

# Teachers' Guide

## CHALLENGING TeachKind ASSUMPTIONS



*Teaching virtually? You can use these lessons for distance learning with popular online conferencing tools like Zoom or Skype, both of which include chat features that allow students to type their responses to discussion questions and respond to each other in real time. If video conferencing tools aren't available to you, you can have students participate in discussions in an online forum, such as Google Classroom.*

### INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of "Challenging Assumptions" will provide students with an overarching theme of social justice to guide their learning throughout the year as well as basic knowledge of the concepts explained in the "Challenging Assumptions" video, which is designed to be shown at the end of this unit. Parts 2 and 3 of "Challenging Assumptions" are available at [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](https://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice).

### WHY CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS?

As educators, we aim to foster the development of critical thinking and processing skills in students, which will allow them to examine and understand important societal issues even after they leave the classroom. To achieve this, it is essential to incorporate strategies that cultivate students' higher-level analytical and communication skills.

Identifying societal assumptions and values that negatively impact others—such as the idea that humans are superior to all other animals or that some animals are to be cared for while others are to be used for personal gain—is the first step in empowering students to be consistent in their beliefs. This will help them ensure that their behavior and actions are justified, leading to improved social interactions with peers as well as greater kindness toward animals.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How do contradictory beliefs and actions play a part in society's treatment of animals?
2. What would it mean to give equal consideration to the interests of all sentient beings?

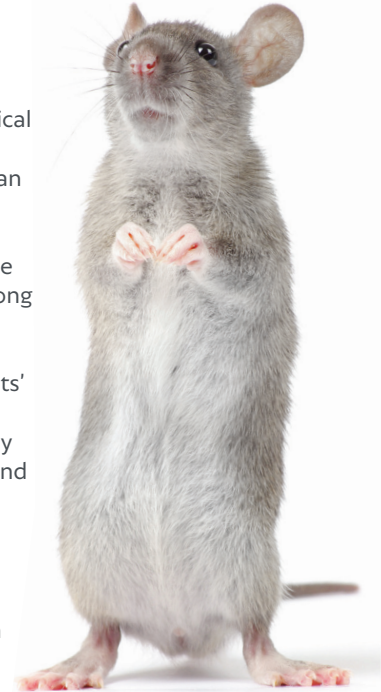
## Part 1 Exploring Speciesism and Discrimination

Please see Parts 2 and 3 at [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](https://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice).

### OVERVIEW

The following lessons are designed to help students move beyond the assumptions that they might make about other sentient beings and become more perceptive, thoughtful, and analytical about the reasons humans engage in certain behavior. They can serve as a preliminary step in helping students determine what actions are in line with their belief system and how society can challenge speciesism—the belief that all other animal species are inferior to our own.

Students begin by thinking critically about and discussing the abstract concepts of social justice with a gallery walk activity. Next, they'll reflect on their own thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes along with any inconsistencies in their behavior with a lesson on cognitive dissonance. Then, they'll turn their attention to a video that explores the moral considerations regarding animals and introduces the concept of equal consideration of interests. The unit will culminate with students' viewing and analyzing the "Challenging Assumptions" video, which will help them practice identifying and challenging the assumptions they've made about the rights of other animals. By the end of this unit, students will better understand their identities, values, and perspectives and will be better able to recognize and respect those of others, regardless of their species.



### WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Begin by instructing students to shake both hands in the air over their heads and then clasp their hands together, interlacing their fingers. Next, ask them to unclasp their hands and shake them out over their heads again. Then, have them clasp their hands together once more, this time interlacing their fingers with the opposite thumb on top. Ask students to describe how it felt to clasp their hands with the opposite thumb on top. Point out that doing so may feel uncomfortable or even be a bit challenging to do without some extra thought—much as it might feel to challenge assumptions that they've held for most of their lives. Inform students that in this unit, as they explore topics of social injustice, privilege, and bigotry, among others, they may feel uncomfortable or have trouble understanding new concepts at times. Assure them that your classroom—either in person or virtual—is a safe space where they can share their thoughts and feelings openly, and encourage them to ask questions and listen carefully to their peers as they participate in a variety of discussions.

Now that some expectations have been established, have students write down their responses to the following prompts to assess their prior knowledge and prepare them for the unit:

- Describe a period in history, which may be the present, when a certain group of individuals are or were harmed in some way as a result of prejudice against them. (Define prejudice as "an unfavorable opinion or feeling about a group of individuals formed without knowledge or reason.")
- Explain the types of justification used to continue treating the group of individuals unfairly (e.g., tradition, beliefs about superiority, or perceived necessity).

Invite students to share their responses with the class. Encourage them to ask each other questions and listen attentively as their peers express their thoughts. Allow for a variety of viewpoints to be shared while ensuring that the conversation remains respectful. Explain to students that throughout this unit, they'll be asked to challenge assumptions made about both humans and other animals and to reflect on what it means to oppose all prejudice in their day-to-day lives.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE GALLERY WALK

In this lesson, students think critically about the parallels between animal abuse and human abuse and examine the causes and effects of discrimination.

### Objectives

- **Affective:** Students will be able to draw parallels between the treatment of animals and the historical discrimination against people of color, women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and others who have been and continue to be marginalized or systemically denied basic rights.
- **Cognitive:** Students will be able to advance conversations by posing and responding to questions; to clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and to respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives.



[Angela Davis' University of Cape Town speech video](#) (available online)

### Background

Class discussions are an excellent way to get students thinking critically about the abstract concepts of social justice. Older students, however, are sometimes reluctant to participate in these conversations if it means speaking in front of their peers, so high school teachers must get creative in order to inspire rich and meaningful dialog in their classrooms. A gallery walk is a thought-provoking activity that gets students talking to one another about important issues, such as how present-day societies strive to justify abuse just as societies of the past did—regardless of the victims' species.

### Materials

- [Angela Davis' University of Cape Town speech video](#)\* (Students will watch a three-minute clip from this video.)
- Gallery walk images\*
- For a virtual gallery walk: Zoom, Skype, Google Classroom, Padlet, or another virtual tool for hosting online discussions
- For an in-person gallery walk: glue, scissors, construction paper, tape, markers, and up to a dozen poster-size pieces of paper.
- ["PETA Reveals: Why Feminists Must Reject All Violence, Not Just Violence Against Humans" video](#)\*

- ["PETA Reveals: Animal Rights Is Not a 'White Thing'" video](#)\*
- ["PETA Reveals: Civil Rights Icon Inspired This Lawyer to Push the Boundaries of Animal Rights" video](#)\*

### Key Vocabulary

**oppression:** prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control

### Motivation

- Begin the lesson by showing students a clip of [Angela Davis' 2016 speech at the University of Cape Town in South Africa starting at 40:13 and ending at 43:24](#),\* when she delivers a powerful call for political activism to wipe out racism, sexism, ableism, and society's other ills. (If you have time to have students watch the entire speech, you will see that she elaborates on ways we can oppose oppression of all groups, including animals.) Best known as a longtime human rights activist, Davis is also a committed vegan, and she made sure to highlight the connection between all forms of exploitation and oppression in her keynote address.
- Tell students to pay attention to the examples of activism (e.g., Muhammad Ali's refusal to be inducted into the army) and prejudice (racism, sexism, etc.) that she uses throughout the video.
- Have students discuss with a partner why they think she included those examples. Davis told the packed house, "[S]entient beings ... endure pain and torture as they are transformed into food for profit, food that generates disease in humans whose poverty compels them to rely on McDonald's and KFC for nourishment." Heroes like her leave animals off their plates as they tackle the issues that plague the Black community, because they understand that in the way that matters the most—our ability to

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- feel pain, love, fear, and acceptance—humans and all other animals are the same.
- Discuss this statement in particular as a class and ask, "Is civil rights related to animal rights? Why or why not?" Have students support their positions with clear reasons and relevant evidence.



Gallery walk images (available online)

**Before the Gallery Walk**

If you're teaching virtually or if you need to limit students' movement around the classroom to maintain social distancing, you can still conduct a gallery walk using popular online conferencing tools like Zoom or Skype. Simply display the images individually so that students can see them, or share them in the chat feature and instruct students to respond by typing their responses (as opposed to saying them out loud). You can also use Padlet, an online tool that allows students to post notes on a shared page. If these tools aren't available to you, you can have students discuss each image in an online forum, such as Google Classroom.

**Virtual Gallery Walk**

1. Using your online forum of choice, create a separate discussion thread for each image. Include a different image in each thread, along with the following instructions: "Consider this image. What thoughts or feelings come to mind? You may write as little as one word, such as 'suffering,' or as much as a few sentences."
2. Designate a time frame during which students are to post at least one response in each discussion thread.
3. Have students post a thoughtful response to at least three of their classmates' posts.

**In-Person Gallery Walk**

- **Begin by printing out the gallery walk images.\*** Cut out each one, and glue it to a piece of construction paper.
- On the day of your gallery walk, tape the images around your classroom at eye level. Next to each image, tape a large piece of paper to the wall. Have markers available at each station.



For this activity, some teachers juxtapose images of humans and other animals (e.g., a homeless person and a homeless dog). You could also use images from your curriculum that your students have already seen.

**During the Gallery Walk**

Explain the rules of the gallery walk.

- Tell students that as they would explore an art gallery, they should walk around the room and consider each image at least once.



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- On the piece of paper next to the image, they should write whatever thoughts or feelings come to mind. They may write as little as one word, such as "suffering," or as much as a few sentences. If they've responded to each image and time is left, they should revisit images and add more impressions to the paper.
- Encourage students to circle important words or phrases on the pieces of paper, draw arrows, or use other symbols, such as exclamation points or question marks, to connect their ideas to those of others. They can even write short responses to their classmates' comments, such as "Yes, I agree!" or "But what if ... ?" Remind them that they should use appropriate language, respond to one another's comments respectfully, and avoid crossing out or obscuring someone else's words.
- All responses should be written, not spoken. Assure students that there will be time to discuss their thoughts afterward.

