



### Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Analyze multiple perspectives on the human/animal relationship.
- Articulate their own philosophy on how animals should be treated.

### Time Needed

45 minutes

### Materials

- Animal quotations
- Animal quotations paraphrased
- Whiteboard / chalkboard
- Dry erase markers / chalk

## Activity 2: Attitudes Toward Animals

**Overview:** Students will consider how attitudes of the past have influenced our relationship to animals in the present. They will analyze different perceptions of the human/animal relationship and examine their own attitudes toward animals.

### Procedure:

#### Introduction

Introduce the topic by letting the students know that they are going to be thinking about the human/animal relationship and how our perceptions of animals have been influenced by the opinions of others from the past to the present.

#### Animal Perceptions

1. Write the following on the board:

- Polar Bears
- Dogs
- Chickens
- Bees
- Cows

2. Ask the students, *“If you were asked to rank the animals in descending order of importance, how would you do this? How would you justify this ranking?”*

3. Give students time to make their own lists, decide why they ranked the way they did, and give them a chance to share out loud.

**Note:** Be prepared for a wide range of answers and justifications.

4. Let students know that the class will analyze quotations by famous people who have influenced how different people perceive animals.

#### Quotations about Animals

1. Break the students up into seven groups and give each group a quotation.

2. Ask the students to first paraphrase the quotation.

3. Then ask students to determine what they think the quotation really means and whether or not they agree with it and why.

4. Ask each group to share out loud and as they share ask the students to consider which quotations most align with, and most differ from, what they believe.

5. Ask students to share which quotations they most agree or disagree with and why.

### Insider Tips

- The goal here is not to find the “right answer,” but to challenge students to persuasively articulate their views.

### Classroom Teachers

- As an extension activity, ask students to look up additional quotations about the human/ animal relationship that may have influenced our perceptions of animals.
- Ask students to think about real life examples of how animals are treated that represent each quotation.
- Ask students to imagine they are an animal and have them write a story inspired by one of the philosopher’s quotations if everyone lived by that philosophy. Challenge them to consider what their lives are like, what rights they have, how they are treated and describe their day-to-day existence.

### Outside Humane Educators

- It may be difficult for the students to paraphrase the quotations in small groups so you may consider paraphrasing them together as a whole class and then break the students into groups to analyze what they think the statement really means.

## Activity 2: Attitudes Toward Animals (continued)

6. Challenge students to write their own animal-related quotations. Encourage them to use the quotations provided as models and help them to create their own. If they are having difficulty, ask them to answer the following question, “If you had to explain in one or two sentences how animals and humans should coexist, what would you say?”
7. Give students the opportunity to share their animal quotations with the class.

### Wrap Up:

Ask the students the following questions:

- *Can you see how these quotations have influenced the way people treat animals? Can you think of any examples?*
- *Have these quotations influenced how you look at the human/ animal relationship?*
- *How can you put your quotation into practice?*



# Animal Quotations

## Quotation

## Quotation Paraphrased

<p>1. René Descartes, a philosopher of mathematics and physics, is known for deeming animals as “thoughtless brutes that were merely sophisticated machines lacking consciousness.”</p>	<p>Descartes: Animals are thoughtless and can be compared to machines. They have no awareness or feelings.</p>
<p>2. Benedict de Spinoza, an ethics philosopher, said, “I do not deny that beasts feel; what I deny is, that we may not consult our own advantage and use them as we please, treating them in the way which best suits us; for their nature is not like ours, and their emotions are naturally different from humans’ emotions.”</p>	<p>Spinoza: I admit that animals can feel, but they are here for our own use and we can use them the way we want to. They are lesser than human beings and their feelings are not as important as the feelings of people.</p>
<p>3. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of the reforming utilitarian school of moral philosophy, is known for saying, “The question is not, Can they reason? nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?”</p>	<p>Bentham: It does not matter how smart an animal is, what matters is that they can suffer, and that means we should not cause them harm or pain.</p>
<p>4. Voltaire, a French enlightenment writer and philosopher, said, “There are barbarians who seize this dog who so greatly surpasses Man... (in...friendship, and nail him down to a table and dissect him alive...) You discover in him all the same organs of feeling as in yourself. Answer me, mechanist, has Nature arranged all the springs of feeling to the end that he might not feel?”</p>	<p>Voltaire: There are heartless people who are dissecting dogs while they are still alive. Dissecting a dog would show that the animal has the same organs as a person, so of course a dog can experience the same emotions that a human being can feel.</p>
<p>5. Mahatma Gandhi, known for his practice of non-violence, said, “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the treatment of its animals.”</p>	<p>Gandhi: Nations that are kind to animals are more likely to be kind to people, and nations that are cruel to animals are more likely to be cruel to people. A nation that is kind to animals is morally more advanced than one that does not care about the welfare of animals.</p>
<p>6. Alice Walker, civil rights activist and author of <i>The Color Purple</i>, said, “The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than blacks were made for whites, or women for men.”</p>	<p>Walker: Animals have their own purpose for being and they are not here to be used and abused by people, just as black people are here for their own reasons and are not here to be used as slaves by white people, and just as women are here for their own reasons and are not here to be used as servants for men.</p>
<p>7. Albert Schweitzer, author and peace advocate, said, “Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living things, man will not himself find peace.”</p>	<p>Schweitzer: We will only have a peaceful world when we extend compassion to everyone, including animals. We can’t have peace when we cause harm or violence to someone else.</p>