

Should We Keep Animals in Zoos?

Lesson plan for planning and writing a petition

Suggested length: 2 class periods (45-55 minutes each)

Lesson components:

- Opener (5-10 minutes)
- Activity
 - Part A: Exploring the discussion and filling out the graphic organizer (focus of 1 class period)
 - Part B: Writing the petition letter (focus of 1 class period)
- Optional closer (10-15 minutes)

Assessment

Students will write a letter to accompany a petition, based on one of the following scenarios:

- You want the government to shut down the local zoo and send the animals to a sanctuary.
- You want the local zoo to improve the lives of the animals who live there.

Opener (5-10 minutes)

1. Ask the students if they've ever visited a zoo and to share what their experiences were like there. Discuss with the students why some people might have negative or positive views towards zoos.

Activity

Part A: Exploring the discussion and filling out the graphic organizer (focus of 1 class period)

1. Go over instructions for the lesson, which are contained in the discussion background (this can be found by clicking the  button in the top-left corner of the discussion).
2. Hand out individual copies of the graphic organizer. Have students fill it out as they explore the discussion.

3. Direct students to explore the Kialo discussion, "[Should We Keep Animals in Zoos?](#)"

TIP: Encourage students to read **both** the pros and the cons of their favored arguments.

Part B: Writing the petition letter (focus of 1 class period)

1. Show students examples of petition letters from other websites, such as these:
 - [Teach disabled children literacy](#)
 - [Let Kenyan students keep their hair](#)
2. Discuss with students which elements they would like to see in their letters, such as arguments supported by facts and evidence.

TIP: Ask students to write balanced arguments in their petition. For example, "Even though zoos protect animals, they are still better off in the wild"

3. Direct students to pick a position/scenario and start writing their petitions individually. Students should use their graphic organizers to support their writing.

Optional closer (10-15 minutes)

1. Have students volunteer to read their petitions out loud for the rest of the students.