As students circulate throughout the "gallery," you can play soft instrumental music. Walk around the room with them, monitoring their responses and adding your own comments to the silent conversation. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for students to complete the gallery walk.

**After the Gallery Walk**

Since students have had the opportunity to respond to the images in writing, without judgment from their peers, some may be more willing to share their thoughts in a group conversation. Initiate and guide the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What did you notice as you participated in the gallery walk?
- What comments did you respond to? What comments received the most attention? Why?
- What similarities did you notice between the images? What differences did you notice?
- If you had to give this "exhibition" a title, what would it be? Why?

Allow the dialog to unfold naturally, letting students do most of the talking. Pose questions, and clarify when necessary.

Then divide students into three groups. Assign each group one of the following videos to watch and discuss. Have students use the accompanying questions to guide their discussion and prepare a brief summary of their video to share with the class.



["PETA Reveals: Why Feminists Must Reject All Violence, Not Just Violence Against Humans" video](#) (available online)

**"PETA Reveals: Why Feminists Must Reject All Violence, Not Just Violence Against Humans"\***

1. In your own words, explain the link between the consumption of meat, eggs, and dairy and a patriarchal society (one in which men hold the power).

**Answer:** The production of animal-derived foods that many people consume every day such as meat, eggs, and cheese involves reproductive control, the removal of babies from their mothers, and the deliberate injuring and killing of sentient beings. For example, since cows produce milk only to nourish their calves, dairy farmers keep them pregnant starting from the time they become sexually mature by artificially inseminating them—while they're restrained in a device that the industry itself calls a "rape rack." Like human females throughout history and at present, female members of other species have been exploited for their bodies and dismissed as unimportant, unintelligent, and unworthy of consideration.

2. Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, argues that both women and animals are objectified—treated as objects rather than individuals with thoughts and feelings. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

**Answer:** Will vary based on student experience. Encourage students to reflect on ways women are portrayed in the media, what they are valued for, and what obstacles they must overcome to be treated equally in society. Have them then consider these same factors as they relate to animals used for food.

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3. What specific examples does the speaker provide to support her claim that animal rights is a feminist issue?

**Answer:** In order to force them to have as many babies as possible, pigs are forcibly impregnated and kept in metal crates so small that they can't even turn around. Their piglets are taken away from them shortly after birth to be raised and sent to slaughter. Cows are also artificially inseminated, and their calves are taken from them so that their milk can be sold for human consumption. Hens on egg farms are kept in wire cages so small that they can't spread their wings, and their eggs are taken and sold. When these animals can no longer breed or produce eggs or milk, they are no longer useful to farmers, so they're sent to slaughter.



["PETA Reveals: Animal Rights Is Not a 'White Thing'" video](#) (available online)

**"PETA Reveals: Animal Rights Is Not a 'White Thing'"\***

1. Why did the speaker feel lonely when she first started out in the animal rights movement? What helped relieve some of this loneliness?

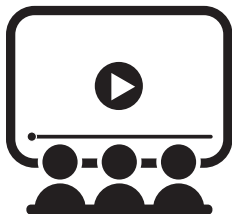
**Answer:** She was often the only Black person at many of the demonstrations she attended. She felt less alone when she found inspirational Black activists online who wrote blogs about animal rights and being vegan.

2. Why is it important for people of color to be equally represented in the animal rights movement?

**Possible answer:** The speaker points out that "[t]o think only white people care about health, animals, and the planet is absolutely false" and that referring to the animal rights movement as a "white thing" overlooks all the Black activists who've contributed to it. Equal representation of minorities in the fight for animal rights is important so that everyone can contribute to and benefit from it. Many Black people face health problems like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease because food companies take advantage of them, but if they were to think that only white people can be vegan, they'd miss out on the health benefits. Similarly, many people of color care about animals and the environment and want to do as little harm to both as possible, but if they don't see others like them represented in the movement, they might be reluctant to join.

3. What does the speaker mean when she says, "We can care about more than one struggle" (4:49)?

**Answer:** It's possible to fight for multiple causes, like the rights of both humans and other animals as well as the health of the planet. In many cases, advocating for one oppressed group can also help another.



["PETA Reveals: Civil Rights Icon Inspired This Lawyer to Push the Boundaries of Animal Rights" video](#) (available online)

**"PETA Reveals: Civil Rights Icon Inspired This Lawyer to Push the Boundaries of Animal Rights"\***

1. Briefly describe the case that PETA argued on behalf of Naruto the macaque.

**Answer:** Naruto the monkey took a selfie using a photographer's camera. The photographer then published the image, claiming that he'd taken the photo. PETA argued that the rights to the photo belonged to Naruto because he'd taken it himself.

2. How was the lawsuit settled?

**Answer:** The photographer agreed to donate 25% of the money that he made from Naruto's selfie to charities that will benefit Naruto and his community of macaques and protect their habitat.

3. Why is impact litigation significant?

**Answer:** Even if they're not won, impact lawsuits such as Naruto's first-of-its-kind case serve as symbolic stepping stones toward the larger goal of freeing all animals from exploitation and abuse. Before this history-making case was heard, many thought it was absurd to grant an animal a copyright, but now the legal community—and society as a whole—is beginning to reconsider what other animals are entitled to. Future lawyers will study this impact lawsuit, increasing the chances that other similar cases will be taken seriously and won.

4. On what grounds does the speaker claim that SeaWorld violates the 13th Amendment?

**Answer:** The 13th Amendment to the Constitution prohibits slavery. The speaker argues that it doesn't just apply to humans but rather to all animals and that SeaWorld violated it by taking five orcas from their natural habitat, imprisoning them in its tanks, and forcing them to work and breed.

In addition to their responses to the discussion questions, invite students to share other insights that they had during their conversations with their peers. Did everyone agree with one another, or were there differences of opinion? Did any students change their minds after talking with their group? Remind students that discussing social justice issues like feminism, racism, and speciesism can feel uncomfortable, but with practice, challenging our assumptions about longstanding harmful institutions, values, and beliefs becomes easier.

### Real-World Connection

Many of history's most iconic leaders and thinkers have opposed violence against animals, understanding that discrimination based on species is no different from discrimination based on skin color, gender, or other arbitrary characteristics. In many cases, those who are working to break down the prejudices that cause animals to be treated as "lesser" are the same people who advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, disability rights, racial justice, religious tolerance, and other social justice issues. In his total commitment to nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi always included animals, stating, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Martin Luther King Jr., who was inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence, said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Bigotry in all its ugly forms is wrong—regardless of who the victim is. And when we witness it, we shouldn't let it go unchallenged.



### Wrap-Up Activity



Have students respond to one of the following journal prompts in their notebooks or on a blank sheet of paper:

- How are humans and other animals similar? How are they different? Do these differences make it right to imprison, abuse, or exploit animals? Why or why not?
- What parallels can you draw between humans' treatment of animals and the historical discrimination against people of color, women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, or others who have been marginalized or systemically denied basic human rights?
- Some people say that animals are so much like humans that we must capture and study them—for instance, in labs—in order to understand our own species better. On the other hand, they also say that animals are so unlike humans that they don't experience pain, loneliness, and sadness, so they aren't worthy of the same ethical consideration given to humans. Can both of these arguments be true, or are they contradictory? Explain your answer.

### Assessment

Evaluate students' written responses, and monitor group discussions for evidence that they're questioning the status quo and responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives.

**Common Misperception/Reality**

Common Misperception 	Reality 
<p>The fight for animal rights takes away from the fight for human rights. Humans should be more concerned about helping members of their own species before helping those of others. When we're still tackling the oppression of humans, it's a luxury to be concerned about other animals.</p>	<p>Bullying and violence aren't limited to humans any more than they're limited to certain races or one gender identity. If we want a more just world, we must work to end all prejudice, not just the kinds that affect us personally.</p> <p>The mindset that condones the oppression of humans—whether we're talking about Muslims, women, older people, members of the LGBTQ+ community, or people of color—is the same mindset that permits the exploitation of animals. Prejudices arise when we start to believe that "I" am special and "you" are not and that "my" interests are more important than those of other sentient beings.</p> <p>It is possible to advocate for the rights of all living beings. Many civil rights leaders, past and present, have maintained that as long as one form of prejudice exists, no form of prejudice can be completely eradicated, and thus, civil rights and animal rights are inextricably linked.</p>



**Extension**

Students can watch the remaining videos in the documentary series [PETA Reveals](#),\* which highlights powerful stories from 10 individuals who recognized animal suffering and became determined to take action instead of maintaining the status quo.

**Common Core Standards Addressed**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C**  
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D**  
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C**  
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D**  
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.



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- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

\*Indicates components necessary to implement the lesson are available online only.  
Please visit [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](https://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice) to access these materials.

**LESSON 2**

# COGNITIVE DISSONANCE AND HOW HUMANS TREAT ANIMALS

In this lesson, students examine their personal beliefs and behavior, identifying areas in which they experience cognitive dissonance and analyzing their opposing attitudes and actions. They then evaluate examples of discordant beliefs and behavior in society as a whole, using their understanding of facts and opinions to challenge the assumption that animals are ours to use.

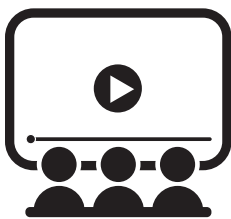
**Objectives**

- **Affective:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the psychological experience of cognitive dissonance and to reflect on and evaluate their own beliefs and behavior.
- **Cognitive:** Students will be able to initiate and participate effectively in a variety of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas, expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively, and citing evidence to substantiate their claims. Students will also be able to draw inferences from an informational text and express their opinions in writing using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Background**

Cognitive dissonance—which is defined as “the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change”—is something most people have experienced at one point or another. It’s that feeling you get when you do something like buy a case of plastic water bottles with lots of packaging while simultaneously being fully aware of the damage that plastic wreaks on the environment.

