Should WILDLIFE stay wild?

Close your eyes and picture an elephant. Are you picturing it in the zoo or in the wild? As humans inhabit more and more of the earth’s land, some species of wildlife are more likely to be found in captivity than in their natural habitat. But is this a good thing? The writers of the selections you’re about to read have different views on whether or not zoos are good for humans and animals.

LIST IT With a group, make a list of the good things and bad things about zoos. Do the pros outnumber the cons, or vice versa? Tell whether you think zoos are a good idea.
Meet the Authors

Rob Laidlaw
born 1959
Wildlife Guardian

Rob Laidlaw has dedicated himself to improving the conditions of animals in captivity. He is co-founder and Executive Director of Zoocheck Canada, an animal protection charity. Laidlaw has inspected close to 1,000 zoos, circuses, and wildlife displays throughout Canada and the United States. He has worked with Canada’s government on establishing standards for zoos. Laidlaw also worked on developing a humane stray dog program, and he investigated Canada’s role in the international pet reptile trade. Laidlaw shares his knowledge about animals through writing. He has published articles about all kinds of wildlife, from wild horses and polar bears to the red-eared slider and the black rhino.

Michael Hutchins
born 1951
Animal Caretaker

As the executive director of The Wildlife Society, Michael Hutchins has traveled to more than 33 countries. His efforts have involved trapping and tagging mountain goats in the Olympic Mountains, scuba diving with manta rays, and tracking jaguars. He has published many articles, books, and reports on the relationships between animals and their environments and on conservation.

Meet the Authors

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML8-989

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

In your Reader/Writer Notebook, write a sentence for each of the vocabulary words. Use a dictionary or the definitions in the following selection pages to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>counterpart</th>
<th>exploit</th>
<th>propaganda</th>
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<td>deprivation</td>
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<td>futility</td>
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<td>exotic</td>
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Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
According to Laidlaw, what three benefits do many zoos say they offer? What does Laidlaw claim instead?

**propaganda**
(prəˈgānˈdə) n.
information that supports a certain cause

**deprivation**
(dēpˈrā-vəˈshən) n. the condition of not having one’s needs met; a lack of

**ARGUMENT**
According to Laidlaw, what three benefits do many zoos say they offer? What does Laidlaw claim instead?

In recent years, zoos have become the target of intense public scrutiny and criticism. In response, many have tried to repackage themselves as institutions devoted to wildlife conservation, public education, and animal welfare. But most zoos fail to live up to their own *propaganda* and vast numbers of zoo animals continue to endure lives of misery and *deprivation*.

Nearly every zoo, from the smallest amateur operation to the largest professional facilities, claims to be making important contributions to conservation, usually through participation in endangered species captive propagation initiatives and public education programming. The zoo world *buzzword* of the moment is “conservation.”

Yet, with an estimated 10,000 organized zoos worldwide, representing tens of thousands of human workers and billions of dollars in operating budgets, only a tiny percentage allocate the resources necessary to

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1. buzzword: a word or phrase connected with a specialized field or group that sounds important or technical and is usually used to impress those outside the group.

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participate in captive propagation initiatives, and fewer still provide any real support for the in situ² protection of wildlife and their natural habitat.

So far, the record on reintroductions to the wild is dismal. Only 16 species have established self-sustaining populations in the wild as a result of captive breeding efforts, and most of those programs were initiated by government wildlife agencies—not zoos. The contribution of zoos in this regard has been minimal, and often involves supplementing existing wild populations with a small number of captive-born individuals who are ill-prepared for life in the wild. ⁰

As the futility of captive breeding as a major conservation tool becomes evident to those in the industry, many zoos are now turning to education to justify themselves. Yet, zoos claim that they teach visitors about wildlife conservation and habitat protection, and their contention that they motivate members of the public to become directly involved in wildlife conservation work doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. The truth is that scant empirical evidence exists to prove that the primary vehicle for education in most zoos—the animal in the cage—actually teaches anyone anything. In fact, viewing animals in cages may be counterproductive educationally by conveying the wrong kinds of messages to the public. Also, the legions³ of conservationists that zoos should have produced, if their claims were true, have never materialized. ⁶

**Humane Treatment**

But there is one issue about which there appears to be widespread agreement—at least in principle. So long as wild animals are kept in captivity, they ought to be treated humanely.

