



Albertans and Animals: Exploring Perspectives

TEACHER GUIDE

Grade 7–9



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Albertans and Animals: Exploring Perspectives

People across Alberta hold varying views on animals based on their culture, religion, age, life experiences and values. When students explore these diverse relationships, they begin to see how deeply animals are woven into our identities, communities and daily lives. Understanding this range of perspectives helps students appreciate that each person's unique connection to animals is shaped by more than personal preference — it reflects history, tradition and lived experience.

Exploring different viewpoints helps foster empathy, critical thinking and respectful dialogue. As students compare and contrast perspectives, they learn to recognize nuance, challenge assumptions and approach differences with open minds. This reflection also strengthens the interpersonal skills needed to build kind and caring communities.

Objectives:

Students will:

- explore, consider, and compare various perspectives that Albertans have on animals
- reflect on their own perspectives, how they were formed, and how they may change in the future
- define bias and unconscious bias and recognize the impact of biases
- compare their perspectives to the perspectives of their peers and of Albertans from a variety of backgrounds

Vocabulary and Concepts:

- Perspectives
- Diversity
- Responsibility
- Companionship
- Animals as Symbols
- Animal Welfare
- Human-Animal Bond
- Agriculture
- One Health
- Ecosystem



Time:

60–90 minutes (can be split between multiple classes)

Materials:

- Animal Association Slides
- Albertans Perspectives on Animals Activity Sheet (*Appendix A-1*)
- Interview Questions Activity Sheet – optional (*Appendix A-2*)
- Pen or pencil
- Paper

Instructions:**Part One: Animal Association**

People’s views on animals are shaped by personal experiences, culture and values. Our perspectives shape our conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings about different animals.

In this first part of the lesson, students will examine their initial reaction to a variety of animals and explore what may have shaped this perspective. Exploring these initial associations can help reveal how perspectives vary from person to person.

Ask students to get a piece of scrap paper and a pen or pencil.

Using the Animal Association Slides, instruct students to write down the first word(s) (or phrase) that come to mind when they see each animal slide. Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should not think about their answer – rather, write the first things that come to their mind.

Show each animal slide (seven in total) for around thirty seconds each. Note: Students should have enough time to write down their initial reactions but not too much time that they overthink the task.

After going through the seven animal slides, discuss the following questions as a class:

- How would you describe the types of words you wrote for each animal?
- What do the animals you described using ‘positive’ words have in common?
- What do the animals you described using ‘negative’ words have in common?
- What do you think made you choose the words that you did? *Past experience, knowledge, bias, culture, friends, family, values, etc.*



As a class, define the word 'bias' and 'unconscious bias.' Explain to students that biases are completely normal. Biases and assumptions help our brain to make shortcuts so it doesn't have to do as much work. The problem is that biases can lead to people or animals being treated unfairly. Ask students:

- Can you think of any examples when biases have led to people or animals being treated unfairly? *Black cats taking longer to adopt at animal shelters, glue traps for mice and insects, etc.*

Explain to students that everyone views animals differently and how we view them is based on things such as culture, religion, age, life experience, values and biases. A student who lives on a farm in rural Alberta may have a different perspective than that of a student who lives in a city and has never been to a farm. Both viewpoints are valid, and neither is inherently right nor wrong.

Have students reflect on their own experience with animals (pets, farm animals and/or wildlife) and how it has played a role in shaping the view they hold towards them. Have students create a mind map to demonstrate their connection and experiences with animals.

To spark reflection, ask them the following questions:

- What animals do you interact with in your day-to-day life? Do you (or someone you know) have pets? Visit farms? See wildlife?
- What are some special memories or stories you have with these animals?
- Are there any animals that are important in your culture? Explain.
- What is your favourite animal? Why?
- What other ways are you connected to animals (friendship, food, clothing, etc.)
- Are there animals that you don't like or are afraid of? Why do you feel this way?

After students have had a few moments to reflect, have them share their ideas with a partner. While students are discussing, scan the class and observe. As the conversations begin to dwindle, signal for attention and ask a few students who feel comfortable to share what they discussed.