While this state can be uncomfortable, it can be used very effectively in the classroom to help



“Grace’: PETA’s Banned Thanksgiving Ad” video (available online)



students make informed choices. Studies show that the experience of cognitive dissonance can be used to foster prosocial behavior and promote positive change.

**Materials**

- “Grace’: PETA’s Banned Thanksgiving Ad” video\*
- “Statements About Beliefs” and “Statements About Behavior” worksheets (included in the kit)
- “Why Are We Outraged About Eating Dog, but Not Bacon?” article (included in the kit)
- “Differentiating Animals From the Ways They Are Used” sheet (included in the kit)
- “The Hidden Lives of Animals” reading passages (included in the kit)

**Key Vocabulary**

**cognitive dissonance:** the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change

**Motivation**

- Begin the lesson by showing students the video “Grace’: PETA’s Banned Thanksgiving Ad.”\* in which a young girl says a disturbingly truthful prayer before her family’s holiday feast.
- Tell students that the ad was submitted to air during the iconic Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade but was ultimately rejected by NBC, even though it contains no graphic images.
- Ask them how they think the family in the video feels as the little girl describes the abuse that turkeys raised for food endure. (Answers could include ashamed, conflicted, disgusted, etc.).
- Ask them to consider PETA’s goal in creating

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the ad (to persuade viewers to go vegan ahead of the holiday season, during which millions of turkeys are slaughtered so that humans can eat them).

- Have students share their responses as a class before explaining that the psychological phenomenon known as cognitive dissonance was purposely used in this ad.

The girl states facts about the treatment that the turkey endured. Viewers of the ad can see on the family members' faces that they're not comfortable with this kind of treatment, yet they're still prepared to eat the turkey. What allows the family members to enjoy their feast without thinking of and feeling for the individual they're eating is *cognitive dissonance*—a disconnect between their beliefs and their behavior. In this ad, students can see what cognitive dissonance looks like. Next, they'll get a chance to experience it.



**Part 1**

**Before Reading**

The following activity was inspired by an in-class exercise used in the study "Bringing Cognitive Dissonance to the Classroom" by David M. Carkenord and Joseph Bullington. It's designed to induce cognitive dissonance in students by pointing out inconsistencies between their beliefs and their behavior.

["Statements About Beliefs" and "Statements About Behavior" worksheets](#) (included in the kit)

["Why Are We Outraged About Eating Dog, but Not Bacon?"](#) article (included in the kit)

- Start by giving your students a copy of the ["Statements About Beliefs" worksheet](#) (included in the kit). If you are teaching virtually, have students complete the digital version of this worksheet. Ask them to choose either A or B as the answer to each of the questions, based on what they believe to be factual, given their awareness of the topic. Ask students to turn their sheet facedown (or minimize their digital worksheet) after they've completed it.
- Then have students complete the second worksheet, ["Statements About Behavior"](#) (included in the kit). Ask them once again to choose either A or B for each answer, and stress that they should be truthful in answering each question, regardless of how they answered the questions about their beliefs—even if they notice inconsistencies. Explain that inconsistencies between attitudes and actions are very normal.
- Have students identify questions that show dissonance between a belief and their behavior. Repeat that inconsistencies are normal, and explain that identifying and processing the dissonance can help them make informed choices in the future.
- Have students write down their initial reactions to this exercise on a separate sheet of paper. This can be as simple as writing a few words that describe how they feel.
- Explore students' reactions as a class, and let them know that when people experience the feeling of cognitive dissonance, they often feel uncomfortable or defensive. Our brains are simply trying to reconcile the difference between our knowledge or beliefs and how we choose to act.

Discuss the following common reactions to feelings of cognitive dissonance:

- Attempting to rationalize the behavior (e.g., "But everybody eats meat, so it's fine.")
- Ignoring the truth or being in denial (e.g., "I don't want to think about that.")
- Reducing the importance of their belief (e.g., "Animals aren't as intelligent as humans, so their lives don't matter as much.")

The above coping mechanisms are defensive reactions. The most effective way to reduce cognitive dissonance is to change either a belief or a related action so that the two are consistent. After the discussion, have students write a paragraph about a behavior they could change in their own life in order to reduce cognitive dissonance brought to light by this activity.



**During Reading**

The concept known as “the meat paradox” describes the cognitive dissonance experienced by people who care about the well-being of animals and also choose to eat them. They believe that animals deserve protection and care, but their actions contribute to the abuse and death of animals. Have students conduct a close reading of the article [“Why Are We Outraged About Eating Dog, but Not Bacon?”](#) by Jared Piazza, lecturer in moral psychology at Lancaster University in the U.K. (included in the kit). Have them respond to and discuss their answers to the questions with a classmate or in small groups:

1. According to the author, why is it that humans feel outraged and heartbroken by the thought of dogs being slaughtered and served as food but don't experience the same reaction to the thought of pigs being slaughtered and served as food? Do you agree or disagree with his claim?

**Answer:** *The author asserts that “emotional prejudice” is the reason why humans react differently to dogs and pigs being eaten as food. Piazza writes, “We just don't care enough about pigs for their needless suffering to pull at our heartstrings.” Additional responses will vary based on student experience, but encourage students to use their knowledge of cognitive dissonance to inform their answer.*

2. Is the popular argument that we should care more about dogs because of their “superior social intelligence” a strong one? Why or why not? Use evidence from the article to support your answer.

**Possible answer:** *It is not logical or accurate to argue that dogs deserve better treatment because they're more intelligent than pigs. The author points out that because humans typically keep dogs as companions, they're simply more familiar with them and therefore more likely to identify with them emotionally. Dogs and pigs share many cognitive abilities, and pigs sometimes even outperform dogs on certain tasks.*

3. How did the participants in the author's lab's study respond when presented with images of baby animals? How did they react when presented with images of adult animals? Do you think individuals who are thought to be “cute” deserve more respect and consideration than those who are not? Explain your answer.

**Answer:** *The study showed that participants thought it would be more wrong to harm the baby animals than the adult animals because baby animals are cute. Additional responses will vary based on student experience, but encourage students to consider the moral implications of treating attractive humans with more respect and consideration than unattractive ones.*

4. Explain the myside bias and the problems it presents.

**Answer:** *The myside bias occurs when someone favors evidence that supports their own opinions. This is problematic because facts should not be up for debate but rather accepted as true. We should instead adjust our opinions to be in alignment with facts, not vice versa.*

5. In Steve Loughnan's study, how did participants' feelings about the alien and the tapir differ from their feelings about the pig? Why?

**Answer:** *Participants felt that it was wrong to eat the alien and the tapir but acceptable to eat the pig because it's considered normal to eat pigs, even though their intelligence level is the same as that of the alien and the tapir.*

Reconvene as a class, and have students share their thoughts on the article. Then discuss the following question:

**If people treated cats and dogs the way animals used for food are treated (i.e., kept in cages so small that they can't even turn around, etc.), they could be arrested on felony cruelty-to-animals charges. In your opinion, what's the reason for this massive, societywide cognitive dissonance? Why are some animals considered beloved companions while others are tortured, killed, and often eaten by people who claim to love and care about animals?**



**LESSON 2**

**After Reading**

As Piazza points out, experts theorize that certain factors contribute to the greater amount of compassion that people have for some animals than others. After the discussion, share these factors with your students:

- How “cute” or “babyish” an animal looks (having characteristics such as large eyes and a round head)
- How intelligent species are perceived to be (although this doesn’t necessarily correspond to their actual intelligence level)
- How many physical characteristics an animal shares with humans
- How many admirable anthropomorphized (or human-like) qualities an animal is thought to possess (e.g., cleverness, bravery, or capacity for affection)

After reviewing these qualities, ask students to write a paragraph giving their opinion on the following questions, citing evidence to support their case: **Is it fair to judge animals by these qualities? Why or why not?**

**Part 2**

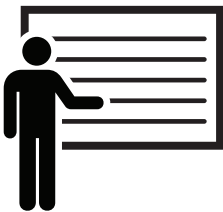
Have students respond to the two questions that follow using their opinions and conducting independent research online. This can be done either in class or as homework:

1. What laws concerning animals show inconsistencies?

***Example answer:** The way animals are treated in a slaughterhouse would warrant felony cruelty-to-animals charges if someone did the same things in another setting or to an animal of a different species, such as a dog.*

2. Think about the many ways humans use animals in our society (e.g., in experiments, as food, for clothing, in entertainment). What are some things that many self-described “animal lovers” do that create cognitive dissonance?

***Example answer:** Some self-described “animal lovers” are horrified at the thought of using the skin of a cat or dog for leather but may buy shoes made of cows’ skin without a second thought, even though cows suffer just as much when they’re killed for leather.*



**Part 3**

Begin this activity by writing the following words on the board, reading them out loud to students via a web conferencing tool such as Zoom or sharing them in your online forum of choice such as Google Classroom:

cat	duck	mouse	rat
chicken	fish	octopus	turkey
cow	frog	pig	
dog	goose	rabbit	

[“Differentiating Animals From the Ways They Are Used” sheet](#) (included in the kit)

[“The Hidden Lives of Animals” reading passages](#) (included in the kit)

- Provide students with the [“Differentiating Animals From the Ways They Are Used” sheet](#) (included in the kit). As you read the name of each animal, have students write the animal under the category

that seems appropriate for the way our society treats them (as science experiments, food, clothing/fabric, companion animals, pests, or wild animals). If students need help defining the category titles, explain further. Let them know that there are no wrong answers and that they may list an animal in multiple categories. For example, mice are companion animals and also commonly used in experiments and considered by some to be pests.

