Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets?

Persuasive Essay by the Humane Society of the United States

Can we ever TAME *what's wild?*



R2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning, **persuasion,** and propaganda **in text.**

Also included in this lesson: R1.4 (p. 907)

KEY IDEA Would you like to have a wolf for a pet? How about a monkey? Owning a wild animal may sound exciting, but unfortunately, people who keep wild animals as pets often run into trouble when they are trying to **tame** them. In the essay you are about to read, you'll discover some of the challenges that can come with having an unusual pet.

LIST IT Is there a particular wild animal you wish you could own? Make a list of what you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of keeping that type of animal. Compare your lists with those of your classmates.

Monkey	
Advantages	Disadvantages
I could teach it to play games.	It might break things.



ELEMENTS OF NONFICTION: PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

If you make an argument for or against something, you are trying to persuade other people using reasons and facts. But there are other ways to persuade people to adopt an opinion or take action. These **persuasive techniques** include

- **Emotional appeals**—messages that create strong feelings, such as pity or fear
- **Appeals to authority**—references to people who are experts on a subject
- **Loaded language**—words with strongly positive or strongly negative connotations, or shades of meaning

As you read "Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets?" notice the persuasive techniques used in the essay. Record examples in a chart like the one shown.

Emotional Appeals	*Appeals to Authority*	*Loaded Language*

READING STRATEGY: PREVIEW

When you **preview,** you examine a text for clues to what it is about and how it is organized. One way to preview is to **skim text features,** quickly looking over such elements as the title, subheadings, footnotes, vocabulary definitions, and graphic aids. As you read the essay, notice how previewing the text features helps you focus on the most important ideas.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The words in Column A help to explain the Humane Society's position on the issue of keeping wild animals. See how many you know by matching each vocabulary word in Column A with the word in Column B that is closest in meaning.

Column A	Column B
1. captivity	**a.** inborn
2. domesticate	**b.** tame
3. instinctive	**c.** confinement
4. unsuitable	**d.** improper

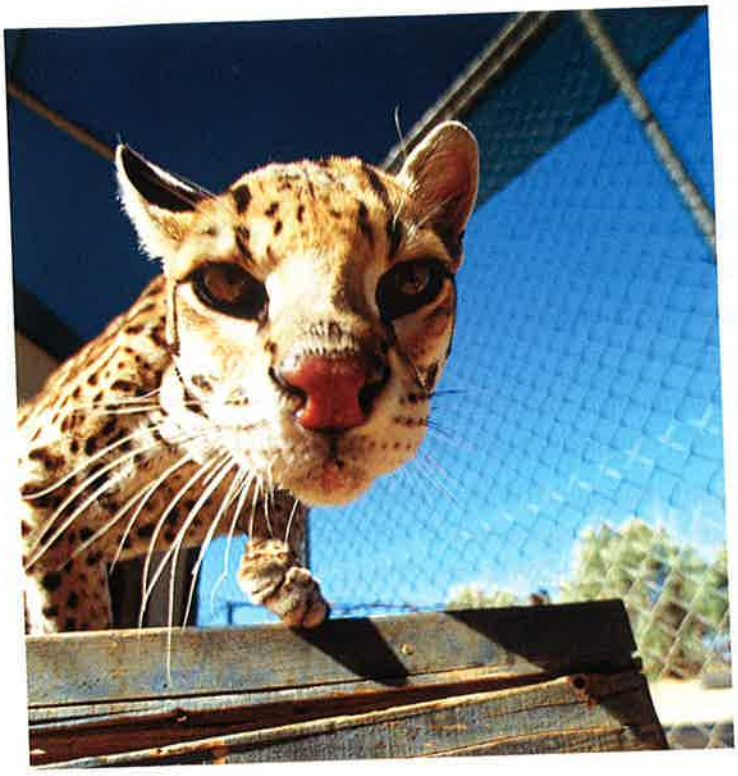
Background CALIFORNIA



Animal Protector
Founded in 1954, the Humane Society of the United States is the world's largest animal-protection organization. Members of the Humane Society are tireless in their efforts on behalf of the country's many dogs, cats, and other pets. However, the Humane Society also works to protect wildlife, animals raised for food, and animals used in research.

