

## Lesson 16: Write an Opinion

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

### The Pros and Cons of School Pets

Some schools have a policy of “No Pets Allowed.” Others invite students to share small pets from home. They also permit students to have their own class pet. Which is the best policy? As you will see, this is not an easy question to answer. I believe there are strong reasons for and against having pets in school.

Opponents of school pets point out that animals in the classroom put students at risk. The Centers for Disease Control states that animals carry germs that can cause vomiting, fever, and stomach pains. In addition, animals can cause injuries. Different kinds of animals may bite, kick, or scratch children who come in contact with them. Also, some students may be allergic to pets.

However, supporters of pets in the classroom point out studies that provide different facts. A university study found that pets make children healthier. They help children build up their immune systems. This allows them to fight off germs that could cause illnesses.

The risk of injuries or sickness is not the only problem with school pets. The animals themselves also can suffer. Often, children may touch the pets too often or too roughly. Sometimes pets are kept in poor conditions where they might have too much or too little light or warmth. School pets can also become lonely or stressed.

Not only can students and the pets have problems, but the teacher can as well. It is often up to the teacher to find someone to care for the pet when school is closed. If no one else takes on the responsibility, the teacher may have to take the pet home every holiday.

In addition, the cost of keeping a pet is another reason that pets should not be in school. For instance, it can be expensive to provide food and shelter for some pets. What happens if the pet becomes ill? Who pays for a veterinarian to care for it? This is another problem the teacher and school must deal with when pets are allowed in schools.

Supporters say that the key to success with pets in the classroom is choosing the right pet. Not all animals make good pets in school. The pet needs to be quiet. Teachers do not want pets to distract students while they are working. Of course, a good school pet should be easy and inexpensive to care for. It should also be healthy and easy for children to handle. And the pet should be comfortable in a school environment. For example, some may think a rabbit or bird might make a great classroom pet. However, rabbits and birds are bothered by too much noise. Some animals that could make good school pets are fish, guinea pigs, and insects.

Pets also provide learning opportunities for students. Teachers have observed benefits such as children developing responsibility and awareness of others' feelings, as well as a respect for animals. Students can study animals and their needs when pets are allowed in schools. Of course, others point out that pets can cause a distraction when students are learning other subjects. There are other, more safe ways to study animals. Taking field trips to zoos and parks allows children to observe and learn about animals without having to deal with the problems of a school pet.

It seems obvious that allowing pets in schools can have advantages and disadvantages. If your school is deciding whether or not to allow pets, there

is lots of research to study. I think reasons for both opinions make sense.

**Answer the following questions.**

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Which text evidence supports the opinion that there are advantages to school pets? Choose **all** that apply.

- A. They also permit students to have their own class pet.
- B. A university study found that pets make children healthier.
- C. Teachers have observed benefits such as children developing responsibility...
- D. Some animals that could make good school pets are fish, guinea pigs, and insects.
- E. It is often up to the teacher to find someone to care for the pet when school is closed.
- F. They help children build up their immune systems.

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**This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.**

**Part A**

Which of the following **best** describes the author's claim?

- A. There are good reasons for and against allowing pets in school.
- B. Students and teachers can benefit from school pets.
- C. Animals in school can cause children to get sick.
- D. Studies show that schools with pets help students.

**Part B**

Find a sentence in the passage that **best** supports your answer to Part A.

Answer:

3

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Reread the following paragraph from the passage.

**In addition, the cost of keeping a pet is another reason that pets should not be in school. For instance, it can be expensive to provide food and shelter for some pets. What happens if the pet becomes ill? Who pays for a veterinarian to care for it? This is another problem the teacher and school must deal with when pets are allowed in schools.**

Identify **two** transition phrases in the paragraph. Explain how these words connect ideas to make them easier to understand.

Answer:

4

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The writer wants to add the following sentence to the passage.

**To decide which is best, you should understand both the pros and cons of having pets in school.**

Where in the passage is the **best** place to add this sentence?

- A. at the end of paragraph 5
- B. at the end of paragraph 7

- C. at the end of paragraph 8
- D. at the end of paragraph 9

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Identify a relative adverb and a relative pronoun in the passage. Then, write the word each one describes.

Relative Adverb	<input type="text"/>	Word Described	<input type="text"/>
Relative Pronoun	<input type="text"/>	Word Described	<input type="text"/>

Use both passages from this lesson to answer the question that follows.

### Pets and School Go Together

Many schools allow children to bring pets for show-and-tell. Some classrooms even have their own pets. Why do schools allow this? The answer is simple. Having pets in the classroom is good for students of all ages. Therefore, I think all schools should allow pets.

First of all, students who cannot have a pet at home learn to be comfortable with pets in a classroom. If children are never around animals, they will be afraid of them. By caring for the school pets, they become familiar with animal behavior. They learn how to handle animals safely. This is only one advantage of having pets in school.

Another advantage is learning responsibility. Children share jobs with their classmates. For instance, they can feed the animal and clean its habitat. Also, important life skills such as taking turns, keeping to schedules, and doing assigned tasks are the result of caring for school pets.

In addition, pets in school can provide opportunities for studying other subjects. For example, school pets help students learn math. They can use math to find out how much it costs to feed the pet each week, month, or year. Also, students can make weekly or monthly schedules for animal care.

Learning skills needed to care for pets is not the only advantage of having pets in schools. There are mental advantages as well. Research has shown that caring for animals helps children concentrate. It makes them calm. Having pets in school has also been shown to make classrooms less tense.

Some people may argue that school pets make children ill. However, studies have shown that children who are around pets are better at fighting off infections than those who are not. Research has also shown that children from homes with pets have better attendance at school than those without pets.

I think it is obvious that allowing pets in schools benefits everyone. However, don't just take my word for it. Dr. Harvey Markovitch, a children's doctor, has a similar opinion. He says, "Being around animals is extremely good for children."

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It seems obvious that allowing pets in schools can have advantages and disadvantages. If your school is deciding whether or not to allow pets, there is lots of research to study. I think reasons for both opinions make sense.

"Pets and School Go Together" presented a student's opinion in favor of allowing pets in school. "The Pros and Cons of School Pets" presented information about both sides of the issue. Think about the reasons and evidence in both passages. Then, write an argument piece **against** allowing pets in school. Be sure to include text evidence from both sources.

Answer: