

# Which are better: cats or dogs?



## You will read:

- **A Letter to the Editor**  
*from Henry Regan*
- **A Letter to the Editor**  
*from Juliette Charles*
- **A Fact Sheet**  
*Facts About Cats, Data About Dogs*
- **A Chart**  
*The Internet Loves Dogs*

## You will write:

- **An Opinion Essay**  
*Which are better: cats or dogs?*

# Source 1: Letter to the Editor

## AS YOU READ

Look for reasons that support your opinion, or reasons that make you change your opinion about this question: Which are better: cats or dogs?

### Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Springfield Weekly ★ June 21

## Letters

Dear Editor,

I'm writing today because I disagree with the results of the poll you included in last week's paper. Your poll showed that most readers like cats better than dogs. But I do not think cats make the best pets, and I'll tell you why.

First of all, a dog is known as "man's best friend." We do not call cats anyone's friend. Cats claw people, and they meow for no reason. My dog  
10 Shelby only barks when she has to go outside, or when I tell her to "speak."

It's easy to train a dog because a dog wants to please its owner. Cats don't want to please humans. They do not run up to greet you when you come in the door. You can't train a cat.

I love how caring my dog is. Shelby loves to have her ears scratched and her belly rubbed. She loves to be brushed, too. If I tried to rub a cat's belly, I'd get clawed up!

20 Shelby goes with me everywhere. She can travel in the car, she can go to the park, and she can swim in the lake. You can't bring a cat anywhere without a carrier!



Dogs are also better pets because they take care of us. I walk Shelby every day, so she and I get exercise at the same time. People who own cats don't have to leave the house to take care  
30 of their pets! I enjoy having a pet that makes me take care of myself.

I don't know how so many people voted for cats as better pets than dogs, but I'll stick to dogs.

Sincerely,

Henry Regan

### Close Read

What is one reason Henry prefers dogs to cats?

---

---

# Source 2: Letter to the Editor

## AS YOU READ

Pay attention to the information in the letter to the editor. Write down comments or questions in the side margins.

### Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Springfield Weekly ★ June 21

## Letters

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the poll you ran last week. I knew that more people liked cats than dogs! I am a cat owner, and I love my cat, Rascal.

Rascal loves to cuddle. Every day when I wake up, he snuggles up close to me. He purrs and purrs! He likes it when I pat him first thing in the morning, and it makes us both feel relaxed and happy.

When I have friends over to visit, Rascal hangs  
10 out in a different room. He is shy around new people. I never have to worry that he'll jump on my friends, or bark at them.

My friends who own dogs have to get up early on the weekends to walk their dogs. They have to go outside in bad weather, or when they don't feel well, because dogs need to go outside many times a day. Cats don't need to be walked! Rascal is an indoor cat. I don't have to take him out, and I can leave a bowl of food out for him all day long. You  
20 have to feed dogs at a specific time of day.



If I want to go away for a weekend, I can leave out food for Rascal and send a friend to check in on him once. If I had a dog, someone would have to stay at my house, or I would have to send my dog to stay with a friend. Dogs need a lot more attention than cats do.

30 Cats clean themselves, which is why they smell better than dogs. I never have to scrub Rascal in the bathtub! That's a task the dog owners can keep.

I wouldn't trade Rascal for a dog. He may like to spend time on his own, but so do I. Thank you for proving that people think cats are better than dogs!

Sincerely,

Juliette Charles

### Close Read

What is one reason Juliette prefers cats to dogs?

---

---

## Source 3: Fact Sheet



# Facts About Cats

- Cats have been companions to humans for 8,000 years!
- Cats sleep about 13–14 hours a day.
- A cat's instincts let it turn itself around in mid-fall and land on its feet.
- Cats have claws that help them climb tall objects and hold onto prey.
- Cats are very quick. They chase and sometimes catch animals that move fast, such as mice.
- Cats keep homes bug-free. Chasing insects is a fun game for them!

## Amazing Cats!

- A cat named Scarlett saved all five of her kittens from a burning abandoned garage in New York. She was badly burned from saving them all. "The Scarlett Award for Animal Heroism" is named after Scarlett. It is given to animals that help humans or other animals.
- Tara the cat saved a four year-old boy in California. She chased away an attacking dog that was dragging the boy off.



# Data About Dogs



- Dogs have been companions to humans for over 10,000 years!
- Dogs have sensitive noses. Some can smell more than 10,000 times better than humans!
- Think you have great hearing? Think again! Dogs can hear high-pitched sounds that humans cannot hear.
- Service dogs help people do things they may not be able to do for themselves. Seeing-eye dogs help people who are blind.
- Dogs can be taught new tricks at any age.

## Amazing Dogs!

- Barry the Saint Bernard was a rescue dog in Switzerland in the early 1800's. He looked for travelers who had been buried in snow. He saved more than 40 human lives.
- 11-year-old Austin was saved by his dog Angel when he was attacked by a cougar near Vancouver, Canada. Angel jumped in front of Austin, saving him from the cougar. Angel had some injuries, but she soon recovered.