Studies have shown that animals can suffer physically, mentally, and emotionally. For this reason, captive environments must be complex enough to compensate for the lack of natural freedom and choice, and they must facilitate expression of natural movement and behavior patterns. This principle has been widely espoused by the modern zoo community in various articles, books, and television documentaries. ⁴

Yet despite the best of intentions or claims, most animals in zoos in North America are still consigned to lead miserable lives in undersized,

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² *in situ* (ˈɪn ˈsɪtu): a Latin phrase; in zoology, it refers to studying an animal without removing it from its natural habitat.
³ *legions* (ˈlɛdʒənz): large numbers.
⁰ *futility* (fyōo-tĭl′ĭ-tē) *n.* uselessness
⁶ *ARGUMENT*
Reread lines 17–23. Identify the opinion and the facts. Do the facts support the author’s opinion stated in line 17?

⁴ *ARGUMENT*
Reread lines 26–35. What counterargument does the author present to disprove the second benefit zoos say they offer?

⁴ *ARGUMENT*
Reread lines 39–44. What support does the author cite here? Explain whether this support is convincing to you.
impoverished enclosures, both old and new, that fail to meet their biological and behavioral needs. Many in the zoo industry will bristle at this statement and point to numerous improvements in the zoo field. They'll claim they've shifted from menagerie-style entertainment centers where animals were displayed in barred, sterile, biologically irrelevant cages, to kinder, gentler, more scientifically-based kinds of institutions. But many of the “advances” in zoo animal housing and husbandry are superficial and provide little benefit to the animals. For example, the many new, heavily promoted, Arctic “art deco” polar bear exhibits that are springing up in zoos across the continent consistently ignore the natural biology and behavior of these animals. The artificial rockwork and hard floor surfaces typically resemble a Flintstones movie set more than the natural Arctic ice and tundra habitat of polar bears. These exhibits are made for the public and dupe them into believing things are getting better. What they really achieve is more misery and deprivation.

In addition, many new exhibits are hardly larger than the sterile, barred cages of days gone by. And one look at the prison-like, off-display holding and service areas in most zoos, where many animals spend a good portion of their lives, is proof of the hypocrisy of zoo claims that things are better for the animals than they were in the past.

Behind the Invisible Bars
If not all is well behind the invisible bars of North America’s more luxurious zoos, a more transparent problem is found in the hundreds of substandard roadside zoos that dot the continent. These amateurish operations fall far below any professional standard and do nothing but cause misery and death to thousands of animals.

My own investigations have revealed animals in visible distress lying unprotected from the full glare of the hot summer sun; primates in barren cages with no opportunity to climb; groups of black bears begging for marshmallows as they sit in stagnant moats of excrement-filled water, scarred and wounded from fighting; nocturnal animals kept without shade or privacy; animals without water; and the list goes on and on.

4. bristle (brī’s’əl): to show annoyance or anger.
5. menagerie (me-naj’er-ə): a collection of live wild animals on display.
6. nocturnal (nōk-tür’nal): habitually active at night and asleep during the daytime.
Comparing Persuasive Texts

Many zoos, including those that meet industry guidelines, also annually produce a predictable surplus in animals that often end up in the hands of private collectors, animal auctions, circuses and novelty acts, substandard zoos, and even “canned hunt” operations where they’re shot as trophies.

A look at compliance with the zoo industry’s own standards (which in the author’s view do not necessarily constitute adequate standards) demonstrates how bad the situation really is. Of the estimated 200 public display facilities in Canada, only 26—slightly more than 10 percent—have been deemed to meet the standards of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA).