- Once students have categorized each of the animals, break them into pairs or groups of three (depending on how many are in your class) and have each group read one of the ["Hidden Lives of Animals" reading passages](#) (included in the kit).
- When they're finished, have group members participate in a collaborative discussion about the things they learned and what new perspectives they have on the animals they read about.
- Then have all the groups prepare and give a short presentation to the rest of the class on the animal(s) in their reading passage. Ask them to address at least five different facts about the animal(s) in their presentation as well as at least one significant quality that they share with animals like cats and dogs. For example, many fish like physical contact with other fish and often gently rub against one another—in the same way a cat weaves in and out of a human's legs.
- Discuss how the class initially categorized each animal, and ask students if that categorization makes sense after looking deeper. Have students address the role that cognitive dissonance plays in society's continued exploitation and general treatment of these animals.

### Real-World Connection

Ask students, "What other times in your life have you experienced cognitive dissonance? How did you respond (for example, attempt to rationalize the behavior, ignore the truth or be in denial, or reduce the importance of the belief)? Did you adjust your belief or your behavior? Going forward, how will your knowledge of cognitive dissonance inform your actions?" Have students explain their answers fully and discuss their responses as a class.

Ask students, "Why do you think many people become uncomfortable when presented with images or video footage of animals suffering (for example, homeless cats and dogs, pigs in slaughterhouses) or altogether refuse to look at them?" Have students explain their answers fully and discuss their responses as a class.



### Wrap-Up Activity

Share with students the quotation below from Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Schweitzer, and ask them to discuss what it means to them and how it relates to cognitive dissonance.



**"No one must shut his eyes and regard as non-existent the suffering of which he spared himself the sight."**

—Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Schweitzer

### Assessment

Evaluate students' written responses, and monitor group discussions for evidence of clear and persuasive expression of ideas as well as building on the ideas of others.

**Common Misperception/Reality**

Common Misperception 	Reality 
<p>It's "natural" for humans to use animals. Some animals are meant to be cared for and deserve our respect and consideration, whereas others are meant to be used in experiments, for food, for labor, or otherwise exploited.</p>	<p>Humans have categorized animals based on arbitrary characteristics. For example, someone might be moved to tears by a news story about an abused dog yet feel no remorse over eating a bucket of chicken wings that caused multiple birds to suffer and die. This is not because dogs suffer more or feel more pain than chickens but because humans ascribe a higher importance to dogs than they do to chickens.</p>



**Extension**

If you'd like to have your students continue their research into the meat paradox, reasons why people treat certain animals differently, and reactions to cognitive dissonance, have them read the following articles or watch the documentary [The Emotional World of Farm Animals](#).<sup>\*†</sup>

- [The Independent: "Why Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others ..."](#)<sup>\*</sup>
- [The Conversation: "The Meat Paradox: How We Can Love Some Animals and Eat Others"](#)<sup>\*</sup>

**Common Core Standards Addressed**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1**  
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1**  
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

<sup>\*</sup>Indicates components necessary to implement the lesson are available online only  
Please visit [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](http://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice) to access these materials.

**LESSON 2**

\*Please note that starting at 11:53 in the documentary *The Emotional World of Farm Animals*, Ned Buyukmihci, D.V.M., cofounder of Animal Place, explains that his colleagues suggested “killing” Jessie, a cow who was taken to the sanctuary with a severely broken leg. While Jessie recovered from her injury, euthanasia is nevertheless a painless, quick, and dignified way to spare animals intense suffering and a prolonged death. When performed properly and by a trained professional, euthanasia is often the most compassionate option.



**LESSON 3**

# SPECIESISM 101

In this lesson, students define and deconstruct the speciesist mindset, identifying logical fallacies in this harmful way of thinking as well as solutions to it.

### Objectives

- **Affective:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of *speciesism* and why it has harmful repercussions in society.
- **Cognitive:** Students will be able to write informatively to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Background

Like sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination, speciesism is an oppressive belief system in which those with power draw boundaries to justify using or excluding their fellow beings who are less powerful. This line of “reasoning” is used to justify treating other living, feeling beings like research tools, food ingredients, fabric, or toys—even though they share our capacity for pain, hunger, fear, thirst, love, joy, and loneliness and have as much interest in freedom and staying alive as we do.

Many humans grow up thinking of themselves as entirely different from and superior to other animals, which lays the foundation for exploiting them. From childhood, most humans are conditioned to view certain species as worthy of care and compassion and others as less important or unworthy—based on arbitrary human preferences. This toxic view also leads humans to draw groundless distinctions between animal species based on their perceived worth.

Because of speciesism, we learn to ignore our own conscience, which tells us that it’s wrong to mistreat others. Addressing speciesism and acknowledging other animals’ rights can be as

simple as respecting their needs and leaving them in peace.

### Materials

- [“All Beings Bleed the Same” campaign images\\*](#)
- [“RZA: We’re Not Different in Any Important Way” video\\*](#)
- [“RZA: We’re Not Different in Any Important Way” video transcript\\*](#)
- [“Non-Human Animals: Crash Course Philosophy #42” \(PBS\) video\\*](#)
- [“Test Subjects” video\\*](#)

### Key Vocabulary

**speciesism:** prejudice or discrimination based on species

### Motivation

Begin the lesson by showing students the [“All Beings Bleed the Same” campaign images\\*](#) and asking them to explain what they think is going on in each image and what the goal of the campaign is. Ask them how they feel when they look at the images and why. Have them share their responses as a class.

### Guided Practice

Have students watch the video [“We’re Not Different in Any Important Way” featuring musician RZA.\\*](#) Provide them with the [transcript\\*](#) so they can follow along, making note of any language in the text or images in the video that stand out to them. As a class, discuss the questions that follow as well as any additional thoughts or feelings that students may have.



[“All Beings Bleed the Same” campaign images](#) (available online)



[“We’re Not Different in Any Important Way” video](#) and [transcript](#) (available online)

**LESSON 3**

**Discussion Questions**

1. Who is usually referred to when the speaker says “we” throughout the video?

**Answer:** In most instances, this refers to all sentient beings, humans and other animals alike.

2. How are humans and other animals different? How are we the same?

**Answer:** As the video points out, some animals have fur, feathers, or fins. Some have long noses, some have four or more legs, and some have no legs at all. Some fly, some can breathe underwater, and some live underground. All animals have thoughts and feelings. We all love, have the ability to feel pain, and want to live free from harm.

3. What do you think the speaker means when he says, “We can all understand, but we are not always understanding”?

**Possible answer:** All sentient beings are individuals with thoughts and feelings. Humans, however, don’t always respect this. Sometimes we judge others based on their outward appearance, and sometimes we even hurt them for being different.

4. The speaker says, “We experience ourselves as separate from the rest.” How can this way of thinking be harmful?

**Possible answer:** When one group of individuals thinks that it is more important than another, the former may use its superior mindset to mistreat or even harm the latter in order to maintain its dominance and privilege. For example, some humans describe animals as unintelligent or unfeeling in order to justify harming and killing them for experiments, food, clothing, or entertainment.

5. The video closes with the message “Face it: Inside every body, there is a person.” Do you think animals are people, too? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Will vary based on student experience. Point out that while the word “person” is almost exclusively used to describe humans, corporations have also been deemed persons in the eyes of the law. There have also been several court cases in which humans have fought for an animal’s right to legal personhood. You may also ask students to consider which noun category (person, place, or thing) they would assign animals to, arguing that they aren’t places or things.



**Group Work**

Put students in groups of three or four and have them watch the video [“Non-Human Animals: Crash Course Philosophy #42.”](#)\* Assign one set of questions to each group. Have students discuss their responses with their group and see if they can come to a consensus. Have each group present their responses to the whole class.

[“Non-Human Animals: Crash Course Philosophy #42” video](#)  
(available online)

**Discussion Questions**

1. “The response to [Cecil] the lion’s death was so strong that the guy who shot Cecil basically went into hiding until he issued an apology. But isn’t that a little bit strange? We react with horror when we hear about a majestic lion being shot or sacks of kittens being tossed into rivers or owners training their dogs to fight each other for sport. But what is the difference between killing Cecil and killing a deer, or a duck, or a cow, or a chicken?” Respond to this question posed in the video. How did you determine your beliefs? Are they consistent with your behavior? How can you use your knowledge of cognitive dissonance to understand your reaction to the video and the questions it raises?
2. “How do we reconcile the strong feelings many of us have about certain animals, mainly the cute ones like kittens and puppies, with the way we actually use animals in our own lives?” Respond to this question posed in the video. The video points out that animals face harm because humans use them for their meat, milk, and skin. How can you make your actions more consistent with your feelings?

**LESSON 3**

3. "Contemporary Austrian philosopher Peter Singer uses the word *speciesism* to describe giving preference to our own species over another in the absence of morally relevant differences." Why does Singer believe that humans giving preference to humans over other animals is based on "morally irrelevant difference[s]"? (Hint: He reminds us that there was a time when enslaving humans was thought to be totally normal and right based on the morally irrelevant difference of skin color.) Is species a morally relevant difference? How do you think future generations will look back on us?
4. Philosopher Carl Cohen argues that "every species is struggling to claw its way to the top and that's how it should be" and that "every species ought to be concerned with protecting itself." He says that "humans ... can pretty much do whatever we want to other beings." Reflecting on previous class discussions, do you believe that "might makes right"? Does tradition justify everything? Is it necessary for humans to use and eat animals?
5. The philosopher Jeremy Bentham said, "The question is not 'Can they reason?' nor 'Can they talk?' but 'Can they suffer?'" What does this statement mean to you?

