



WRITING WITH I-M-P-A-C-T

for animals

ADVOCACY ▲ EDUCATION ► DISASTER AID
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THE ESSAY APPROACH: Introduce, Logically Lead, Prove, Conclude. Whether you write letters, articles, brochures, newsletters...write convincingly! Bundle facts, fluidity, grammar, creativity, even sentence rhythm and length, inside an essay approach. This framework guides WHAT you say and HOW you research it.

4 MAIN COMPONENTS OF AN ESSAY:

- 1) Introduction:** Open letters with who you are + why your comments matter. For any format, introduce the main subject with a creative (not gimmicky or melodramatic) lead paragraph that commands attention.
- 2) Thesis:** Move smoothly from introduction to a summary paragraph that includes a main subject and call to action. Whether writing letters, literature or news articles: Express the overall objective of the piece.
- 3) Topic Paragraphs:** Now prove it. Support your main subject with to-the-point paragraphs that open with a topic sentence and follow with facts, examples, statistics, quotes, and/or studies to build your argument.
- 4) Conclusion:** Exit with a powerful recap and strong sense of urgency. An Essay Approach keeps you on track to communicate clearly and influentially. For LETTERS, try:

► IDENTIFY YOURSELF

State WHO you are and WHY they should care about your comments.

- **LEGISLATORS:** As a constituent who votes in your district, I respectfully ask you to support [bill name]...
- **GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:** I am a taxpayer weary of subsidizing the slaughter of native wildlife. Wolves are key to thriving ecosystems. Please advocate enduring, nonlethal tactics to prevent agricultural loss...
- **INDUSTRY:** As a consumer, I will happily patronize your stores once a no-fur policy is instated...

Personalize your connection to the subject: I'm a mom who wants to buy your baby lotions. But I don't feel confident with items tested "safe" on animals. Each year over 50% of animal-tested goods are recalled or relabeled due to harmful effects in people. Let me know when you update to more reliable, animal-free technology.

► MAIN MESSAGE

You are stinking mad. Or distraught. But emotional rants anger recipients, rather than convince them. To get results for animals, give your letter a **CENTRAL FOCUS** and **CALL-TO-ACTION**. Within your top 2-3 paragraphs, define the action you want decisionmakers to take. Repeat it in your conclusion.

- **TO PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS:** Prosecuting attorneys charge offenders and seek penalties commensurate with the law (federal, state, municipal). Judges sentence offenders with penalties. Be precise: I urge you to seek maximum fines and jail time allowed under state anti-cruelty statutes. Please ensure the offender undergoes psychological evaluation/treatment and is barred from possessing or living with animals...
- **TO LEGISLATORS:** Ask your Congressmembers to cosponsor/support animal protection bills. Encourage them to oppose legislation that hurts animals. (Look up a bill's status: www.thomas.gov) A USDA rule bans slaughter of downed cows and closes a loophole that let some non-ambulatory animals suffer until killed for consumption. I ask my Senators and Rep to now 'make the rule stick,' by passing the Downed Animal Protection Act. Please support legislation that safeguards all downed animals; ensures merciful euthanasia; and bans use of tractors, forklifts, electric prods or any violent means to move dying animals.
- **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:** I urge EPA to keep pace with global standards for human-focused research. Please replace old-fashioned animal experimentation with animal-free chemical screening programs. The U.S. EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program will kill 80,000 animals. Some tests — like 'lethal dose 50%' to gauge how much chemical kills half of animals dosed with it — date back to the 1920s...
- **COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY:** Ask for permanent policy to end promotion of cruelty (fur sales, animal experimentation, circus ticket giveaways, sponsoring rodeo...): Like many shoppers, I won't patronize stores that sell fur and fur trim items. Please instate a storewide no-fur policy...

► POINTS & ALTERNATIVES

Know KEY POINTS. Seek credible references from media, investigations, public records, industry journals, studies, statistics, polls. PROPOSE VIABLE ALTERNATIVES to use in place of cruel practices.

■ **ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION:** Frame animal research as dangerously misleading, harmful to humans and fiscally irresponsible. Use stats on drug recalls and irrelevant studies that waste taxpayer dollars. Cite facts, not your opinion. Genetic, metabolic, anatomic, physiological and psychological variations between species make accurate extrapolation to humans unlikely. In one 7-year span adverse drug events (death, birth defect, disability, hospitalization) doubled from 34,966 to 89,842. All drugs tested “safe” in animals. Quote industry or government insiders who admit animal research is flawed. Refer to experts, such as Francis Collins, Director for National Institutes of Health National Human Genome Research Institute, who has described animal toxicity tests as “expensive, time-consuming, use animals in large numbers...and don’t always work.” Clarify that you do not oppose research itself, but rather, advocate human-focused tools: In vitro methods use cells or cellular components of HUMAN derivation to generate data about risks people face, rather than the test species. Please capitalize on strides in bioinformatics and computer automation that analyze accurately...

■ **LETHAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:** Show why cruel methods don’t work. Suggest nonviolent options: Killing geese does nothing to modify landscapes and waterways that attract birds in the first place. I urge officials to work with avian experts on population stabilization and site aversion. GeesePeace shows how to recruit and train community volunteers to find nests, addle/oil eggs, use repellents, etc. Integrated strategies — more enduring than eradication — resolve conflicts with geese and reduce long-term flock growth...