In the U.S., out of the 1,800–2,000 licensed exhibitors of wild animals (which includes biomedical research institutions, breeding facilities, small exhibitors, travelling shows, educational programs using live animals, zoos and aquariums), about 175 are accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), equivalent to less than 10 percent of all facilities.

Times are changing, and with them, public attitudes. Increasingly, members of the public find the confinement of animals in substandard conditions offensive. Zoos across the continent are feeling the pressure. They have to accept that if wild animals are to be kept in captivity, their needs must be met.

Are there good captive environments where the biological and behavioral needs of animals are being satisfied? The answer is yes. A recent Zoocheck Canada survey of black bear and gray wolf facilities in North America revealed a number of outstanding exhibits where the animals displayed an extensive range of natural movements and behaviors. But they are few and far between.

Can zoos make a useful contribution to conservation and education? Again, the answer is yes. The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (Jersey Zoo) in the U.K., for example, clearly shows that zoos can become leaders in conservation education and wildlife protection. But few actually do.

I can’t understand why the more responsible segments of the zoo industry have not come to their senses and acknowledged the obvious—the present state of zoos is untenable. Either zoos can voluntarily adopt humane policies and practices, push for the closure of substandard facilities, and participate in advocating for laws to help wildlife, or they can be dragged kicking and screaming into the new millennium. It’s their choice.

ARGUMENT
Laidlaw has disproved all three benefits that he says accredited zoos offer in their defense. Now he states that these zoos make up only 10 percent of “licensed exhibitors of wild animals.” What does this fact help him support? For help, refer to his original claim in lines 4–6.

ARGUMENT
Reread lines 111–115. Does the evidence Laidlaw has provided support the first part of his conclusion—that “the present state of zoos is untenable”? Does it support the approach toward zoos he recommends taking in the final part of his conclusion? Explain.
The scene of Little Joe, the curious young gorilla out of his zoo exhibit wandering through Franklin Park,1 certainly sold papers last month. But less well covered was the very real success that our nation’s best zoos have had in nurturing the animals who live within their walls.

At the turn of the last century, gorillas—these strange, human-like creatures from “darkest Africa”—still flourished in the wild and thoroughly captivated the American public. But once relocated from their jungle habitat, gorillas languished. Zoos found it impossible to keep the animals alive for more than a few weeks since little was known about the natural history of gorillas. Even as late as the 1960s and ’70s, most zoo gorillas were kept singly or in pairs in small, sterile concrete and tile cages and fed inappropriate foods. But things began to change as information from field and zoo biologists brought more understanding of both the physiological and psychological needs of these remarkable creatures.

Gorillas in today’s zoos are typically kept in large, naturalistic exhibits, maintained in appropriate social groupings, fed nutritionally appropriate diets, and provided with excellent veterinary care. The result is that zoo gorillas exhibit behavior similar to their wild counterparts, reproduce consistently, and live longer on average than they do in nature. In fact, recent advances in exhibit design, animal nutrition, genetic management, and veterinary medicine have revolutionized animal welfare and care in our zoos. Today, more than 90 percent of mammals housed in accredited2 facilities were born in zoos and not taken from the wild. They are under the charge of animal curators and caretakers who are trained professionals, with both academic and practical experience. Furthermore, accredited zoos have

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1. Franklin Park: a Boston, Massachusetts, park that has a zoo in it.
2. accredited (ə-krēd’it-ad): meeting certain standards that have been set by a respected authority (in this case, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association).
Comparing Persuasive Texts

become “learning organizations” that constantly strive to improve the lives and health of the animals in their care.

So why should we have gorillas or any other wild animals in zoos today? Before speculating about the role of these institutions in contemporary society, I must first draw a distinction between accredited zoos and other kinds of facilities that keep wild animals for public display. All of my statements are focused exclusively on the 213 facilities accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. AZA members undergo a detailed peer-review process, which is more comprehensive than existing local, state, or federal regulations.