Policies and a Vision The Humane Society works to help make the public more aware of the proper treatment of animals, as well as enforcing laws that help to protect animals. The organization has a vision of a world in which humans and animals live in harmony. It believes that we have a moral duty to protect the animals whose habitats we share.

BUILDING BACKGROUND
To learn more about the Humane Society of the United States, visit the **Literature Center** at **ClassZone.com.**



Ocelot

A PREVIEW
Skim the essay's title, footnotes, vocabulary definitions, and photographs. Based on these **text features,** what types of information do you think the essay will cover?

Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets? A

The Humane Society of the United States

The Humane Society of the United States strongly opposes keeping wild animals as pets. This principle[1] applies to both native and nonnative species, whether caught in the wild or bred in **captivity.** The overwhelming majority[2] of people who obtain these animals are unable to provide the care they require.

captivity (kăp-tĭv'ĭ-tē) *n.* the condition of being confined or not free

1. **principle:** a policy or rule.
2. **overwhelming majority:** most or almost all.

Caring for Wild Animals Is Difficult or Impossible B

Despite what animal sellers may say, appropriate care for wild animals requires considerable expertise,[3] specialized facilities,[4] and lifelong dedication to the animals. Their nutritional and social needs are demanding to meet and, in many cases, are unknown. They often grow to be larger, stronger, and more dangerous than owners expect or can manage. Small cats such as ocelots and bobcats can be as deadly to children as lions and tigers. Wild animals also pose a danger to human health and safety through disease and parasites.[5]

Baby Animals Grow Up

Baby animals can be irresistibly adorable—until the cuddly baby becomes bigger and stronger than the owner ever imagined. The **instinctive** behavior of the adult animal replaces the dependent behavior of the juvenile, resulting in biting, scratching, or displaying destructive behaviors without provocation[6] or warning. Such animals typically become too difficult to manage and are confined to small cages, passed from owner to owner, or disposed of in other ways. There are not enough reputable sanctuaries[7] or other facilities to properly care for unwanted wild animals. They can end up back in the exotic pet trade.[8] Some may be released into the wild where, if they survive, they can disrupt the local ecosystem.[9] C

Wild Animals Spread Disease

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention[10] discourages direct contact with wild animals for a simple reason: They can carry diseases that are dangerous to people, such as rabies, herpes B virus, and Salmonella. The herpes B virus commonly found among macaque monkeys can be fatal to humans. Thousands of people

3. **considerable expertise:** a great deal of knowledge and experience.
4. **specialized facilities:** places that are created and used for a specific function.
5. **parasites** (păr'ə-sīts'): animals that live on or in other animals and feed off of them.
6. **provocation** (prŏv'ə-kā'shən): something done to cause anger or irritation.
7. **reputable sanctuaries** (rĕp'yə-tə-bəl săngk'chōō-ĕr'ēz): trustworthy and reliable places that provide protected areas for animals.
8. **exotic pet trade:** the business of buying and selling wild, and sometimes rare, animals.
9. **ecosystem:** a community of living things, together with their environment.
10. **The Centers . . . Prevention:** One of 13 groups that are part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which works to protect the health and safety of Americans. Also referred to by its acronym: CDC.

B PREVIEW
Preview the article's **subheadings.** Why do you think they have been included in the essay?

instinctive
(ĭn-stĭngk'tĭv) *adj.* of or about the natural behaviors of a type of animal

C PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES
Reread lines 15–26. What **emotional appeals** are used in this section? Add this information to your chart.



Long-tailed macaque monkey

get Salmonella infections each year from contact with reptiles or amphibians, causing the CDC to recommend that these animals be kept out of homes with children under five. A recent outbreak of monkeypox[11] was set in motion when small mammals carrying the disease were imported for the pet trade and infected native prairie dogs, which were also sold as pets. Ⓓ

Ⓓ PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES
Reread lines 27–38. In your chart, note the persuasive techniques used in this section.

Domestication Takes Thousands of Years

40 Wild animals are not **domesticated** simply by being captive-born or hand-raised. It's a different story with dogs and cats, who have been domesticated by selective breeding for desired traits over thousands of years. These special animal companions depend on humans for food, shelter, veterinary care, and affection. Wild animals, by nature, are self-sufficient and fare best without our interference. The instinctive behavior of these animals makes them **unsuitable** as pets.

domesticate
(də-mĕs'tĭ-kāt') *v.* to tame a wild species of animal over generations

unsuitable
(ŭn-sōō'tə-bəl) *adj.* not appropriate or fitting

11. **monkeypox:** a virus first found in monkeys, which is harmful and sometimes fatal to both humans and animals.