**Independent Work**

Have students choose one way society uses animals and describe in writing what an equal consideration of interests would look like. Students may find PETA's motto helpful in identifying the four main areas in which the largest number of animals suffer the most intensely for the longest periods of time at the hands of humans: "Animals are not ours to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment, or abuse in any other way."

Ask students to break down Singer's principle of equal consideration by addressing the following questions in their description. Walk them through an example: As the video points out, society uses rabbits (along with mice, rats, monkeys, cats, dogs, and other animals) in laboratory experiments.

- What interests do humans and the animals in your chosen scenario share?  
**Example:** Both humans and rabbits have an interest in avoiding pain and suffering. This includes having all their needs met (food, water, shelter, freedom of movement, safety, etc.).
- Are these shared interests equally considered in the way society uses the animals in your scenario?  
**Example:** These shared interests are not equally considered in the way society uses rabbits. As the video points out, "a common method for testing cosmetics ... involves restraining rabbits and putting the product into their eyes, leaving it for a set amount of time, and then washing it out and checking for ill effects." The video goes on to note that "this can be extremely painful and often blinds the rabbits, [who] are then euthanized."
- If not, how can the scenario be changed to consider the interests of all individuals involved equally?  
**Example:** Opting for animal-free testing and research methods would provide both humans and rabbits with an equal consideration of interests.

**Real-World Connection**

Read the following short story to the class to prepare students to watch the "Test Subjects" video:

Thanks to a rat named Ratsky, Dr. Neal Barnard, founder of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, changed the way medical schools in the U.S. and Canada use animals.

While in college, Barnard, interested in how the human mind works, enrolled in a psychology course that included placing rats in boxes and depriving them of food and water so that they would press levers or do whatever else the experimenters wanted them to do.



["Test Subjects" video](#)  
(available online)

**LESSON 3**

One day Barnard was conducting a test in which he had to drill holes into a rat's head and insert electrodes inside the brain. To steady the skull, the rats had to be placed in a device that held them in place by way of bars in their ears. Barnard's professor walked by and told him that his device was too loose. When Barnard tightened it, he could feel it pierce the rat's eardrums. He reported this to his professor, who shot back, "Well, I guess he won't be able to listen to his stereo in the morning."

Barnard was taken aback. The professor had always struck him as a kind man, but, Barnard says, "this callous remark, this disregard for the suffering of animals, was something very different." Troubled by this attitude, he took one of the rats home. He began to see, even in that tiny body, a sentient being who loathed pain, bonded with others, and had a wide range of complicated emotions. He named her Ratsky.

Ratsky lived for some months in a cage in his bedroom. And in her cage, she behaved the way Barnard assumed rats behave. But when he started leaving the cage door open so that she could scurry around, he began to see actions he hadn't anticipated. After several days of cautious sniffing at the cage door, Ratsky began to investigate the world beyond it. "As she explored my apartment (under my watchful eye), she became more and more friendly. If I was lying on my back reading, she would come and stand on my chest," Barnard says. "She would wait to be petted, and if I didn't pay her enough attention, she would lightly nip my nose and run away. I knew her sharp teeth could have gone right through my skin, but she was always playfully careful."

Shortly afterward, when Barnard was attending the George Washington University School of Medicine, an instructor announced that an upcoming laboratory exercise would involve giving numerous human heart drugs to a dog and recording any reactions. All the dogs would be killed at the end of the exercise. Barnard refused to participate—obvious cruelty was involved, and he felt that medical students could sufficiently grasp the concepts of pharmacology without a graphic (and fatal) demonstration using a dog. Instead, he and one other student turned in reports of the expected psychological effects of these drugs. Both passed the course.

Dr. Barnard is one of many scientists who have chosen to recognize that animals used in experiments are living, feeling beings whose bodies and lives are their own—not ours—and that abundant evidence shows that animal experimentation produces almost nothing to promote better human health, despite what we've been taught to believe. Challenging the status quo, especially in the world of science and academia, isn't easy, which makes these rebel scientists all the more inspiring.

Share with students the 16-minute documentary "[Test Subjects](#),"\* which explores the pervasive and sometimes subtle pressure on graduate students to experiment on animals—even when doing so is contrary to good science. The film profiles three scientists whose lives were altered when they were coached by their doctoral advisers to accept that experimenting on animals was the best way to earn their diplomas, even though it was unnecessary for their research. They had all entered their graduate studies as young scientists hoping to improve human health, but they soon realized that they were being taught to perpetuate an archaic system that was *impeding* good research—and they've since dedicated their careers to ending animal tests. **Have students discuss what it means to "challenge the status quo." Ask them to recall a time when they had to take a stand against something that was popular but that they felt was wrong. As a group, discuss the importance of standing up for what you believe in.**



**Wrap-Up Activity**

Have students discuss the following common acts of speciesism and suggest ways each situation could be changed to give equal consideration to all individuals involved:

- Animal shelters hold fundraisers to help certain species (like dogs, cats, and rabbits) have a better



life, while serving the dead bodies of other species (like pigs, chickens, and cows). Although this is done with good intentions, it can confuse the people attending and can prevent farmed animals from getting the help that they need.

- The thought of drinking cat's or dog's milk is seen as more disgusting than drinking cow's milk—even though all these animals produce milk for just one reason: to nourish their own young.
- Wearing the skin of a dog or cat would freak most people out, yet many wear shoes made of cow skin (aka "leather") without thinking twice.

### Assessment

Evaluate students' written responses and group discussions for clear and accurate descriptions of complex ideas.

### Common Misperception/Reality

Common Misperception 	Reality 
<p>People don't need to justify their use of animals. If they want to eat meat, wear fur, go to an animal circus, or otherwise exploit animals, they should be allowed to do so without scrutiny.</p>	<p>It's important for people to be consistent in their beliefs and to be able to justify their actions—otherwise, everyone would be acting only in their own self-interest and disregarding the safety and well-being of others, which wouldn't make for a society anyone would want to live in.</p>



### Extension

Like other harmful forms of discrimination, speciesism relies on the differences between groups of individuals—in this case, humans and animals. But the more we learn about animals, the more we can see *ourselves* in these living, feeling beings—after all, humans are animals. Visit [TeachKind.org/WritingPrompts](https://TeachKind.org/WritingPrompts) for images and videos to cultivate students' empathy for animals.

### Common Core Standards Addressed

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2**  
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2**  
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

\*Indicates components necessary to implement the lesson are available online only. Please visit [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](https://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice) to access these materials.

**LESSON 4**

# HOW BIGOTRY BEGINS

In this lesson, students examine the intersection of many forms of prejudice against humans and other animals. They synthesize information from the historical framework and use new information to explore current moral dilemmas, focusing on the theme of the systematic “othering” of and discrimination against different groups of human beings as well as members of different animal species.

### Objectives

- **Affective:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of reasons why we should consider all living, feeling beings in the fight for social justice.
- **Cognitive:** Students will be able to write persuasively to support claims in an analysis of a topic, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Students will also be able to initiate and participate effectively in a variety of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively.

### Background

Bigotry begins when categories such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or species are used to justify discrimination against entire groups. Many humans consider themselves entirely different from and superior to other animals, which lays the foundation for exploiting them. Animal species are different from one another, of course, but there are important similarities, too. We’re all able to experience feelings such as love, sadness, pain, and joy. And we all want to live. Humans have the ability to exploit other species and ignore their suffering, but that doesn’t mean that it’s morally acceptable to do so. **This powerful video will challenge everything your students thought they knew about bigotry and animal intelligence in just a few minutes.**

### Materials

- [“Challenging Assumptions” video “Agree or Disagree?” sheet](#) (included in the kit)
- [“Challenging Assumptions” video\\*](#)
- [“Challenging Assumptions” video graphic organizer](#) (included in the kit)

- “Is Speciesism Unethical?” debate kit ([TeachKind.org/SpeciesismDebateKit](http://TeachKind.org/SpeciesismDebateKit))
- [“Conservationist: Be Kind, Get Blacklisted” video\\*](#)

### Key Vocabulary

**exploitation:** the action of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work or suffering  
**rhetoric:** language designed to have a persuasive or an impressive effect on its audience but often regarded as lacking in sincerity or meaningful content  
**subjugate:** bring under domination or control, especially by conquest  
**barbarian:** someone considered to be uncultured  
**ancestry:** one’s family or ethnic descent

### Motivation

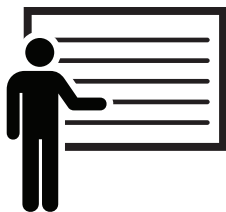
Have students respond to the following prompts in writing:

- Describe *bigotry* in your own words. What does it mean to be a bigot or bigoted?
- Provide examples of bigotry, either from personal experience or observation. Describe how you reacted (or would have reacted) and what events led to the incident.
- How do you think bigotry begins? What are the root causes of bigotry?

Students may choose to respond to all three prompts or focus on just one. Regardless, have them write for about 10 minutes. Assure them that their responses will not be discussed as a class—rather, each individual will revisit and reflect on their own views on bigotry at the end of the lesson.



**LESSON 4**



["Challenging Assumptions" video "Agree or Disagree?" sheet](#) (included in the kit)



["Challenging Assumptions" video](#) (available online)

**Before Viewing**

Have students complete the ["Challenging Assumptions" video "Agree or Disagree?" sheet](#) (included in the kit).

**During Viewing**

Distribute copies of the ["Challenging Assumptions" video graphic organizer](#) (included in the kit). Have students view the ["Challenging Assumptions" video](#)\* in its entirety as a class, taking notes in their graphic organizers as they watch.