At a time when children learn more about the world around them from television and computers than from personal experience, modern zoos—and aquariums, for that matter—offer fun, safe opportunities to view living wild animals up close and personal. In 2002, over 140 million people visited AZA zoos and aquariums, more than attended all professional baseball, football, basketball, and ice hockey games combined. Modern zoological parks provide us a wonderful opportunity to build awareness and appreciation of wildlife in an increasingly urbanized populace—a group that is becoming progressively disconnected from the natural world.

Only a small percentage of our nation’s citizens can afford to travel to exotic locations to view wild tigers, elephants, or giant pandas.

3. peer-review: evaluation by equals (in this case, other zoo officials).

Language Coach
Oral Fluency When saying the word zoological, pronounce the word part zoo- as two syllables that sound like zoo-oh. Practice this as you read aloud the sentence beginning in line 90.

exotic (ɪˈɡɜːr-tɪk) adj. foreign; unusual; exciting
or to dive with sharks or moray eels. Zoos provide exhilarating experiences that can’t be replicated on two-dimensional television or computer screens. Seeing, smelling, and in some cases even touching real, live animals is a powerful experience.

The best zoos include conservation, education, and science among their core missions, and the animals in their collections can be viewed as ambassadors for their counterparts in the wild. Many species are endangered or threatened and would have little chance of survival without human intervention. Increasingly, zoos are playing an important role in those efforts. Last year alone, AZA member institutions supported 1,400 field conservation and associated educational and scientific projects in over 80 countries worldwide. These ranged from restoring habitat for endangered Karner blue butterflies in Ohio to attempting to curb the illegal, commercial harvest of wildlife for meat in Africa to rehabilitating injured marine mammals and sea turtles and returning them to the sea.

Some critics have characterized zoos and aquariums as “exploiting” animals for personal financial gain, but that’s not true of the professionals I know. As a curatorial intern at New York’s Bronx Zoo/Wildlife Conservation Society in the late 1980s, I went on rounds with the staff veterinarians as they cared for sick and injured animals. They worked long hours for comparatively little pay, and their dedication was inspiring. I also witnessed animal keepers weeping over the loss of their favorite animals and spending their own money to attend training programs to improve their knowledge and skills.

In my opinion, a society that values wildlife and nature should support our best zoos and aquariums. Habitat conservation is the key to saving endangered species, and professionally managed zoos and aquariums and their expert, dedicated staffs play a vital role by supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts and by encouraging people to care for and learn about wildlife and nature.

Zoos and aquariums are reinventing themselves, but while many are in the process of rebuilding their aging infrastructures, still others retain vestiges of the past or have been hit hard by recent state or local budget cuts. Good zoos and aquariums are invaluable community assets, and they deserve our attention and enthusiastic support.

ARGUMENT
Reread lines 134–151. What opposing viewpoint does the author present? What is his counterargument?

exploit (ɪkˈsploɪt) v. to use for selfish purposes

ARGUMENT
Reread Hutchins’s conclusion in lines 164–174. What kinds of zoos and aquariums does Hutchins propose we should give “our attention and enthusiastic support”? Is his argument broad enough to support this conclusion?

4. core missions: central goals and beliefs.
5. field conservation: conservation of wild organisms in their natural habitats (not in zoos).
After Reading

Comparing Persuasive Texts

Comprehension

1. Recall  According to “Zoos: Myth and Reality,” what often happens to surplus animals from zoos?

2. Recall  According to “Zoos Connect Us to the Natural World,” how do zoos benefit people?

3. Clarify  What kind of action does each author call for?

Text Analysis

4. Identify Claim and Support  For each selection, identify the author’s claim. Then list three reasons or pieces of evidence the author uses to support his claim.

5. Evaluate Conclusions  Each selection reaches a conclusion about what zoos should do and how people should treat them. Identify each author’s conclusion. Then tell whether you think it is adequately supported by his argument. Give reasons for your opinion.