■ **ANIMAL ABUSE CASES IN COURT:** Innumerable studies reveal that violence against animals leads to violence against humans: Domestic battery studies show abusers commonly torment or kill companion animals. ‘Violence against helpless or non-threatening creatures is a precursor to assaulting children, elderly, disabled, or other vulnerable victims,’ says ASPCA’s Dr. Randall Lockwood, a consultant for cruelty investigators, police, mental health professionals...

■ **FACT FOLDERS:** On your computer, store topic folders for animals in: Entertainment, Agribusiness, Fashion, Research, Companions, Wildlife... File timely industry findings, investigative reports, quotes, polls, stats, etc. If you write for animals, a fact library is essential.

► AVOID MELODRAMA

Animal cruelty is dramatic by itself. Why cloud your writing with hyper-dramatic words that push buttons and make readers defensive? Lean language speaks more loudly than emotion-fueled rants.

■ **DO NOT USE LETTERS TO VENT:** Though outraged or distraught, you are not the subject. A decision-maker (or aide) will see your hostility and irrationality — rather than the animals you want them to help.

■ **AVOID THE SCREAMING!! LETTER:** Letters with exclamation points !!! and ALL-CAPS come across as rants — instead of well-reasoned and worth consideration. Recipients think “fanatic” and walls go up. You want all doors open to humane reform.

■ **DON’T USE LETTERS TO THREATEN, HARASS OR CURSE:** A polite, fact-based writing style — that still conveys the urgency of animal suffering and need to alleviate it — ultimately has more impact and potential to influence decision-makers.

► CONTACT KEY DECISION-MAKERS

Investigate WHO is empowered to enable humane strategies or laws. It is imperative comments reach people with authority to make decisions or influence policy-makers. Kinship Circle researches letter recipients and ways to contact them via email, webmail, postal-mail, phone, fax.

► TECHNIQUE: GRAMMAR & STYLE

Asleep in high school English? Crash-course yourself in structure.

10 GRAMMAR TIPS - For Readability & Oomph:

- 1. AVOID PASSIVE VOICE.** Passive voice puts subject (the doer) behind the verb (the action). The doer should be in front of what he/she/it is doing. Passive voice makes weak, long-winded text and should be avoided.
PASSIVE VOICE: Emaciated dogs were found by cruelty investigators.
ACTIVE VOICE: Cruelty investigators found emaciated dogs.
- 2. USE CORRECT SYNTAX AND VERB TENSE.** Syntax is the order and relationship between words and other structural items in sentences or phrases. Tense describes past, present or future verb use (action words). Convolution use of either creates clumsy text this is difficult to follow.
ROUGH SYNTAX & INCONSISTENT VERB TENSE: People have tried to strangle this poor greyhound, probably because he is no longer useful for the races. But they didn’t succeed. The dog has been found in Martos in the Spanish province of Jaen, where he was wandering around for quite a long time. But he was too much afraid to be captured. Finally they succeeded by putting some kind of anesthetic drug in his food. A vet has seen the animal and doubts if the wound will ever heal.
CLEARER STRUCTURE/VERB TENSE: This greyhound no longer served his primary purpose: To race. People tried to strangle him as he roamed the streets. The frightened dog was in terrible condition when found in the Spanish province of Jaen in Martos. He’d eluded capture until rescuers spiked his food with anesthetic. A vet examined the dog, but doubts his wound will heal.
- 3. AVOID GERUNDS (ING VERBS).** Verbs that end in *ing* need helping verbs (was, has, has been, etc.) Sentences sound lazy and lose urgency.
GERUND OVERUSE: At Shandong Mingshui Great Chemical factory, huge boiler vats are turning coal into melamine to make plastics and fertilizer. But leftover melamine is then being sold to entrepreneurs, who say they secretly mix a powdered form of the scrap into animal feed. This fake protein deceives consumers into thinking they’re buying feed with higher nutrition value.
WITHOUT GERUNDS: At Shandong Mingshui Great Chemical factory, huge boiler vats turn coal into melamine to create plastics and fertilizer. But leftover melamine is then sold to entrepreneurs, who say they secretly mix a powdered form of the scrap into animal feed. This fake protein deceives consumers with false claims of higher nutritional value for animals.
- 4. OVERUSED WORDS BECOME EMPTY WORDS.**
WORD OVERUSE: The abused cat was abused so badly he was an obvious victim of intentional animal abuse.
WORD VARIETY: Someone had intentionally abused the battered cat.
- 5. USE SPELLCHECK, DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS.**
- 6. LIMIT LETTERS TO 1 PAGE.** Readers lose interest if letters ramble.
- 7. WRITE IN CONCISE PARAGRAPHS.** Blocks of run-on text intimate or frustrate readers. Use to-the-point paragraphs, each with clear intent.
- 8. ANIMAL ETIQUETTE.** Respect animals to achieve respect for animals.
 - **Never refer to an animal as it or that.** Use person pronouns such as “A horse, who suffered grave injuries” or “Her feathers are gone from life in a battery cage.” If gender unknown, use adjective + noun: “The injured dog”
 - **Refrain from words that objectify or demean animals:** Substitute guardian, caretaker, companion, family member... for owner or pet.
- 9. USE LETTER SET-UP & IDENTIFY YOURSELF.** Recipient’s address and title at top, then salutation + letter. Sign full name, address, country.
- 10. HOW TO SEND?** Automated petitions can be ignored or cause adverse results. Speaking by personal email, phone, snail-mail or fax may take a few minutes, but better help animals. Do more than petitions alone.