Part Two: Exploring Perspectives

As covered in the first part of this lesson, views towards animals develop from a combination of individual qualities including a person's culture, religion, age, life experiences and/or values. Therefore, perspectives towards animals (and other topics) can vary considerably from person to person.



In this part of the lesson, students will explore perspectives on animals and animal welfare collected from ten Albertans across the province.

Distribute the Albertans Perspectives on Animals Activity Sheets to all students. Be sure to distribute the ten different perspectives evenly as possible. Note: If less perspectives would work better for your class, it isn't necessary to use them all.

Individually, have students read the perspective they were assigned and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Once students have finished reading the perspective, group students together based on their assigned perspective number (e.g., all perspective 1s together). As a group, have students complete the reverse side of the activity sheet by answering the questions about their assigned perspective. Students will:

- Identify key animals discussed
- Describe factors that influenced that perspective
- Provide a summary of that perspective
- Explain how this perspective is similar to and/or different from their own view on animals

After students have completed the activity sheet, divide them into new groups of 3–4, making sure each group includes students with different assigned perspectives. Students will take turns sharing their perspective with their group until all group members have shared. Ask students to speak about their perspective as if it were their own. While listening to their group members, have each student write down one similarity and one difference between each group member's perspective and their own assigned perspective.

Repeat the jigsaw sharing process until all students have learned about all perspectives studied.

As a class, complete a quick summary of each perspective in a mind map or similar brainstorming format, taking time to also research definitions of unfamiliar words and concepts mentioned. Geographic locations can also be noted.

Then discuss the following questions:

- What surprised you?
- Were there any perspectives you felt were missing? If so, what



were they?

- Why do people have different ideas about animals?
- Why do you think it is important to consider different perspectives?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask the people who wrote the perspectives you read about? If so, what are they?
- Is there any further information you would like to know? What resources could you use to find out?

Part Three: Student Task

Have students compare their personal perspectives on animals with another perspective by completing one of the following tasks. Encourage students to reflect on:

- How their choice of task will be the right level of challenge
- How it connects to their strengths or interests
- How it relates to a goal they may have set

Option 1: My Perspective on Animals (Personal Response)

Have students write a clear, informative and engaging multi-paragraph response detailing their perspective on animals. Their response should be autobiographical in nature as if providing information for an audience that does not know them.

Encourage students to explain the “why” behind their perspectives, detailing factors that have influenced their views over time and reflecting on the implicit biases they may have or had.

Challenge students to dedicate one paragraph to comparing their perspective to one (or more) of the perspectives from the previous parts of this lesson — highlighting similarities and differences, and identifying whether and/or how learning about this/these perspective(s) impacted their own.

Remind students to revise for clarity, fluency and effectiveness, and to edit spelling, punctuation and grammar as needed.

Option 2: Compare and Contrast Perspectives (Critical Response)

Have students write a clear, informative and engaging multi-paragraph response comparing and contrasting two or more perspectives from the previous parts of this lesson, describing similarities and differences between them.

Students should refer to factors that influence each of the perspectives, as



well as any implicit biases that may be present in either person's perspective.

Remind students to revise for clarity, fluency and effectiveness, and to edit spelling, punctuation and grammar as needed.

Option 3: Conduct an Interview

Have students conduct an interview with an adult (e.g., parent, guardian, teacher, grandparent, neighbour, etc.) about their views on animals. Students can use the Interview Questions Activity Sheet to help guide their interview.

After the interview, have students write a clear, informative and engaging multi-paragraph response comparing their perspective on animals to the individual they interviewed – highlighting similarities and differences, and identifying whether and/or how learning about this/these perspective(s) impacted their own.

Remind students to revise for clarity, fluency and effectiveness, and to edit spelling, punctuation and grammar as needed.

GRADE 7 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SOCIAL STUDIES

Local and Current Affairs

In order to allow opportunities for students to engage in current affairs, issues and concerns of a local nature, the program of studies provides the flexibility to include these topics within the time allotted for social studies.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

7.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- demonstrate the ability to analyze local and current affairs
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- access diverse viewpoints on particular topics, using appropriate technologies (ICT)

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Students will:

7.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- consider the needs and perspectives of others

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

7.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- communicate information in a clear, persuasive and engaging manner, through written and oral means
- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and multiple points of view in discussions
- listen to others in order to understand their perspectives
- offer reasoned comments related to a topic of discussion

7.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:

- detect bias on issues presented in the media
- examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message

LANGUAGE ARTS

General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences.