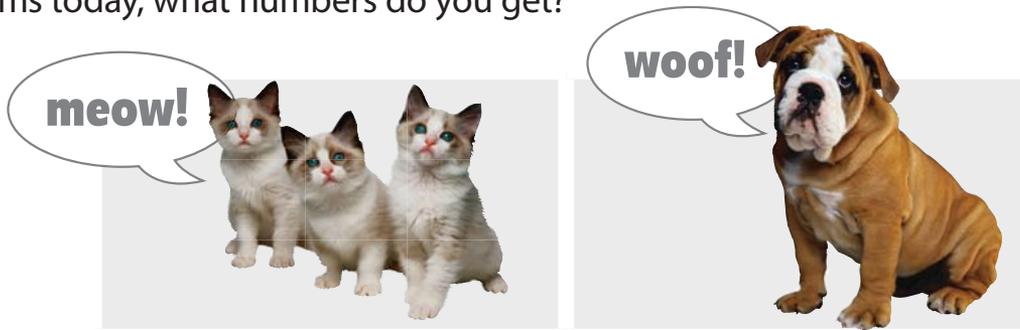
### Discuss and Decide

According to the fact sheet, what is one way that cats are different from dogs?

## Source 4: Chart

### The Internet Loves Dogs

I'm Theo, and I love all kinds of animals. I like cats and I like dogs, too. So when my friend Nadine asked me, "Which are better, cats or dogs?" I didn't know how to answer! That's when we went online to find out what the Internet has to say. If you look up these search terms today, what numbers do you get?



<b>Google</b>	search term: <b>cats are better than dogs</b> about <b>39.8 million</b>	search term: <b>dogs are better than cats</b> about <b>40.1 million</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	search term: <b>cat</b> or <b>cats</b> about <b>37.4 million</b>	search term: <b>dog</b> or <b>dogs</b> about <b>36.4 million</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	"likes" for: <b>cats</b> about <b>2.6 million</b>	"likes" for: <b>dogs</b> about <b>8.7 million</b>
<b>Instagram</b>	tagged: <b>#cat</b> or <b>#cats</b> about <b>47 million</b>	tagged: <b>#dog</b> or <b>#dogs</b> about <b>46 million</b>

#### Discuss and Decide

What details suggest that dogs are more popular than cats?

## Respond to Questions

These questions will help you think about the sources you've read. Use your notes and refer to the sources to answer the questions. Your answers to these questions will help you write your essay.

- 1** Which of the following statements is a fact?
  - a.** "... they meow for no reason." (Source 1)
  - b.** "Dogs are also better pets . . ." (Source 1)
  - c.** "You have to feed dogs at a specific time of day." (Source 2)
  - d.** "Cats have claws that help them climb tall objects and hold onto prey." (Source 3)
  
- 2** According to Source 1, why are dogs better than cats?
  - a.** They encourage people to take care of themselves.
  - b.** They are clean.
  - c.** They are easy to care for.
  - d.** They have to travel in carriers.
  
- 3** Which sentence best supports your answer to Question 2?
  - a.** "My dog Shelby only barks when she has to go outside, or when I tell her to to 'speak.'"
  - b.** "You can't bring a cat anywhere without a carrier!"
  - c.** "Dogs are also better pets because they take care of us."
  - d.** "People who own cats don't have to leave the house to take care of their pets!"

4 Which sentence best supports the idea that cats are brave?

- a. "Cats clean themselves, which is why they smell better than dogs." (Source 2)
- b. "Their claws help them climb tall objects and hold onto prey." (Source 3)
- c. "Scarlett saved all five of her kittens from a burning abandoned garage in New York." (Source 3)
- d. Google has about 535 million cat links. (Source 4)

5 Which source(s) agree that cats are better? Which source(s) agree that dogs are better? How do you know? Make notes about your reasons in the chart.

Source	Which are better?	Reasons
<b>Letter to the Editor</b> from Henry Regan	<input type="checkbox"/> cats <input type="checkbox"/> dogs	
<b>Letter to the Editor</b> from Juliette Charles	<input type="checkbox"/> cats <input type="checkbox"/> dogs	
<b>Fact Sheet</b> Facts About Cats Data About Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> cats <input type="checkbox"/> dogs	
<b>Chart</b> The Internet Loves Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> cats <input type="checkbox"/> dogs	

6 **Prose-Constructed Response** What information in Source 3 can support the writer's opinion in Source 1? Explain. Cite evidence from the text in your response.

