas provided enough energy for homes and industries, but now they are harder to get and are more expensive. People in developing countries throughout the world need cheap energy for better lives. People in industrialized countries want to keep their high standard of living. Nuclear power by itself can provide energy for both these purposes.

However, many people oppose atomic energy. ~~[In addition,]~~ They say that the high standard of living in developed nations is unnecessary. Moreover, nuclear power can be dangerous. ~~[What’s more,]~~ A single accident could kill or injure thousands of people.

A strong argument of the proponents of nuclear energy is that it is clean. Uranium mines do not damage the land as surface coal mines do. Coal- and oil-powered industries emit ugly, bad-smelling pollutants; nuclear generators do not. However, opponents of nuclear energy point out that nuclear reactors pour coolants into streams and rivers. These coolants change the temperature of the water. Opponents state that the temperature changes cause damage to fish and plants. Proponents, on the other hand, say that the warm water from nuclear reactors provides ideal conditions for raising certain fish.

The safety question is the most important of all. Every nuclear generator has radioactive waste products. Those opposed to atomic power say that this waste is dangerous because it is hard to find safe places (in which to store it). Moreover, they state that generators are still dangerous and give the accident at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, as an example. At the Three Mile Island generators, the cooling system failed. This caused the temperature of the generators fuel core to rise. The danger was that if the core became very hot, it might melt and let radioactive materials escape. On the other hand, proponents reply that this did not happen because nuclear generators are built very carefully. Furthermore, governments have made many safety rules to assure safe operation.

Nevertheless, since Three Mile Island, people are afraid of nuclear power. What is your opinion? Is nuclear power safe? Would you want to have an atomic power plant in your community? These are important questions for people throughout the world.

[from Sorenson, S. (1997). *Student writing handbook*. New York: Macmillan.]