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- extend understanding of ideas and information by finding and exploring oral, print and other media texts on related topics and themes
 - express personal understandings of ideas and information based on prior knowledge,

GRADE 7 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

experiences with others and a variety of oral, print and other media texts

- reflect on own observations and experiences to understand and develop oral, print and other media texts

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider the ideas of others

- listen and respond constructively to alternative ideas of opinions

Combine ideas

- use talk, writing and representing to examine, clarify and assess understanding of ideas, information and experiences

Extend understanding

- talk with others to elaborate ideas, and ask specific questions to seek helpful feedback

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use prior knowledge

- select and focus relevant ideas from personal experiences and prior knowledge to understand new ideas and information

Use comprehension strategies

- identify, connect, and summarize in own words, the main ideas from two or more sources on the same topic

2.2 Respond to Texts

Experience various texts

- organize interpretations of oral, print and other media texts around two or three key ideas

2.4 Create Original Text

Structure texts

- create a variety of oral, print and other media texts to explore ideas related to particular topics or themes

General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to manage ideas and information.

3.2 Select and Process

Access information

- distinguish between fact and opinion, and follow the development of argument and opinion

3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate

Record information

GRADE 7 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- reflect on ideas and information to form own opinions with evidence to support them
- compare, contrast and combine ideas and information from several sources

Evaluate information

- connect new information with prior knowledge to build new understanding

3.4 Share and Review

Share ideas and information

- communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as reports, autobiographies, brochures and video presentations

General Outcome 5: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to respect, support and collaborate with others.

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Appreciate diversity

- explain how differing perspectives and unique reactions expand understanding

Relate texts to culture

- identify and discuss recurring themes in oral, print and other media texts from diverse cultures and communities

Use language to show respect

- demonstrate respect for diverse ideas, cultures and traditions portrayed in oral, print and other media texts

5.2 Work within a Group

Cooperate with others

- contribute collaboratively in group situations, by asking questions and building on the ideas of others

Work in groups

- contribute ideas, knowledge and questions to establish an information base for research or investigations
- assist in setting and achieving group goals by inviting others to speak, suggesting alternatives, assigning tasks, sharing resources, following up on others' ideas and listening to a variety of points of view

GRADE 8 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SOCIAL STUDIES

Local and Current Affairs

In order to allow opportunities for students to engage in current affairs, issues and concerns of a local nature, the program of studies provides the flexibility to include these topics within the time allotted for social studies.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

8.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- analyze the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- evaluate ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- demonstrate the ability to analyze local and current affairs
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Students will:

8.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- consider the needs and perspectives of others

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

8.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration
- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and multiple points of view in discussions
- listen to others in order to understand their points of view
- offer reasoned comments related to a topic of discussion

8.S.9 develop skills of media literacy

- examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message

LANGUAGE ARTS

General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences.

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- revise understanding and expression of ideas by connecting new and prior knowledge and experiences
- seek out and consider diverse ideas, opinions and experiences to develop and extend own ideas, opinions and experiences

1.2 Clarify and Extend

GRADE 8 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Consider the ideas of others

- acknowledge the value of the ideas and opinions of others in exploring and extending personal interpretations and perspectives

Combine ideas

- exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives

Extend understanding

- reconsider and revise initial understandings and responses in light of new ideas, information and feedback from others

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

2.2 Respond to Texts

Experience various texts

- expect that there is more than one interpretation for oral, print and other media texts, and discuss other points of view
- explain connections between own interpretation and information in texts, and infer how texts will influence others

2.4 Create Original Text

Generate ideas

- create oral, print and other media texts related to issues encountered in texts and in own life

General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to manage ideas and information.