Capturing Wild Animals Threatens Their Survival

When wild-caught animals are kept as pets, their suffering may begin with capture—every year millions of birds and reptiles suffer and die on the journey to the pet store. Even after purchase, their lives are likely to be filled with misery. If they survive, they may languish[12] in a cramped backyard cage or circle endlessly in a cat carrier or aquarium. More often, they become sick or die because their owners are unable to care for them properly. The global wild pet trade continues to threaten the existence of some species in their native habitats. E

Having any animal as a pet means being responsible for providing appropriate and humane care. Where wild animals are concerned, meeting this responsibility is usually impossible. People, animals, and the environment suffer the consequences.

12. **languish** (lăng'gwĭsh): suffer in a state of neglect or indifference.



Prairie dog

E **PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES**
Reread lines 47–56. Record examples of the **loaded language** used in this section in your chart.

Comprehension



R2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning, **persuasion,** and propaganda **in text.**

1. **Recall** What three things are required in order to properly care for a wild animal?
2. **Clarify** Reread lines 15–26. What can happen to wild animals when their owners are no longer able to manage them?
3. **Clarify** Reread lines 39–46. Describe the process by which animals become domesticated.

Critical Analysis

4. **Examine Author's Purpose** Why do you think the Humane Society is trying to persuade people not to keep wild animals as pets? Explain your answer.
5. **Monitor Previewing** In what way did previewing the **text features** help you better understand the essay? Explain.
6. **Evaluate Persuasive Techniques** Review the chart that you filled in as you read. Then explain which of the three persuasive techniques used in the essay was the most effective and why.
7. **Draw Conclusions** According to the essay, there are distinct differences between wild animals and domesticated, or **tame,** animals. In a chart like the one shown, note the unique traits of each category of animal. Then explain which traits make wild animals most unsuitable as pets.

Wild	Tame

Extension and Challenge

8. **Speaking and Listening** Imagine that you have been asked to film a public service announcement explaining the responsibilities and challenges that come with having an exotic pet. With a partner, write the script for your announcement. Then present it to the class.
9. **Inquiry and Research** Research to find out about wildlife sanctuaries, rescue centers, and other facilities in your area that aid in the survival and protection of animals. Choose one and summarize the work done there. Present your findings to the class.



An alligator at an exotic animal sanctuary

RESEARCH LINKS
For more on wildlife protection, visit the **Research Center** at **ClassZone.com.**

Vocabulary in Context

VOCABULARY PRACTICE



Show your understanding of the vocabulary words by deciding whether each statement is true or false.

1. An **instinctive** behavior is one that an animal learns as it grows.
2. You cannot **domesticate** an animal in a day.
3. Animals in **captivity** are never kept in cages.
4. If something meets a person's needs, it is considered **unsuitable.**

VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Using at least three vocabulary words, explain how a wild animal might feel about being kept as a pet. You might begin this way.

EXAMPLE SENTENCE

I really don't want to be kept in ***captivity.***

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: CONTEXT CLUES

CALIFORNIA

R1.4 Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

You can sometimes figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word by finding **context clues** in the same sentence, or within the surrounding paragraph. This can be particularly helpful when you are reading nonfiction about an unfamiliar topic. For example, a clue to the meaning of the vocabulary word *domesticate* can be found in line 42: "selective breeding for desired traits." Using context clues, we can infer the meaning of *domesticate.*

PRACTICE Use context clues to write a definition of each boldfaced word.

1. Bulldozers **graded** the land so that it was smooth and level for the new road.
2. Ice will **liquefy** if the temperature is above 32 degrees.
3. Everyone got sick as the **contagion** was passed from one person to the next.
4. A **miscellany** of tools, including satellites, radar, and barometers, help people predict the weather.
5. Over the course of the season, the basketball player has had many free throw opportunities but has scored points only **sporadically.**

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
For more practice, go to the **Vocabulary Center** at **ClassZone.com.**