



Lesson 5: When Does Animal Use Become Animal Abuse?

Overview: While examining the range of human use (and abuse) of animals, students will consider which behaviors they deem acceptable, and “draw the line” at those they don’t.

Procedure:

Introduction

Ask the students to provide examples of people using animals for the benefit of human beings. Ask them generally how they feel about animals being used.

Use or Abuse?

1. Divide students into small groups. Hand out to each student an envelope filled with 14 small pieces of paper, numbered 1 through 14. Give each student the “Animal Use Example” handout. Distribute to each group the “Continuum Paper Packet.”
2. Instruct the students to put together their group’s “Continuum Paper Packet” by laying out the 10 sheets of paper on their desks with one end having the paper with a “-” or negative sign on it and the other end having the paper with a “+” or positive sign on it.
3. As a class, read through the 14 examples of animal use in the “Animal Use Example” handout. Have student volunteers read each example. Solicit and answer any questions students might have about each example.
4. Ask the students to decide which uses of animals they can accept and which ones they cannot. Then instruct the students to use the papers inside their individual envelopes to indicate their personal feelings on the particular animal use. The statement of use they can most readily accept is placed closest to the “+” sign on the continuum and the statement of use they have the most difficulty accepting should be placed closest to the “-” sign. Other statements are placed accordingly in between on the continuum.
5. Once each student has completed placing his or her numbers on the continuum, ask the students to draw a line on the continuum where they would personally draw the line on what is acceptable to them and what is not (i.e. what would be considered acceptable use vs. animal abuse).
6. Have students discuss their reflections with the other members of their group. Ask the students to try to agree on a group assessment on what can be considered animal use and what can be considered animal abuse.

Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Examine their beliefs regarding acceptable and unacceptable human uses of animals.
- Practice building consensus with their peers.

Time Needed

35–45 minutes
1 class period

Materials

- “Animal Use Example” Handout
- “Continuum Paper Packet”—Set for each group (10 sheets of paper: 8 of them have a straight line going all the way across the paper, 1 has a “-” and 1 has a “+” on the paper)
- “Animal Use Envelopes”—one for each student (Each envelope is filled with 14 pieces of paper numbered from 1 to 14)

Insider Tips

- If possible, use different color paper in each envelope so students can easily distinguish themselves on the Continuum.
- Prior to starting the class discussion, consider establishing some ground rules for a safe and productive classroom discussion.
- Throughout the class, underscore that current animal conditions are not permanent. Students are learning about these issues so that, if they deem necessary, they may help effect change.

Insider Tips (continued)

Classroom Teachers

- For a longer and more in depth lesson, prior to this class, assign each small group a number of the animal uses from the “Animal Use Example” handout to research. This way when the class reads all of the animal uses together, each group can be responsible for answering questions about a particular use.
- This activity aligns to Common Core Reading Standard 1; Speaking and Listening Standards 1 and 3; and Writing Standard 2.

Outside Humane Educators

- Consider modeling a consensus building activity prior to having the small groups discuss the animal uses and try to come to a consensus.
- Be prepared for the unexpected. If a student asks you a question about a particular animal use that you do not know the answer to, you can admit that you do not know to the class, and inform them that you will get back to them with that answer.

Resource Links

Animal Protection Organizations

- www.ifaw.org
- www.asPCA.org
- www.hsus.org
- www.peta.org
- www.farmsanctuary.org
- www.aavs.org

Pro-Use Organizations

- www.ucla-pro-test.org
- home.nra.org
- www.aza.org
- www.consumerfreedom.com
- www.nsta.org
- www.feldentertainment.com

Lesson 5: When Does Animal Use Become Animal Abuse? (continued)

Use or Abuse: Class Discussion

1. Once the students have done their best to come to an agreement, hold a class discussion on the subject.
2. Ask the following questions of the students:
 - *On what grounds did you find uses of animals more or less acceptable?*
 - *Where did you draw the line?*
 - *Was your decision made on moral, pragmatic, or other grounds?*
 - *Did the views of others change your own views?*
 - *Were you able to achieve consensus in your group?*
 - *If so, on what grounds did you agree?*
 - *If not, why not?*
 - *Might the line be drawn differently depending on the circumstances surrounding each case?*
 - *Does the decision depend upon the animal being used?*
 - *Might people of different age groups, cultures, or countries draw their lines differently?*
 - *Do your personal choices reflect the views that you’ve expressed?*

Wrap Up:

1. Ask students if they have ever thought about the issues that were presented before today.
2. Instruct the students to write down one thing that they can do to help animals subjected to a use that falls on the unacceptable, abusive side of their continuum. Share responses.



Animal Use Example



1. Using animals for scientific experiments to test whether cosmetics and toiletries (perfumes, aftershaves, lipsticks, shampoos, etc.) are safe for human use.
2. Hunting and trapping fur-bearing animals so their skins can be used to make fur coats and other fur products.
3. Keeping wild animals in zoos, aquaria, and aviaries for purposes of amusement and education.
4. Using animals for military experiments to test the effects of new weapons of chemical, gas, and biological warfare.
5. Intensive rearing of animals inside factory farms for eventual slaughter and consumption as food.
6. Using animals in scientific experiments to find cures for human diseases such as AIDS and cancer.
7. Using animals as “beasts of burden” for riding and pulling carts, carriages, and ploughs.
8. Using specifically bred and freshly killed animals for dissection purposes in school biology lessons.
9. Rearing of animals in free-range conditions (open yards, fields) for eventual slaughter and consumption as food.
10. Using animals in television commercials as a means of promoting products.
11. Using dogs and cats, who would otherwise be euthanized at city pounds, for scientific experiments.
12. Purposely breeding cats and dogs.
13. Using wild animals (elephants, tigers, bears) as entertainers in circuses.
14. Hunting animals for sport.

USE OR ABUSE?