3.1 Plan and Focus

Focus attention

- identify and trace the development of arguments, opinions or points of view in oral, print and other media texts

3.2 Select and Process

Access information

- record key ideas and information from oral, print and other media texts, avoiding overuse of direct quotations

3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate

Organize information

- organize ideas and information creatively, as well as logically, to develop a comparison or chronology, or to show a cause–effect relationship
- organize ideas and information to establish an overall impression or point of view in oral, print and other media texts

Evaluate information

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incorporate new information with prior knowledge and experiences to develop new understanding

General Outcome 5: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to respect, support and collaborate with others.

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Appreciate diversity

- clarify and broaden perspectives and opinions, by examining the ideas of others

Use language to show respect

- use inclusive language and actions that demonstrate respect for people of different races, cultures, genders, ages and abilities

5.2 Work within a Group

Cooperate with others

- propose ideas or advocate points of view that recognize the ideas of others and advance the thinking of the group

Work in groups

- contribute ideas, knowledge and strategies to identify group information needs and sources

GRADE 9 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SOCIAL STUDIES

Local and Current Affairs

In order to allow opportunities for students to engage in current affairs, issues and concerns of a local nature, the program of studies provides the flexibility to include these topics within the time allotted for social studies.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

9.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- demonstrate the ability to analyze current affairs from multiple perspectives
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

Students will:

9.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the needs and perspectives of others

RESEARCH FOR DELIBERATIVE INQUIRY

Students will:

9.S.7 apply the research process:

- reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted
- integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

9.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration
- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions
- make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion
- listen to others to understand their perspectives

9.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:

- examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message

LANGUAGE ARTS

General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas,

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feelings and experiences.

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- talk with others and experience a variety of oral, print and other media texts to explore, develop and justify own opinions and points of view
- explore and explain how interactions with others and with oral, print and other media texts affect personal understandings
- extend understanding by taking different points of view when rereading and reflecting on oral, print and other media texts

Experiment with language and forms

- develop and extend understanding by expressing and responding to ideas on the same topic, in a variety of forms of oral, print and other media texts

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider the ideas of others

- integrate own perspectives and interpretations with new understandings developed through discussing and through experiencing a variety of oral, print and other media texts

Combine ideas

- examine and re-examine ideas, information and experiences from different points of view to find patterns and see relationships

Extend understanding

- assess whether new information extends understanding by considering diverse opinions and exploring ambiguities

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use prior knowledge

- use previous reading experiences, personal experiences and prior knowledge as a basis for reflecting on and interpreting ideas encountered in texts

Use comprehension strategies

- identify explicit and implicit ideas and information in texts; listen and respond to various interpretations of the same text

2.2 Respond to Texts

Experience various texts

- compare and contrast own life situation with themes of oral, print and other media texts

Construct meaning from texts

- relate the themes, emotions and experiences portrayed in oral, print and other media texts to issues of

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personal interest or significance

General Outcome 5: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to respect, support and collaborate with others.

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Appreciate diversity

- examine how personal experiences, cultural traditions and Canadian perspectives are presented in oral, print and other media texts
- take responsibility for developing and sharing oral, print and other media texts and for responding respectfully to the texts of others

Relate texts to culture

- analyze how oral, print and other media texts reflect the traditions, beliefs and technologies of different cultures, communities or periods in history

Use language to show respect

- create or use oral, print and other media texts in ways that are respectful of people, opinions, communities and cultures

5.2 Work within a Group

Cooperate with others

- contribute to group efforts to reach consensus or conclusions, by engaging in dialogue to understand the ideas and viewpoints of others

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 1: Aimee

My name is Aimee and I am an artist, acupuncturist, wife and mother. I am Indigenous from Fishing Lake and Samson Cree Nation, but because of colonial practices and residential schools I did not grow up immersed in my culture or language. It is important for me to reclaim my culture and share it with my kids.

We always had pets in our house as kids, and some of my earliest memories are of my dog Boots. As children we were always taught that our pets were a responsibility and we had a role to take care of them. But even more valuable than the lesson of responsibility for those pets was a sense of companionship and connection to a little spirit that didn't need words to communicate and feel affection for. I have been patiently waiting to give my kids the gift of a family pet (most likely a dog) because I understand the great responsibility that comes with it, and I am waiting for the right time for us to be fully committed.

