

Activity

Episode 29
21st October 2014

Cat Ban

Key Learning

Students will investigate the impact that introduced species have on our environment. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the structural framework and language features of persuasive texts.

The Australian Curriculum

Science / Science as a Human Endeavour / Use and influence of science

Science and technology contribute to finding solutions to a range of contemporary issues; these solutions may impact on other areas of society and involve ethical considerations ([ACSHE120](#)) Year 7



Science / Science Understanding / Biological sciences

Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food webs; human activity can affect these interactions ([ACSSU112](#)) Year 7



English / Literacy / Creating texts

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1714](#)) Year 5 & 6



Discussion Questions

1. Before you watch this story, make some predictions about what you think it will be about.
2. In which state are they proposing a ban on cats roaming outdoors?
3. What is a 'cat containment area'?
4. Why has the rule been introduced?
5. What impact can cats have on native wildlife?
6. Why are some people opposed to the plan?
7. Canberra is the only city in Australia with cat laws. True or false?
8. What is a curfew?
9. Do you think the plan is a good idea? Explain your answer.
10. Are there alternative solutions to this problem? Working in pairs, brainstorm a list of solutions.

Activities

Discussion

Have your say!

Before watching the BtN *Cat Ban* story, hold a classroom poll.
Should pet cats be kept inside?

Vote in the BtN poll. Go to <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/polls.htm>



Classroom discussion

After running the classroom poll watch the BtN *Cat Ban* story.
Encourage students to participate in a classroom discussion.
Below are some discussion starters:

- Cats are an introduced species. What does that mean? List 5 other species that have been introduced.
- Why do people have cats as pets?
- What is responsible pet ownership? Think about vaccinations, collars, registration and the impact that cats have on the neighbourhood and local wildlife.

Further research

Students will work individually or in groups to learn more about introduced species and their impact on the environment.

- Why were cats introduced to Australia? (provide a history)
- What impact do cats have on Australia's native animals?
- Visit your local council's website to find out if there are cat regulations in your area. Make a checklist of things that a responsible cat owner should do.
- Design a poster that highlights a local native animal that cats and dogs impact upon. Design a poster using *Blendspace* or *Glogster* to identify problems our native animals face relating to cats and dogs and what we can do to ensure their safety.

Glogster – <http://edu.glogster.com/?ref=com>

Blendspace – <https://www.blendspace.com/>

Language features of persuasive texts

This activity introduces the structural framework and language features of persuasive texts to your students and allows them to gain an understanding of the purposes of each sentence within a paragraph.

Discuss the following arguments and ask your students to rank them from low modality to high modality. Explain that modalities can be high, medium or low and that these have an impact on the certainty of the argument of the writer. Explain that modality can be expressed through choice of auxiliaries, verbs, adverbs, adjectives and nouns.

Write the following sentences on the classroom whiteboard and ask your students to rank the arguments from low modality to high modality.

Rank the following arguments from the weakest to the strongest

- It may/could be a good idea to keep cats inside/in cages at all times. (possibility – low modality)
- It will be a good idea to keep cats inside/in cages at all times (probability – medium modality)
- We need to/should keep cats inside/in cages at all times. (obligation – medium modality)
- We must keep cats inside/in cages at all times. (obligation – high modality)
- We have to keep cats inside/in cages at all times. (obligation – high modality)

Construct your own exposition text

Explain that students will be constructing a text to persuade others that there should be tougher restrictions and rules on cat owners in Canberra. Provide students with the following structure to follow when completing this activity.

Structure of an exposition text

Introduction

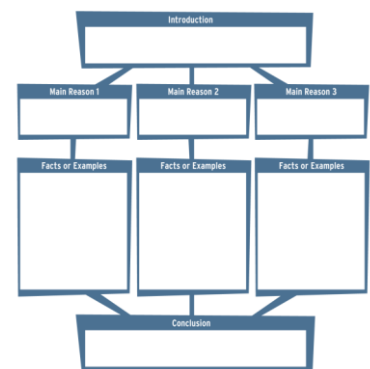
- What is the point you are trying to argue? Construct an introductory paragraph which states the issue or topic.
- Introduce the arguments that will be developed in the body of the text.

Body

- Construct arguments that support your point of view.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces each point.
- The rest of the paragraph gives more reasons.
- Arguments can be ordered from strongest to weakest.

Conclusion

- Restate your position on the argument.
- Construct a concluding paragraph that provides a summary of your arguments and a call to action.



readwritethink

Use a persuasion map to plan your exposition text.
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/

Tips for writing persuasive texts

- Who is your audience? For example, are you directing your argument at kids, teachers or politicians?
- Provide facts and evidence to support your argument.
- Be creative with your word choice to enhance your argument. Convey emotion using thinking and feeling words.
- Write in the present tense
- Check your spelling and punctuation.



Reflection

Ask students to think about how difficult it was to think of arguments to support their case. Do they think they could have created a stronger argument if they were speaking for the opposing view?

Design

Students will plan and design the perfect home for a cat and make a model of it. Present the model to the class highlighting key design features.

🔗 Related Research Links

ABC Lateline – Canberra cats may have to stay indoors

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2014/s4106207.htm>

Blacktown City Council – Owning a Cat

http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Resident_Services/Animal_Services/Keeping_Animals/Owners_Responsibilities/Cats

WWF – Australia's responsibility for its species

http://www.wwf.org.au/our_work/saving_the_natural_world/wildlife_and_habitats/threats_to_species/australias_responsibility_for_its_species/

NSW Department of Environment and Heritage – Keeping cats as pets

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/KeepingCatsAsPets.htm>