Next, divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the four sections of the video:

- Why Do We Treat Animals 'Like Animals'?
- The 'Animalization' of Humans Throughout History
- Are We Really So Different?
- When We Witness Oppression, We Should Never Let It Go Unchallenged

Have students rewatch and analyze their assigned sections of the video using the discussion questions below to delve deeper into the theme explored in that section. Tell students that they should also be prepared to share their thoughts with the class, answer questions from their peers, and ask other groups questions about their findings. Students should add notes to their graphic organizers during both their group discussion and the class discussion. These notes can be used later in writing their persuasive arguments.

**Discussion Questions**

**Why Do We Treat Animals 'Like Animals'?**

1. If we know it's wrong to torture, abuse, and exploit members of our own species, why do we do these things to others?
2. Is the comment "They're just animals" dangerous? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important to refer to people as individuals rather than things (i.e., use personal pronouns like "he," "she," or "they" rather than the impersonal pronoun "it")?
4. Why do we refer to other animals as "it"? What are the consequences of doing so?
5. In grocery stores, why are animal body parts called "beef," "pork," "poultry," etc.?

**The 'Animalization' of Humans Throughout History**

1. How have humans "animalized" or dehumanized other humans throughout history, and why has this been done?
2. How does our present society's treatment of animals compare with its treatment of humans? Should there be a difference? Why or why not?
3. What makes a human a person? Can these traits apply to animals?

**Are We Really So Different?**

1. What similarities do all living, feeling beings share, and why are they more significant than our differences?
2. What does it mean to be different or the "other"? Have you ever felt different in a negative way or like the "other"? How did it feel?
3. Have you ever been bullied or been a bully? How did it feel? How do you think humans bully animals?
4. Compare and contrast racism, sexism, and speciesism. What do these forms of oppression have in common? How are they different?

**When We Witness Oppression, We Should Never Let It Go Unchallenged**

1. Are humans animals? Are nonhuman animals people? Explain your answers.

**LESSON 4**

2. How can humans challenge speciesism in their day-to-day lives? How can we work to end speciesism systemically? Do these solutions to speciesism apply to other forms of oppression like racism and sexism?
3. How do animal rights compare to human rights? Should there be a difference? Why or why not?
4. Is it ever ethical to exploit someone? Explain your answer.

**After Viewing**

Provide students with the “Is Speciesism Unethical?” debate kit ([TeachKind.org/SpeciesismDebateKit](http://TeachKind.org/SpeciesismDebateKit)) and have them prepare either a written argument (an essay) or a spoken argument (a presentation) to respond to this question. Some students may choose to argue the opposite, but they will need to substantiate their claims with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence, which may be hard to find. These resources will assist students in supporting their pro-animal position using scientific, ethical, and philosophical arguments. The debate kit lists a variety of resources that can be used to support the argument that speciesism is ethically unjustifiable and that equal consideration for animals is the only solution.

Students will research general information about animal rights and the ethics of speciesism in the “Become an ‘Expert’” section. This research will be used to prepare a logical argument. They will then gather evidence and examples from the “Build Your Case” section to support their position. Next, using the “Finding Solutions” section, students will build a proposal suggesting solutions to issues that could arise if humans were to acknowledge speciesism and make ethical choices that wouldn’t hurt animals. Finally, students will analyze websites that support the exploitation of animals to determine their reasons for justifying speciesism and think of responses to their reasons using suggestions from the “Anticipate Counterarguments and Prepare Rebuttals” section.

**Real-World Connection**

It’s one thing to say that you’re opposed to oppression, either of humans or of other animals. It’s another thing to take action to help end it. Consider Danielle Solberg, who became a conservationist to help animals but was blacklisted by the Idaho state government when she spoke out after her non-invasive research was used in the slaughter of wild wolves. Have students watch this [short video](#)\* about reasons why she chose to leave the conservation field and become an activist.

It’s not always easy standing up for what’s right, but we all have a “universe of obligation”—our responsibilities as a member of the global community. Have students respond to this question in a journal in order to record their thoughts and explanations about the ideas covered in this lesson: “What is my ‘universe of obligation’ when it comes to addressing speciesism?”

This is a big question for students to tackle, but it’s important for young people to recognize that humans have a collective responsibility for all the Earth’s inhabitants—including animals.

**Use these questions as a scaffold to help students formulate a response:**

- What are your personal responsibilities? (Doing well in school, taking care of my physical and mental health, etc.)
- What are your responsibilities within your family? (Performing household chores, taking care of animal companions or younger siblings, etc.)
- What are your responsibilities in your local community? (Not littering, reporting criminal activity, preparing to participate in local elections, etc.)
- What are your responsibilities as a global citizen? (Making informed decisions with regard to the effects of my actions and lifestyle on others, such as my choice of diet, my purchases, my mode of transportation, etc.)

While students certainly can’t control everything, they do have power over the way they treat others. Their daily actions are significant and can have a major impact, especially collectively. Behaving responsibly starts with becoming aware of the effects that our personal actions have on others.



[“Conservationist: Be Kind, Get Blacklisted” video](#) (available online)

**LESSON 4**



**Wrap-Up Activity**

Have students reread their journal entry on bigotry from the beginning of the lesson. Ask them to revisit the following questions and add any new thoughts they may have after viewing the "Challenging Assumptions" video:



- Describe *bigotry* in your own words. What does it mean to be a bigot or bigoted?
- Provide examples of bigotry, either from personal experience or observation. Describe how you reacted (or would have reacted) and what events led to the incident.
- How do you think bigotry begins? What are the root causes of bigotry?

Then have students write a response to the question "How can we as a society end bigotry?" Once again, assure students that the thoughts they write about can remain private. As they write, give each student a sticky note. Ask them to summarize their response to the last question with one general suggestion, such as "Be kind to all sentient beings," "Use inclusive language," "Be an ethical consumer," or "Give back to your community." Collect the sticky notes and read each statement aloud—then display them on the board, a wall, or a poster.

**Assessment**

Evaluate students' writing for the use of relevant and effective reasons and sufficient evidence to support their claims.

**Common Misperception/Reality**

Common Misperception 	Reality 
<p>If we as a society eradicate speciesism and grant rights to animals, that means they'll have the same rights as humans. Animals shouldn't be able to do the same things humans do, like vote, get married, drive cars, use credit cards, etc.</p>	<p>In his book <i>Animal Liberation</i>, Peter Singer states that the basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical <i>treatment</i>—it requires equal <i>consideration</i>. This is an important distinction when talking about animal rights. All animals have the ability to suffer in the same way and to the same degree that humans do. They feel pain, pleasure, fear, frustration, loneliness, and motherly love. Whenever we consider doing something that would interfere with their needs, we are morally obligated to take them into account.</p> <p>For instance, a dog most certainly has an interest in not being subjected to pain unnecessarily. Therefore, we're obliged to take that interest into consideration and to respect the dog's right not to be subjected to pain. However, animals don't always have the same rights as humans, because their interests are not always the same as ours and some rights would be irrelevant to them. For instance, a dog doesn't have an interest in voting and therefore doesn't have the right to vote, since that right would not be meaningful.</p>

**LESSON 4****Extension**

Have students conduct an interview as part of their research. Staff members from PETA's student division are available to speak with students via phone, Skype, Zoom, or e-mail and to answer questions about our stance on speciesism. Have students e-mail us directly at [Student@peta.org](mailto:Student@peta.org)—or if you'd like to contact us on their behalf, please e-mail [Info@teachkind.org](mailto:Info@teachkind.org).

**Common Core Standards Addressed**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B**  
Develop claims and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1**  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B**  
Develop claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

\*Indicates components necessary to implement the lesson are available online only  
Please visit [TeachKind.org/SocialJustice](https://TeachKind.org/SocialJustice) to access these materials.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Statements About Beliefs

**1. Animals can feel pain and suffer.**

- Yes  
 No

**2. It's wrong to test household and personal-care products on animals when they can be tested just as effectively using humane alternatives.**

- Yes  
 No

**3. Meat and dairy products are bad for our health.**

- Yes  
 No

**4. Cruelty to animals is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.**

- Yes  
 No

**5. Littering is harmful to wildlife and the environment.**

- Yes  
 No

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Statements About Behavior

**1. I participate in activities that contribute to animal suffering and death, such as eating meat or other animal-derived foods.**

- Yes  
 No

**2. I only purchase household and personal-care products that aren't tested on animals and don't contain animal ingredients.**

- Yes  
 No

**3. I eat meat and dairy products.**

- Yes  
 No

**4. I have recently donated money or volunteered time to help fight cruelty to animals.**

- Yes  
 No

**5. I try to reduce waste, and I never litter.**

- Yes  
 No

## Why Are We Outraged About Eating Dog, but Not Bacon?

Jared Piazza, Lancaster University, Lancaster, England | CC BY ND | <https://bit.ly/30q6PA4>

### THE CONVERSATION



Images of distressed, caged puppies on their way to be slaughtered at Yulin dog meat festival in China have caused outrage around the world. Angry Facebook posts, tweets and [online petitions](#) supported by the likes of [Ricky Gervais](#) and [Simon Cowell](#) direct us to gruesome photos of dead dogs, skinned and boiled and hung up on butchers hooks.

I too find myself heartbroken by these images. But as a vegan I find myself wondering why isn't there more outrage in the world over the slaughter of other animals. For instance, each year in the US roughly [110m pigs are killed](#) for meat. Where is the same public outcry over bacon?

The simple answer is emotional prejudice. We just don't care enough about pigs for their needless suffering to pull at our heartstrings. As Melanie Joy, social psychologist and expert on "carnism" points out, [we love dogs, yet we eat pigs](#), and there are simply no good moral reasons for such hypocrisy. One popular argument is that we should care more about dogs because of their superior social intelligence.

This Twitter user is typical:



However this belief really just reflects the fact that people spend more time getting to know dogs than pigs. Many people have dogs as pets and through this relationship with dogs we've come to learn about them and care deeply for them. But are dogs really that different from other animals we eat?