Growing up my family also did a lot of fishing and hunting. Animals are also a source of food for us, and I was taught to give thanks to the Creator and to the animals for providing us with sustenance we would usually say a prayer and offer tobacco. We would try to make the most of every part of the animal.

For me the Eagle has a special significance; it is my spirit animal and my spirit name is Blue Eagle Woman. The Eagle is an animal that is very close to the Creator and can travel between the spirit world and the physical world to communicate our prayers. In my culture the Eagle feather is very significant and we use the Eagle feather in prayer and ceremony, and certain protocols are followed to take care of the feather. The Eagle feather gives strength to your spirit, strength to tell the truth, and strength to be your highest self

I think an important lesson from animals is that it is not a hierarchy, but a circle relationship. There are a lot of lessons to be learned from our animal relatives. Humans are not more superior than animals, rather we are part of the same complexly beautiful network that couldn't exist without the other.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 2: Justin

My name is Justin, and although I was born in Canada, I grew up in New Zealand. I now live in Edmonton. We had a cat growing up named Samson. I remember him being really little and cute, but when he got sharp claws and teeth, he wasn't so cute. He would try to sleep next to me, but would take up too much space, so I would make him get off the bed. I wasn't responsible for looking after any of his needs, my mom handled that.

In New Zealand, when you are driving on highways, you always see sheep and often dairy cows in the fields, so I was always reminded of the agricultural aspect of animals. This was a huge difference I noticed when I moved to Canada; maybe because of the amount of land/space here, you don't see nearly as many farm animals. In university, friends would have to go back to their farm to help during lambing season, and would ask other friends to come help.

The kiwi is symbolic in New Zealand. It is a flightless bird that has a strong cultural significance to the country – we even call ourselves 'kiwis.' The kiwi is a symbol, and it gets used on the branding of sports teams and other national teams. They are nocturnal, so I've never seen a kiwi in the wild, just in a zoo.

I am a lab technician and we use animals for research. I do believe that animals have a place in research as long as the 3 Rs are followed – replacement (is there an alternative to using animals?) reduction (can the number of animals being used be reduced?) and refinement (ensuring they have the best quality of life possible). Coming from a research perspective, particularly studying infectious disease, I think it is important for young people to understand the concept of One Health. We need to look at things (like human disease) not just from a human perspective, but from a whole ecosystem/globe that covers humans, wildlife, domestic animals, plants and the environment. All of these things impact human health and human populations.

The human population is growing and encroaching into forests and other areas, and interacting with different wild animals, which can create spillover with new diseases, or a monoculture sort of crops (instead of diverse forests) which changes the way that wildlife interacts with the land. It is important to think about animals from a global perspective. We are all interconnected and a change in one area can impact another.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 3: Shanuki

My name is Shanuki, and I'm from Sri Lanka, but grew up in Canada. In Sri Lanka, I was always surrounded by dogs – my own, my uncles' and aunts', and my neighbors'. My siblings and I have fond memories of going on long walks around the neighborhood with our dogs, Husky, Bruno, and Ranger, and playing near the water at the beach. It was often difficult for us to go to school, as we hated spending hours apart from them. They were our friends, and companions in our crazy adventures. It was heartbreaking when we lost Husky and later, Bruno. As a young person, I learned that animals are not so different from us; they too have feelings, need to bond, to feel loved, and be taken care of. I think understanding this has helped me connect with animals on a deeper level and be more mindful of their needs.

The lion is very symbolic in our culture – it is found on our national flag and represents bravery and strength. While I love dogs, the elephant is my favourite animal. We see elephants all the time in Sri Lanka and I'm always captivated by their presence. To me, they symbolize wisdom and fortitude – powerful creatures who are able to use their strength to overcome negative forces in their lives.

