

Item Name:	Best Pets
Item Type:	Curriculum Embedded
Subject and/or Course:	English Language Arts (Opinion Writing), Grade 4
Common Core Standards:	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.4.1.A Introduce a topic or text clearly...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.4.1.B Provide reasons that are supported...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.4.1.C Link opinion and reasons using words...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.4.1.D Provide a concluding statement...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary...</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10 Write routinely over extended time...</p>
Developer/Source:	New Hampshire Task Bank; Authors: Amy Ashe, Julie Cohen, Paula Cullen-Kent, Shaun Elliott, Marylou Saxton, Margaret Parent, & Stacey Leary
Item Features:	<p>Administration: Curriculum-embedded</p> <p>Length of time for response: 4 weeks</p> <p>Method of scoring: Analytic rubric scoring</p> <p>Opportunity for student collaboration: Ongoing</p> <p>Opportunity for teacher feedback and revision: Yes</p>

Collection of performance assessment items compiled by



Subject area/course: ELA

Grade level/band: 4th

Task source: New Hampshire Task Bank; Authors: Amy Ashe, Julie Cohen, Paula Cullen-Kent, Shaun Elliott, Marylou Saxton, Margaret Parent, & Stacey Leary

Best Pets

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

A. Task context:

Your task is to write an opinion-writing piece on the topic below. Use the space below to brainstorm your ideas before you begin. Write your opinion piece on the lined paper provided.

There are many reasons people own pets. Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer dogs, while others prefer cats. Imagine your family is deciding between bringing home a dog or a cat. Which is the better pet and why? Think about the reasons you might give to convince your family which pet is best.

Student Brainstorm Space:

Use the space below or the back of this sheet to create a web, chart, or any other brainstorm graphic you know. Remember to include in your brainstorm/writing the opinion techniques you have learned in class.

B. Final product:

Read the two articles given to you by your teacher. One article is on the benefits of owning a dog and the other is an article on the benefits of choosing a cat as a pet. Decide which pet you think is best. After you've chosen your best pet, find another source that supports your opinion. Write an opinion piece that states your opinion and explains your thinking. Be sure to use evidence (facts and reasons) from the article your teacher provided, and the article you found, to back up your opinion. Remember, your piece will be read by members of your family so think carefully about the reasons and evidence you choose to include. Be sure to cite your sources!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

C. Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:

Students will know:

- How to clearly state their opinion
- How to supply reasons that support their opinion



- How to use conventions of language to convey meaning
- How to make conclusions based on supporting detail

Students will be able to:

- State opinions clearly
- Support a point of view with facts and details
- Link opinion and reasons using key words and phrases
- Provide a concluding statement related to the opinion presented

D. Materials needed:

In addition to writing materials and paper, you will need to read the two texts about dogs and cats that follow these directions.

E. Time requirements:

This task will be completed over the course of eight weeks. Your teacher will provide you with directions about each portion of the task and what you need to do at each step.

F. Scoring:

Your work will be scored using the Best Pets Opinion Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.



Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for a walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>. Used by permission of Dee Em, eHow Contributor.



Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

This article was adapted for classroom use from "Why Dogs Make Good Pets" by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>. Used by permission of Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor.



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Best Pets

TEACHER'S GUIDE

A. Task overview:

This is an opinion writing prompt and rubric for fourth grade students. Students will read two articles. One article outlines why a dog is better than a cat. The other article outlines why cats are better than dogs. Students will read the articles, choose a side, and write a response.

B. Aligned standards:

1. Primary Common Core State Standards

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1](#) Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.A](#) Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.B](#) Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.C](#) Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.D](#) Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

2. Secondary Common Core State Standards (optional)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4](#) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5](#) With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9](#) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10](#) Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

3. Critical abilities

Research: Conduct research projects to answer a question. Gather relevant information from multiple sources. Assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience.

Communication in Many Forms: Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Develop and



strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting while considering the audience.

Interpersonal Interaction and Collaboration: Develop the ability to work with others and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations.

4. Other standards

New Hampshire Competencies

Writing Arguments Competency: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critique texts or topics and support claims and reasoning with sufficient evidence for intended purpose and audience.

