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| Course: Science | Grade Level: 7 |
| Type: Argumentative | Structure: Analysis |
| Teaching Task 2: Should animals be kept in zoos? After reading informational texts, write an essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the text(s). L2 Be sure to acknowledge competing views. | |
| Performance Level: Advanced | |

Zoos and Animal Welfare

Would you be able to make it in the wild if you never had the experience of learning any natural survival skills? Many animals that are born in captivity have little or no natural survival skills. Furthermore, these animals are rarely ever successfully released back into the wild. Many animals in zoos perform negative stereotypical behaviors. Animals kept in zoos are mistreated and put in small spaces to live. Therefore, zoos should be abolished.

Many animals that are born in zoos, or brought to zoos, learn few natural survival skills. Even though zoos are breeding endangered animals for release into the wild, zoo keepers are breeding them with too small of a gene pool. According to Van Tuyl, “If the captive gene pool is too small, then inbreeding can result in increased susceptibility to disease, birth defect, and mutations; the species can be so weakened that it would never be viable in the wild.” In addition, these zoos are only breeding two percent of endangered animals. So, how much are they really helping these animals survive? Whenever animals are bred with too small of a gene pool, they will always have the chance of getting a disease, birth defect, and/or mutation. Some mammals, marine mammals, and many bird species are already very hard to breed. Zoos have been trying to breed Pandas for decades without much success (Van Tuyl 77). So, how can this help when there are already so many problems with breeding? Although zoos are helping some endangered animals, there are still 98 percent of other animals out there that need help too.

When an endangered animal, or just any animal is bred in a zoo, it has an effect in the releasing of that animal, too. There are a few successful releases back into the wild, but not many. Animals need to be taught all the skills they would learn in the wild such as, how to fly, hunt, build dens, and raise their young (Van Tuyl 77). These animals will rarely survive the transition from captivity to their natural habitat because they are used to having people do things for them. Some animals have an even lesser chance of surviving because of poaching. There are some species that will almost never be capable to get released back into the wild because of chemicals and pesticides. In her chapter on Captive Breeding Programs, Van Tuyl points out “bird species vulnerable to pesticides and lead shot will not be candidates for release until we stop using the offending substances, and enough time has passed for the toxins to be processed out of the environment. It will take decades or centuries before these species will even have a chance. Many animals will either die or never get to experience the wild because they are stuck in cages all day and night.

Many zoos have a fair amount of space for the animals, but hardly enough for running animals, such as the cheetah, to pick up a trot. There are multiple animals that perform stereotypical behaviors because of the small amount of space provided for them. When a test was done in 2000, there were about 80 percent of animals that performed stereotypical behaviors. These behaviors included pacing, swaying, and self-mutilation, which can be caused from too small of a “home.” The space for the animals in some zoos and safari parks is at least 100 times smaller than their actual home, and 18,000 times smaller for large cats. For polar bears, the space constraints are one million times less than that of their natural environment (Van Tuyl 14). Although it would be nearly impossible to get the perfect amount of space for the animals, zoos should still strive for that accomplishment. Stereotypical behaviors or repetitive movements have also been seen in people with mental illnesses. A zoo will never be able to make an animals home as perfect as it is in the wild, but they should try to get it as close as possible to possibly prevent these behaviors.

Many animals in zoos are treated poorly, and put in small spaces to spend most of their lives in. Therefore, zoos should be abolished. Stereotypical behaviors in animals kept in zoos is not a positive sign. If animals are able to get released back into the wild, it is almost never successfully accomplished. Animals that are born in zoos could have health problems and little or no natural survival skills. Just imagine living like this. Although zoos do provide educational opportunity for many people, at what expense is this being done?

Bibliography

Van, Tuyl Christine. *Zoos and Animal Welfare*. Detroit: Greenhaven, 2008. Print.

“Zoos: Debatabase – Debate Topics and Debate Motions.” IDEA: *International Debate Education Association – Debate Resources & Debate Tools*. Web. 24 Mar. 2011.
http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=1.

| Annotation | | |
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| Focus | 4 | The writer clearly addresses all aspects of the prompt by arguing that animals should not be kept in zoos. The writer maintains this focus throughout the paper by giving reasons to support the claim that animals should not be kept in zoos. |
| Reading/Research | 4 | <p>It is evident that the writer has researched the topic. The writer provides evidence to support the argument.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For polar bears, the space constraints are one million times less than that of their natural environment (Van Tuyl 14).</i> • <i>According to Van Tuyl, “If the captive gene pool is too small, then breeding can result in increased susceptibility to disease, birth defect...”</i> |
| Controlling Idea | 4 | The writer presents a clear stance to establish the claim: <i>Therefore, zoos should be abolished.</i> In paragraph two, the writer also acknowledges an opposing viewpoint by stating, <i>“Even though zoos are breeding endangered animals for release into the wild...”</i> Not only does the writer acknowledge this viewpoint, but the writer also refutes the argument by mentioning the small gene pool used. Also, in the final paragraph, the writer recognizes that <i>“zoos do provide educational opportunity for many people...”</i> but questions <i>“at what expense?”</i> |
| Development | 4 | <p>The writer provides adequate explanations of the claim in order to fully develop the argument that zoos should be abolished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Many animals that are born in zoos, or brought to zoos, learn few natural survival skills.</i> • <i>When an endangered animal, or just any animal is bred in a zoo, it has an effect in the releasing of that animal, too.</i> • <i>Many zoos have a fair amount of space for animals, but hardly enough for running animals, such as the cheetah, to pick up a trot.</i> |
| Organization | 3.5 | The essay is well-organized and follows a logical structure to support the overall claim: breeding problems, survival rate in the wild, limited space, and poor treatment. These arguments increase in strength over the course of the essay. Basic transitions are used to guide the reader: <i>“Therefore...” “Even though...” “Although zoos...”</i> |
| Conventions | 3.5 | The writer demonstrates a strong command of Standard English. There are few errors that do not affect the readability of the essay. The writer uses standard format for in-text citations and bibliography is properly formatted. The writer needs to cite the test and results mentioned in paragraph 4: <i>When a test was done in 2000, there were about 80 percent of animals that performed stereotypical behavior.</i> The writer maintains a persuasive tone and concludes with an effective rhetorical question: <i>Although zoos do provide educational opportunity for many people, at what expense is this being done?</i> |
| Content Understanding | 4 | The writer demonstrates knowledge of the content surrounding the issue of keeping wild animals in captivity (e.g., breeding, genetics, endangered species, animal behavior). While still acknowledging the opposing view, the writer uses this knowledge to effectively argue the claim that zoos should be abolished. |

This writer would benefit from feedback, discussion, and/or instruction in the following areas:

- Effective attention-grabbing introductory paragraph beyond beginning with a question: *“Would you be able to make it in the wild if you never had the experience of learning any natural survival skills?”*
- More precise word choice and use of content-area vocabulary