Since moving to Canada, I don't interact with animals as much. We don't have any pets here, but I have many friends who have cats and dogs. Every time we visit Sri Lanka, we stay with my uncle, who takes care of Ranger. Our interactions with Ranger are always rocky the first couple of days of our visit. He is reluctant to trust us after not seeing us for years. In a few days he softens and becomes more comfortable with our presence: sniffing us, tangling himself underneath our legs, and lying on the floor in preparation for long belly rubs. These moments with Ranger are what I look forward to whenever I go back to visit. I think it's important that young people understand and appreciate how much animals do for us – they provide us with food, comfort and companionship, security, and help us with daily tasks. Moreover, the relationships we have with animals should be a two-way street – while animals provide us with all these benefits, it's essential we do our part to address their needs and ensure their safety and well-being.

It's also important that young people understand that having a pet isn't easy – it requires a lot of research, consideration, and dedication to ensuring your pet's needs are being always met. It's important we focus on strengthening the similarities that humans and animals share as opposed to the differences, so that we can be more compassionate towards animals and strengthen our bonds with them.



Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 4: Isabell

My name is Isabell and I was born and raised on a farm near Vermilion, Alberta, (90 years ago). I now live on a farm near Vermillion not too far from my childhood farm. I am very social and community oriented, and enjoy visits with family and friends over a meal or tea. I grow a garden and do all my own canning and freezing of fruit and garden produce, all grown on the farm. I also love to bake and cook.

As a farm kid, we always had a few dogs, cats, horses, milk cows, cattle, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, pigs, etc. I loved all the animals, valued them all dearly, and remember them very fondly. I had a deeper connection with pets and livestock than most other farm families at the time. I remember a neighbor lady asking for our rabbit to eat, and being appalled. Our dog used to pull us kids to school on a sleigh and later we used horses. Table scraps were fed to our dogs and cats, as there was no bagged dog and cat food back then.

More monetary value is placed on pets now more than 75 plus years ago. Currently I have six cats and one dog in my home that are all rescued one way or another. The pasture is rented out, so cattle are only here in the summer. My daughter lives right beside me with 2 horses, a cat and a dog. There are deer in my yard and on occasion fox and coyotes that are after the leftover apples. I feed the wild birds all winter. I have a few very old well-loved chickens. They are kept around despite the fact that they hardly ever lay. They sure clean up worms and bugs in the garden and yard!

I was taught to be kind to animals and feed them well. It takes relatively little effort to keep them happy and healthy. Give them a pat, food, fresh water and shelter, and this will give them a joyful long happy life. For outdoor livestock, cattle, horses, etc. they need a straw bed, this is half of the animal's life.

How a person treats animals is a true testament to their character. Take the time to be kind and caring. Animals have a soul. Since it doesn't take much effort at all, that is all an animal asks of you. Get your cats and dogs spayed or neutered to avoid overpopulation. It will make the world a better place.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 5: Peter

My name is Peter, and I was born in Wildwood, Alberta, but call Spruce Grove home. Growing up my family had a "mixed farm." We raised sheep, pigs, horses, and chickens. My mother would consistently judge animals at the Wildwood fair. Farming didn't have many safety precautions to follow when I was growing up. As a youth, I was rammed, and knocked over by a ram while feeding my sheep. While trying to transport a calf into shelter during the winter, I fell over backwards off a fence with the calf in my arms. While trying to catch a colt in the horse enclosure, I was running, and struck by a board that the colt stepped on as it was not properly secured. In my youth I attended 4H and I learned from traditions passed down through my family.

Now as an adult I have a "hobby farm." I have five horses that I care for and ride on occasion. I also have numerous cats and two dogs. Farming used to be a source of income, a way of life, now I do it because it brings me joy. I was forced to farm as a child as it was my family's livelihood. As an adult, I do it because it is my passion. I am also aware I now have funds more readily available to run a safe farm, and care for my animals in the best way possible. When I was a child money was tight and we just did what we had to do to get by. My horses mean everything to me, I have raised them all from colts and they feel like a part of our family.

There's no better life than farm life. Working with animals is life-changing and impacts my point of view daily.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 6: Gloria

My name is Gloria, and I am a water colour artist who primarily paints animals. My parents are from Hong Kong, so I grew up with both Canadian and Chinese culture and customs. Twelve animals make up the Chinese Zodiac. An animal is assigned to each year, and each animal represents characteristics of people born in that particular year.