C. Time/schedule requirements:

This task may take place over the course of approximately eight weeks, depending on how each portion of the task is scheduled and how much time can be devoted to the task each week. See teacher directions for a sample plan/schedule.

D. Materials/resources:

A variety of resources may be needed for teaching opinion writing, including modeling, examples from children’s literature, professional resources, and lessons gleaned from the Internet. For the assessment itself, these two resources could be used:

- “Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs” by Dee Em, eHow Contributor achievethecore.org/file/1036
- “Why Dogs Make Good Pets, and Why Cats Make Good Pets”, by Cecilia McCormick, eHow contributor achievethecore.org/file/1036

E. Prior knowledge:

None provided

F. Connection to curriculum:

This assessment task was designed with the intention of implementing it mid-year. However, this task could also be used early in the school year as one of the first exposures students have to opinion writing in 4th grade.

G. Teacher instructions:

Teacher directions

- Introduce the task and timeline. (1 day)
- Have students read and discuss the two articles. (1-2 days)
- Have students work in small groups to create opinion posters. (1-2 days)
- Have students each locate an additional source to support their opinion. (1 day)
- Have students complete the outline individually with their ideas. (1 day)
- Review and give formative feedback on outlines.



- Have students complete a first draft.
- Collect and give formative feedback on drafts. (Non-graded samples can be used for class discussions about style, technique and conventions)
- Collect final draft.

Sample Unit

- Week 1: Read the articles, discuss, formulate individual opinions. Differentiate between facts and opinions.
- Week 2: Teach how to provide reasons, facts, and details to support your opinion using the articles provided and those the students locate. Students work in small groups to create a poster that conveys which pet is best and includes text and images to support the opinion.
- Week 3: Assist students in locating additional sources to support their opinions. Begin brainstorming and composing rough drafts.
- Week 4: Revising rough draft with one specific focus for each lesson such as:
 - Using evidence from the text to support opinions
 - Linking opinions and reasons using words and phrases
 - Concluding statement/paragraph related to the opinion
 - Grade level conventions

H. Student support:

Accommodations would be given according to the IEP's in the classroom. Examples include:

- more time
- reading aloud of the two articles (We are not assessing the reading ability, but the ability to write.)

Also, there are formative assessment pieces leading up to the final product that will allow all students to receive support:

- Outline provided within the task
- 1 draft of the writing
- Drafts and subsequent revisions will reinforce the iterative process of writing (as needed)

I. Extensions or variations:

Other grade levels could use this same task, but with a modified prompt and rubric as appropriate for that grade level.

J. Scoring:

Student work can be scored using the Best Pets Opinion Rubric.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Best Pets Opinion Rubric- Grade 4

	3	2	1	Comments
STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE/ FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion is clearly stated, focused, and strongly maintained Opinion is communicated clearly within the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion is stated, generally focused, and maintained Opinion is communicated within the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion is generally stated and somewhat maintained, may have minor drifts in focus Opinion is not clear 	
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective, consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies Logical, clear progression of ideas from beginning to end Effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate transitional strategies used Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end Adequate introduction and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent use of transitional strategies Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end Introduction and conclusion are weak 	

Subject area/course and Grade level: ELA, 4

Task source: NH Task Bank

Additional Sources Used: "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>; "Why Dogs Make Good Pets, and Why Cats Make Good Pets, by Cecilia McCormick, eHow contributor <http://www.ehow.com>; Smarter Balanced opinion writing rubric

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Reviewed and Revised by: NH PA Network Review Team (CCE, NCIEA, NHDOE, NH educators)

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ELABORATION OF EVIDENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and relevant • Effective use of a variety of sources, facts, and details • Citations are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence from sources is included, though citations may be general or imprecise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from sources is weakly integrated, and citations, if present, are uneven 	
LANGUAGE/ VOCABULARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary reflects the topic and is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of domain specific vocabulary that is generally appropriate for audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of domain specific vocabulary that may at times be inappropriate for audience and/or purpose 	
CONVENTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of sentence structures. • Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few, if any, errors in grammar, usage and sentence formation • Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally correct. Errors, if any, do not interfere with clarity of the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors in grammar obscure meaning • Inconsistent punctuation, capitalization, and spelling 	

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