Though obviously not identical, dogs and pigs are quite similar in [all the features that seem to count morally to most people](#). They have similar social intelligence with rich emotional lives, both [can use human-given cues to locate objects](#), both might be able to use a mirror to locate objects (though research suggests [pigs might have an advantage here](#)) and, of course, both animals have [a deep capacity to suffer](#) and a desire to avoid pain.

So whether you believe, like the philosopher [Peter Singer](#), that sentience should be the basis of our assigning moral value to an agent, or you believe, like [Peter Carruthers](#), that higher intelligence or the capacity to act according to moral principles should be the basis, then dogs and pigs seem to be on equal footing. Yet where are the global protests on behalf of pigs?

As a psychologist who studies the way people think morally, I am sobered (and saddened) by the cold truth that people are often blind to the inconsistencies in their thinking, [particularly when animals are involved](#). Andrew Rowan, director of the Center for Animals and Public





Policy at Tufts University, once [observed that](#): “the only consistency in the way humans think about animals is inconsistency”. His statement is increasingly being backed up by new psychology research.

### How are people inconsistent?

For one, people allow the wrong factors to influence their judgements of an animal’s moral standing. People often [think with their heart rather than their head](#). For example, in one recent study conducted by [my lab](#) (not yet published) we presented people with images of farm animals and had them decide how wrong it would be to harm them. Unknown to participants, however, they were either presented baby animals (baby chicks, for example) or adult animals (fully grown chickens).

By a large margin people said it would be more wrong to harm the baby animals than the adult animals. And why? Additional measures showed it was because baby animals are cute and evoke feelings of warmth and tenderness in people, while adult animals do not. The intelligence of the animal had nothing to do with the moral value that was assigned.

While these results may not be terribly surprising, they do highlight a problem with our moral hardware. Our morals seem to be guided in this case by involuntary emotions rather than careful reasoning.

Second, we are inconsistent in our use of “facts”. We tend to think the evidence is always on our side – what psychologists call [myside bias](#). [In one study](#) I simply had people rate their level of agreement or disagreement about a number of potential benefits of going vegetarian. The benefits ranged from environmental benefits to animal welfare, health, and financial benefits.

I thought people would be divided about the benefits of going vegetarian, endorsing some of the arguments but not all of them. This is not at all what I found. People did not simply endorse one or two benefits; they either endorsed all or none of them. In other words, people recruited all of the arguments that supported their foregone conclusions about eating meat or going vegetarian.

Thirdly, we are quite flexible in our use of information about animals. Rather than thinking carefully about the issues or the facts, we tend to endorse evidence that supports our desired views. In another recent study not yet published, carried out with [Steve Loughnan](#) from the University of Edinburgh, we had people tell us how wrong it was to eat one of three different animals. One animal was a fictitious, alien animal they had never encountered before; a second was a tapir, a strange animal that is not used for food in their culture; finally, there was a pig.

All participants received the same information about the animal’s intelligence and cognitive capacities, but people only thought it was wrong to kill the alien and the tapir for food. For the pig, participants ignored the intelligence information when making their moral judgement. It is normal that we eat pigs – and this seemed to be sufficient to lower pigs’ moral value, despite their equal intelligence.

Thus, while the vegan inside me is puzzled to see people get upset about the use of dogs as food yet not think twice about chowing down on a pork chop, my inner psychologist is not at all surprised. Our moral psychologies are good at finding fault, but not when the spotlight is turned toward our own practices and preferences.



## Discussion Questions

1. According to the author, humans feel outraged and heartbroken by the thought of slaughtering and serving dogs as food but don't experience the same reaction to the thought of slaughtering and serving pigs as food. Do you agree or disagree with his claim? Explain your answer.
2. Is the popular argument that we should care more about dogs because of their "superior social intelligence" a strong one? Why or why not? Use evidence from the article to support your answer.
3. How did the participants in the study by the author's lab respond when presented with images of baby animals? How did they react when presented with images of adult animals? Do you think individuals who are thought to be "cute" deserve more respect and consideration than those who are not? Explain your answer.
4. Explain the *myside bias* and the problems it presents.
5. In Steve Loughnan's study, how did participants' feelings about the alien and the tapir differ from their feelings about the pig? Why?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Differentiating Animals From the Ways They Are Used

*Instructions:* As your instructor reads the name of each type of animal aloud, write it down beneath the category heading that best reflects the way our society treats that type of animal. Keep in mind that there are no "wrong" answers.

<b>Animal Companions</b>	<b>Clothing/Fabric</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>Pests</b>
<b>Experiments</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>

### Questions to Consider After Reading the 'Hidden Lives' Passages

1. How did you and your classmates initially categorize each animal?
2. Do your initial categorizations of each animal make sense after taking a deeper look?
3. What role does cognitive dissonance play in society's continued exploitation and general treatment of these animals?

## The Hidden Lives of Cephalopods



With their suction cup–covered tentacles capable of tasting through their skin, their boneless bodies that can squeeze through the tiniest of holes, and their magnificent ability to shape-shift and change color, it’s easy to understand why octopuses and their cephalopod relatives squids and cuttlefish are often referred to as “intelligent aliens.”

Resourceful, cunning, and curious, cephalopods have been observed using tools and impersonating other animals. In captivity, they’ve opened child-proof jars and played with dolls and Legos.

### What the Experts Say

When it comes to sentience, the science is clear: Cephalopods are capable of experiencing pain. Just like dogs, cows, and chickens, they have complex nervous systems, try to escape from noxious stimuli, show physiological stress responses, and guard their wounds—their reactions when harmed fulfill the scientific criteria for pain.

Dr. Jennifer Mather, a leading expert on cephalopod sentience, explains that octopuses “can anticipate a painful, difficult, stressful situation—they can remember it. There is absolutely no doubt that they feel pain.” When asked about ghastly live-animal

dishes—for which octopuses and other animals are mutilated and served alive—Mather added, “[T]he octopus, [whom] you’ve been chopping to pieces, is feeling pain every time you do it. It’s just as painful as if [he or she] were a hog, a fish, or a rabbit, if you chopped a rabbit’s leg off piece by piece. So it’s a barbaric thing to do to the animal.”

### Mischievous Masterminds

Quite the masters of illusion, cephalopods can change color and texture, and they even walk on two limbs or take on the appearance of rocks to fool predators. The mimic octopus can impersonate more than 15 different marine species, including sea snakes and flatfish. In captivity, octopuses have been known to make a run for it when no one is watching. Famed octopus Inky made international headlines in April 2016 after he climbed out of an aquarium tank, traversed the floor, and slid down a 164-foot pipe to freedom. Otto, an octopus at a German aquarium who was already notorious for juggling hermit crabs and rearranging his tank, repeatedly short-circuited an annoying bright light by climbing onto the rim of the tank and squirting it with water.

Cephalopods are capable of recognizing and learning from one another, and they can remember individual humans. A laboratory in New Zealand reported that an octopus took a disliking to one staff member and squirted her with water whenever she passed, while many captive cuttlefish have been known to soak new visitors.

Like chimpanzees, crows, humans, and dolphins, octopuses use tools. Veined octopuses carry coconut shells across the ocean floor and climb inside them for protection. Blanket octopuses snatch venomous tentacles from Portuguese man-of-wars and wield them like swords.

Given their knack for problem-solving and their feisty personalities, it’s no surprise that scientists declared in the 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness that cephalopods, like mammals and birds, experience the world consciously.

## The Hidden Lives of Chickens



Leading animal behavior scientists from around the globe know that chickens are inquisitive and interesting animals whose cognitive abilities are on a par with those of cats, dogs, and even some primates.

Like all animals, chickens love their families and value their own lives. Their social nature means that they're always looking out for their families and for other chickens in their group. People who have spent time with them know that they have complex social structures and adept communication skills, just as we do.

They can complete complex mental tasks, learn from watching each other, demonstrate self-control, and worry about the future. Chickens comprehend cause-and-effect relationships and understand that objects still exist even after they're hidden from view.

### **Social Smarts**

When chickens are in their natural surroundings, not confined to factory farms, they form complex social hierarchies (aka "pecking orders")—all chickens

know their place on the social ladder, remembering the faces and ranks of more than 100 other birds. Scientists agree that their complex social structures and good memories are undeniable signs of advanced intelligence comparable to that of mammals.

People who have spent time with chickens know that each bird has a unique personality that often relates to placement in the pecking order. Some are gregarious and fearless, while others are shy and watchful. Some enjoy human company, while others are standoffish or even a bit aggressive. Just like every dog, cat, and human, each chicken is an individual with a distinct personality.

### **Did You Know?**

Researchers have also found that chickens have cultural knowledge that they pass down from generation to generation. In an ethically challenged study at University of Bristol in the U.K., chickens were fed a mixture of yellow and blue corn kernels. The blue kernels were tainted with chemicals that made the birds feel sick, and they quickly learned to avoid them. When these hens' chicks hatched, yellow and blue corn (which was harmless this time) was spread around the farm. The mother hens remembered that the blue corn had previously made them sick, so they carefully steered their chicks away from it.

Chickens also have impressive communication skills. They use dozens of types of vocalizations to distinguish between threats that are approaching by land and those that are approaching over water, and a mother hen begins to teach these calls to her chicks before they even hatch. She clucks softly to them while sitting on her eggs, and the chicks chirp back to her and to each other from inside their shells.



## The Hidden Lives of Cows



Cows are as diverse as cats, dogs, and humans. Some are very quick learners, while others are a little slower. Some are bold and adventurous, while others are shy and timid. Some are friendly and considerate, while others are bossy and devious.

Cows are generally quite intelligent animals who can remember things for a long time. Animal behaviorists have found that they interact in socially complex ways, developing friendships over time and sometimes holding grudges against other cows who treat them badly.