I grew up as an indoor child with pet dander allergies, so my experiences with wildlife and farm animals were limited to the rare petting zoo and family road trips to the mountains. I never felt comfortable around animals, even domestic ones. The first pet I felt safe with was my childhood friend's very sweet and cuddly Bichon Shih Tzu, Bubbles

I have more regular interactions with animals now, and I am much more comfortable around them. My sister's beagle, Webster, has been a beloved member of our family for over a decade. My toddler absolutely loves puppies and gets very excited to see them in person. Also, my in-laws are cattle farmers, so I've learned a lot about farming, calving seasons, and raising animals. I've even gotten to pet newborn calves!

The gorilla will always have a special place in my heart! I started painting animals because some of my elementary students in South Korea thought my name was Gorilla, and called me "Gorilla Teacher." I thought it was hilarious and it inspired a series of gorilla drawings, which led to primate paintings, then to a wide array of animals.

I remember learning as a child how animals are essential to our ecology and environment and to respect wildlife. I also remember learning to be gentle when petting animals and that it was important not to alarm them. My parents told me not to waste food and to appreciate that the meat we ate came from animals. I think young people need to learn to treat animals with kindness and to respect their environments.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

Name: _____

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Perspective 7: Jad

My name is Jad and I'm 22. I grew up both in Saudi Arabia and Syria and my home now is my bedroom in Calgary. I am a biological anthropology and psychology student. Unfortunately, I did not receive a lot of education on animals as a child. I believe that education (globally and nationally) lacks content on animal awareness.

Growing up in the city of Riyadh, a huge metropolitan area with industrialized communities, there was a large population of street cats everywhere. They would be in the garbage bins and in alleyways. They were not friendly, but still adorable. In my culture, most birds of prey such as hawks or the Arabian falcon are considered representative of strength, intelligence, and tenacity. There is also a history of falcons being used in entertainment, or trained to perform tasks and fetch objects. Now that I understand the emotional bandwidth and intelligence of animals, I do not believe that this is ethical.

As a biological anthropology student, I have studied primates (and other animals) extensively. My interactions currently involve research at the zoo for my classes and studying primate behavior and cognition. There is now definitely a difference in my perception of animals. Growing up, animals were treated quite often as a resource, rather than as individuals. After understanding how animals (mostly primates) think, it is fair to say that animals are almost little people that just lack the ability to speak.

When I said that I see animals as little people, I was specifically referencing the African Grey Parrot. They are sentient, live up to 80 years, can communicate clearly, and are hyper-intelligent. All of these features make me feel as if this bird is just a human that can fly.

Animals have feelings like humans, but communicate them differently! It's important for us to acknowledge that animals have as much right as we do to exist in safety and without stress. We have to stay attentive to their needs and respect the space that they are entitled to occupy.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

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Instructions: Individually read the following perspective and underline or highlight important information, such as the animals mentioned and any factors that influenced the individual's perspective (e.g., experience, age, culture, etc.)

Perspective 8: Alice

My name is Alice and I am a fourth-year zoology student at the University of Calgary. Growing up, we had many pets, except for dogs and cats. We've had birds since I was 10, along with amphibians, fish, and hamsters. If you were to ask me what in particular I love about birds— it's hard to say! Ten-year-old Alice would say; "I like how they look and fly!". But 22-year-old Alice says that their behaviour, anatomy, and diversity are super interesting!

I didn't receive too many teachings or lessons about animals when I was younger. However, what I did learn is that they should be respected and treated fairly, just like we treat each other as humans.

Living in Calgary, with the yearly Calgary Stampede, visiting the farm animals was a must. Volunteering at the SPCA helped me appreciate the farm animals a lot more, and I helped with Aggie Days. My main personal interest from when I was little were birds. That's why I decided to pursue a degree in zoology!

It wasn't until recently that I began birding. I had always thought that there were no cool birds in Calgary, but wow was I ever wrong! Instead of taking the bus home from school, I began to walk home, taking photos of birds. While birding, I have also developed an interest in other animals and nature in general.

I took an entomology (study of bugs) course last year, which was super inspiring to me. We had to go and find bugs out in Calgary and either take a photo of them, or do a bug collection. Because of bug ethics, I decided to make most of my collection digital. Insects are such important animals! Because of my love for both birds and bugs, I now want to become a naturalist.