---



---

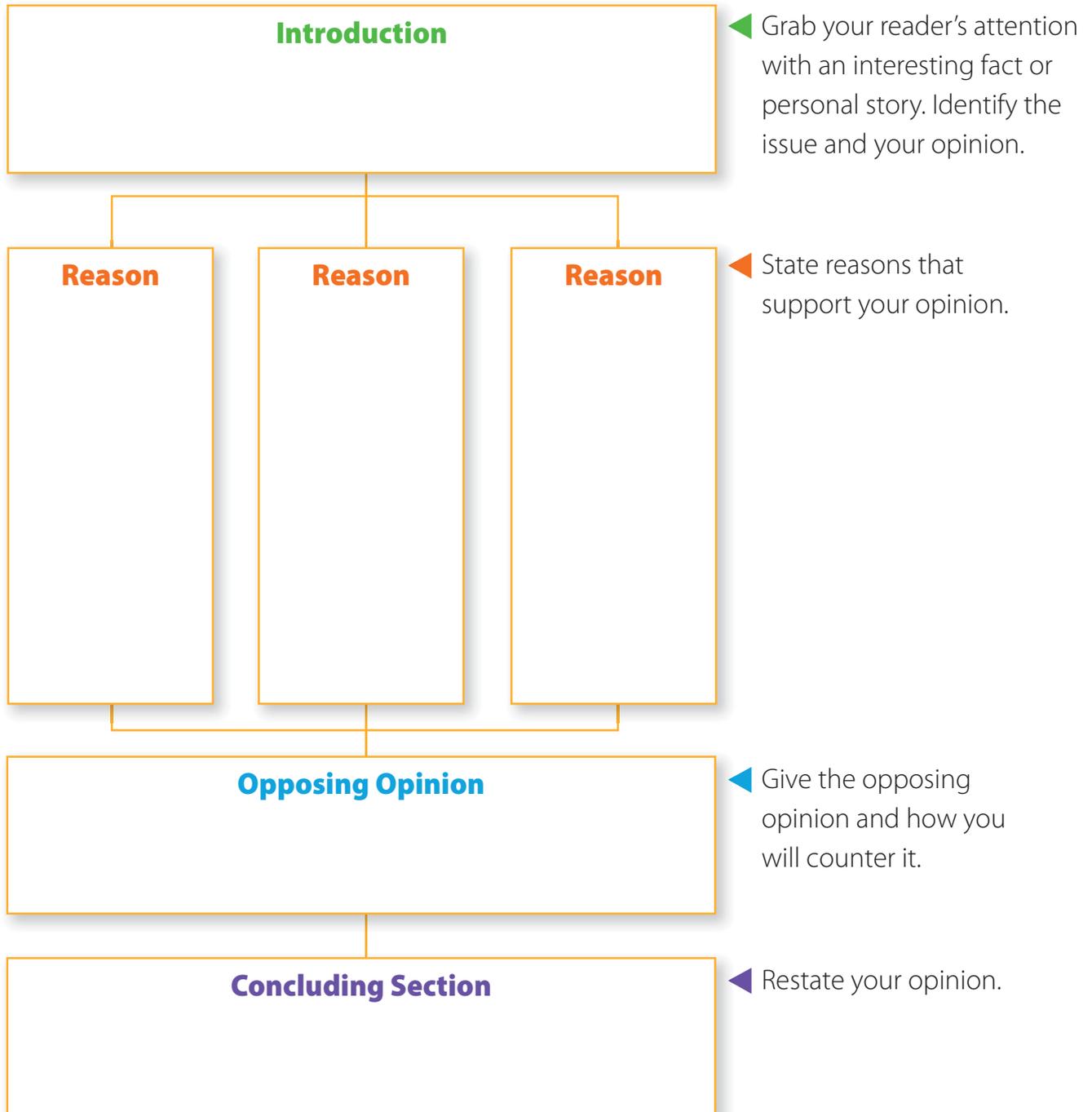
# Write the Essay

Read the assignment.

## Plan

Use the graphic organizer to help you outline the structure of your opinion essay.

**Assignment**  
You have read about cats and dogs. Now write an opinion essay explaining why you think cats or dogs are better pets. Support your opinion with details from what you have read.



## Draft

Use your notes and completed graphic organizer to write a first draft of your opinion essay.



## Revise and Edit

Look back over your essay and compare it to the Evaluation Criteria. Revise your essay and edit it to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

 You may wish to draft and edit your essay on the computer.

## Evaluation Criteria

Your teacher will be looking for:

### 1. *Statement of purpose*

- Is your opinion stated clearly?
- Did you support your opinion with reasons?
- Did you mention an opposing opinion?

### 2. *Organization*

- Are the sections of your essay organized in a way that makes sense?
- Is there a smooth flow from beginning to end?
- Did you use connecting words?
- Is there a clear conclusion?

### 3. *Reasons*

- Do your reasons support your opinion?
- Are your reasons convincing?

### 4. *Vocabulary*

- Did you use academic vocabulary?

### 5. *Conventions*

- Did you use proper punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?