Comparing Persuasive Texts

6. Set a Purpose for Reading  Now that you have read the second persuasive text, finish filling in your chart. Add the final questions and answer them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Zoos: Myth and Reality”</th>
<th>“Zoos Connect Us to the Natural World”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>lines 4–6: “Most zoos fail to live up to their own propaganda and vast numbers of zoo animals continue to endure lives of misery and deprivation”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>In what ways are the persuasive texts similar? In what ways are they different?</td>
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Should WILDLIFE stay wild?

Refer to the list you made of the good and bad things about zoos. What might you add to this list now that you have read these two articles?
Vocabulary in Context

**VOCABULARY PRACTICE**
For each item, choose the word that differs most in meaning from the other words.

1. (a) suffer, (b) languish, (c) enjoy, (d) endure
2. (a) exploit, (b) aid, (c) help, (d) befriend
3. (a) hope, (b) uselessness, (c) futility, (d) meaninglessness
4. (a) unadorned, (b) desolate, (c) lush, (d) sterile
5. (a) suffering, (b) deprivation, (c) lack, (d) wealth
6. (a) persuasion, (b) truth, (c) propaganda, (d) bias
7. (a) boss, (b) equal, (c) peer, (d) counterpart
8. (a) ordinary, (b) exotic, (c) foreign, (d) extraordinary

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING**

- accurate • bias • contrast • convince • logic

What is your opinion of housing animals in zoos? In a paragraph, state your opinion along with two reasons you might give to convince someone to adopt it. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your paragraph.

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE GREEK ROOT exo**
The vocabulary word *exotic* contains the Greek root *exo*, which means “outside” or “external.” You can use your understanding of this root along with context clues to help you to figure out the meaning of other words formed from *exo*.

**PRACTICE** Use a dictionary to look up each word that appears in the web. Then decide which word best completes each sentence. Be ready to explain how the meaning of the root is reflected in each word.

1. The earth’s _____ protects it from much of the sun’s ultraviolet radiation.
2. A peach’s fuzzy _____ holds in the juicy fruit.
3. There was a mass _____ of fans from the stadium after the concert.
4. A beetle’s _____ is like armor, protecting it from predators and weather.

**COMMON CORE**
L.4b Use Greek roots as clues to the meaning of a word.
Comparing Persuasive Texts

Writing for Assessment

1. READ THE PROMPT

In writing assessments, you will often be asked to compare and contrast two works that are similar in some way, such as two persuasive texts about the same issue.

In four or five paragraphs, compare and contrast the arguments in “Zoos: Myth and Reality” with “Zoos Connect Us to the Natural World.” Identify the differences in their claims, the nature and strength of their support, and the effectiveness of their conclusions. Use details from the texts to support your ideas.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

1. I need to identify each claim, support, and conclusion.
2. I need to state the differences in their claims, the nature and strength of their support, and the strength and soundness of their conclusions.
3. I need to support my ideas with details from the texts.

2. PLAN YOUR WRITING

Use your chart to identify the claim, support, and conclusion presented in each text. Write a thesis statement that sums up their major differences. Then consider how to organize your response.

• Option A: In one paragraph, describe the claim, nature and strength of the support, and the effectiveness of the conclusion Laidlaw presents in his online article. In the next paragraph, describe the same aspects of Hutchins’s opinion piece.

• Option B: In one paragraph, contrast each writer’s claim. In the next paragraph, contrast their support for their claims. In a third, contrast the effectiveness of their conclusions.

Once you have decided on your approach, create an outline to organize your details.

3. DRAFT YOUR RESPONSE

Introduction  Provide the titles and authors of both texts, a brief description of each author’s position, and your thesis statement.

Body  Using your outline as a guide, contrast the claims, nature and strength of support, and effectiveness of the conclusions in the two texts. Include details from the texts to illustrate your statements.

Conclusion  Restate your thesis statement, then leave your reader with a final thought about the arguments delivered in each of these texts. For example, you might draw a conclusion about which is the more persuasive text or ask a stirring question.

Revision  Make sure you support your thesis statement with the ideas you develop in your body paragraphs and that you illustrate each idea with a detail from the text.