I think it's important to appreciate the diversity and role of animals in our environment. Every individual animal is important and carries out a very important role in our ecosystem. Sadly, through a lot of human activities, we are going through a sixth extinction event. It is important that we learn and appreciate all life, so that we can make sure we are doing our job to protect them.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

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Perspective 9: Gwen

My name is Gwen and I'm a retiree. I grew up in 12 different small communities across Alberta, and now live in Edmonton. As a child, we had a terrier named Tippy and she was my best friend. As my parents and brother and I moved to a new town almost every year, Tippy was one of the few constants in my life. Tippy went everywhere with us, whether we were out on our little boat fishing, playing in our neighbourhood, or traipsing through the woods. I also loved cats, as my sister almost always had a cat. Both of my parents were animal lovers, and taught us to respect not only pets but farm animals and wildlife.

I have always been drawn to kangaroos. They really are the most magnificent creatures, ranging from when they are tiny and adorable, first learning to hop, to the enormous alpha male adults, who can be quite intimidating. I would love to travel to Australia to visit a kangaroo sanctuary that I support.

My interactions with animals have only grown since childhood. One of my first goals as an adult was to get my own dog, and in total I've had five. Each one has been my closest companion, and they have joined me in a lifetime spent as a volunteer in animal welfare. Several of them did school visits with me for the Alberta SPCA. My current dog Gilly also does weekly visits to a seniors' home as part of a pet therapy program.

I think it is vital for young people to recognize animals as sentient, feeling creatures and to treat them with respect and kindness

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
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Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Albertans Perspectives on Animals

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Perspective 10: Jeffrey

My name is Jeffrey and I live in Morinville, Alberta. Growing up we often had outdoor cats at the house. I would help family members on their farms and participated in 4H raising a heifer calf. I recall falling asleep on her during the showing day. My immediate family weren't really animal people and it wasn't something that was ever talked about in school despite being in a rural community. I watched family raise beef cattle, but the methods were very traditional and the way they were raised always bothered me. After doing more school, and working in animal industries, I learned a lot about better practices.

I've studied bats in Costa Rica and squirrels in Algonquin Park in Ontario. I also now have a horse and I'm training him using positive reinforcement rather than pressure and release, like traditional horse training. Animals are the core of my life now; if I'm not working with one, I'm typically reading or watching videos of them.

When I adopted my German Shepherd, Magnum, in university, it completely changed my life trajectory. Up until that point I had been planning on working with wildlife. Magnum had some very serious behavior issues including animal and people directed aggression, which wasn't flagged at the time of adoption. I was instantly in love with him and I spent a lot of time learning how to manage and train him. Now, I have a MSc in canine behaviour and welfare. I've had the opportunity to work with dogs at nearly all levels, from kennel care of dogs at animal shelters, to doing behaviour assessments on adoptable dogs. I've also had the chance to work with service dogs, and currently I work with wellness/therapy dogs.

There are a couple of things that young people should learn about animals. One is animals have emotional states just like humans and treating them with respect and being kind to them is the most important thing. Another is that at the end of the day they are animals, so no matter how well you know them, there is always some risk they could injure you if you don't listen to what they are telling you. I think learning to ask animals for their permission to interact with them, and learning their body language, is key to making interactions better between people and animals.

Instructions: Complete the activity sheet by completing the table.

Perspective # and name:	
Animals mentioned:	
Factors that influenced perspective:	
Summary:	
How is this perspective similar and/or different to mine:	

Interview Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Use the following questions to guide your interview. Is there anything else you would like to ask?

What is your name?	
Where are you from?	
Where did you grow up?	
Where do you call "home"?	
Is there anything special about your family or background that you'd like to share?	
When you were growing up did you have any pets, visit farms or see wildlife? Do you remember stories about animals from when you were young?	
What animals do you spend time with now? Is this different from when you were young? How?	



Are there any animals that are important to your culture? Explain.

Are there any animals that are special to you? Explain.

What did adults teach you about animals when you were growing up?

Ask your own question.