These gentle giants mourn the deaths of or even separation from those they love, sometimes shedding tears over their loss. The mother/calf bond is particularly strong, and there are countless reports of mother cows who have continued to call and search frantically for their babies after they've been taken away and sold to veal or beef farms.

### **Brainy Bovines**

Research has shown that cows clearly understand cause-and-effect relationships—a sure sign of advanced cognitive abilities. For example, they can learn how to push a lever to operate a drinking fountain when they're thirsty or to press a button with their heads to release grain when they're hungry. Researchers have found that cows not only can figure out problems but also enjoy the intellectual challenge and get excited when they find a solution, just as humans do.

### **Pecking Orders Aren't Just for Chickens**

A herd of cows is very much like a pack of wolves,

with alpha animals and complex social dynamics. Each animal can recognize 50 or more members of the herd, and relationships are very important to cows. They consistently choose leaders who have good social skills and are intelligent, inquisitive, self-confident, and experienced—while pushiness, selfishness, large size, and brawniness are not recognized as suitable leadership qualities.

Raising cows in unnatural conditions, such as on crowded feedlots, causes them distress because it upsets their social hierarchy. Researchers note that cows who are kept in groups of more than 200 on commercial feedlots become stressed and constantly fight for dominance. (Feedlots in the U.S. hold thousands of cows at a time.)

### **Cows Value Their Lives**

Like all animals, cows value their lives and don't want to die. Stories abound of those who have gone to extraordinary lengths to fight for their lives.

A cow in Virginia named Idabelle was about to be loaded onto a freighter bound for Venezuela when she turned around, ran back down the gangplank, and leaped into the river. Even though she was pregnant, she managed to swim all the way across the river, eluding capture for several days. She was rescued by PETA and sent to a sanctuary.

When workers at a slaughterhouse in Massachusetts went on break, Emily the cow made a break for it. She took a tremendous leap over a 5-foot-tall gate and escaped into the woods, surviving the harsh New England winter weather with the aid of concerned local residents who began watching for her and leaving out hay for her to eat.

When she was caught several weeks later by the owners of a nearby sanctuary, the public demanded that the slaughterhouse allow the sanctuary to buy her for \$1. Emily lived out the rest of her life in peace. Her story is a testament to the fact that eating meat means eating animals who don't want to die.

## The Hidden Lives of Ducks and Geese



### Geese: A Lesson in Family Values

Geese are very loyal. They mate for life and are protective of their partners and offspring. They often refuse to leave the side of a sick or injured mate or chick, even if winter is approaching and the others in the group are flying south. If their mate dies, they will mourn in seclusion—and some geese spend the rest of their lives as widows or widowers, refusing to mate again. This enduring bond was evident in a series of photos that went viral in which a distraught male goose in China was seen giving his mate a “kiss” goodbye as she was being loaded onto a motorcycle to be taken to slaughter.

Geese enjoy preening, foraging for food in the grass, and collecting twigs, bark, and leaves to make improvements to their nests. They lay eggs once a year in the spring, and females incubate them for 30 days while their mates guard their well-concealed homes. Some birds like to use the same nest each year if they can.

### A Lesson in Teamwork

Multiple families of geese come together to form a larger group called a *gaggle*, in which birds look out for each other. There are usually one or two “sentries” who keep watch for predators while the others feed. The gaggle members rotate sentry duty, like sailors standing watch on a ship. Observers have noted that healthy geese sometimes look after injured comrades and that injured birds stick together to protect each other from predators and help each other find food.

Geese are adept at flying and may travel thousands of miles during their yearly migrations. Flocks fly in a characteristic “V” formation so that the geese in front

reduce the air resistance for those behind them, which helps the birds fly about 70% farther as a group than they could on their own. They rotate from the front to the back when they get tired, and those in the rear honk their encouragement to the leaders. Geese have long memories, and they use familiar landmarks and the stars to navigate during their annual journeys.



Ducks are outgoing social animals who feel most at ease when they're in large groups, which are called *paddlings* when on water. They spend their days looking for food in the grass or in shallow water, and they sleep with their paddling-mates at night. They're meticulously clean animals who keep their nests free of waste and debris, and they enjoy preening and flaunting their beautiful plumage for potential mates. In nature, they live for up to 10 years.

Ducks can travel hundreds of miles each year during their migrations. Like geese, they fly in formation for protection and to reduce air resistance, and they can travel at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour!

### Duck Dialects

Ducks use vocalizations and body language to communicate. Researchers at Middlesex University London in the U.K. reported that ducks even have regional accents, just as humans do. The scientists found that city ducks have more of a “shouting” quack so that other birds can hear them above the hustle and bustle, while country ducks have softer voices.



## The Hidden Lives of Fish



### What the Experts Say

Dr. Sylvia Earle, one of the world's leading marine biologists, said, "I never eat anyone I know personally. I wouldn't ... eat a grouper any more than I'd eat a cocker spaniel. They're so good-natured, so curious. You know, fish are sensitive, they have personalities, they hurt when they're wounded."

Scientists are learning more and more about our finned friends, and their discoveries are fascinating.

Hundreds of scientific papers about fish intelligence show that these animals are smart, they can use tools, and they have impressive long-term memories and sophisticated social structures. A paper published in the journal *Fish and Fisheries* said that they're "steeped in social intelligence ... exhibiting stable cultural traditions, and cooperating to inspect predators and catch food."

Dr. Culum Brown, a Macquarie University biologist who is studying the evolution of cognition in fish, says this: "Fish are more intelligent than they appear. In many areas, such as memory, their cognitive powers match or exceed those of 'higher' vertebrates including non-human primates."

Fish's long-term memories help them keep track of complex social relationships. Their spatial memory allows them to create cognitive maps that guide them through their watery homes, using cues such as polarized light, sounds, odors, and visual landmarks. Brown says that "fish perception and cognitive abilities often match or exceed other vertebrates."

Dr. Theresa Burt de Perera of Oxford University says this: "We're now finding that [fish] are very capable

of learning and remembering, and possess a range of cognitive skills that would surprise many people." An article about fish intelligence in the U.K.'s *Telegraph* supports this claim. It reports that Brown has found the following about fish who were cruelly kept in a net inside a tank: "Australian crimson spotted rainbowfish, which learnt to escape from a net in their tank, remembered how they did it 11 months later. This is equivalent to a human recalling a lesson learnt 40 years ago."

Furthermore, a scientific review presented to the Australian Veterinary Association disproved the myth that goldfish have three-second memories—instead, veterinarians found that they have impressive memories and problem-solving abilities. One of the researchers said that after conducting the review, "We're wanting to get [the] message out to the broader veterinary community to start looking more closely at fish and considering their welfare like they do other animals."

### More Fascinating Facts About Fish

- Fish talk to each other using squeaks, squeals, and other low-frequency sounds that humans can hear only with special instruments.
- They like physical contact with other fish and often gently rub against one another in the same way cats weave in and out of their guardian's legs.
- Scientists documented that cichlids would play with a bottom-weighted thermometer, intentionally knocking it over just so that they could watch it bounce back up again.
- When cleaner fish—who nibble parasites and dead tissue off larger, predator fish—accidentally bite their "clients," they make amends by giving the larger fish back rubs.
- Fish even use tools. The blackspot tuskfish, for example, has been photographed smashing a clam on a rock until the shell breaks open. Pearlfish use oyster shells as speakers to help amplify the volume of their communications.
- Goldfish have longer sustained attention spans than humans, according to a study by Microsoft, which found that the small fish can concentrate for nine seconds compared to eight for humans.

## The Hidden Lives of Frogs



Frogs are best known for their webbed feet and flying leaps, but these complex, sensitive animals have many other amazing characteristics and capabilities.

### Frog Families

Many frog species are devoted—and resourceful—parents. Some species of dart frogs lay eggs on the forest floor, guarding them from predators and keeping them moist by urinating on them if they become too dry. In other species, after the tadpoles hatch, the parents carry them on their backs to a water-holding bromeliad (flowering plant). The parents then feed the tadpoles by laying unfertilized eggs in the bromeliad for them to eat until they have metamorphosed.

Some frogs even protect their offspring inside their own bodies. The male Australian pouched frog has pouches along his side, where the tadpoles live until metamorphosis. Darwin's frogs from Chile hold tadpoles in their vocal sacs for development.

Male bullfrogs defend their territory by inflating their lungs and floating in open water. If another male gets closer than about 6 meters, the guarding frog will make a sharp, staccato "hiccup" sound and move toward the intruder. Usually, the intruder will leave, but if he doesn't, the two frogs will leap at each other until one is forced onto his back.

Most frogs live in moist areas, such as ponds and creeks. Some species, such as the Catholic frog and the

flat-headed frog, can survive in desert environments by using a technique called bloating, in which they burrow underground during the dry season and surface during the rainy season to absorb as much water as possible before burrowing again.

Frogs absorb oxygen and moisture through a thin film covering their skin that allows oxygen to be dissolved and passed into their bloodstream. Because of this, they're very susceptible to environmental toxins. Pollution, pesticides, and habitat destruction are some of the components contributing to declining frog populations.

Countless frogs are tortured, killed, and deprived of everything that's natural and important to them in classroom dissection exercises. Pins are stuck through their skulls to destroy their brains, and they're dissected while their hearts are still beating. Frogs are also used in pharmaceutical development and are sold as desktop "decorations" by the pet industry, doomed to bleak lives in small plastic boxes, in which they're slowly poisoned by their own waste.

### Fun Facts About Frogs

- Many frogs secrete mild toxins that make them undesirable to potential predators, including irritants, hallucinogens, convulsants, nerve poisons, and vasoconstrictors (which constrict blood flow).
- Poisonous frogs are often brightly colored to warn potential predators. At least two nonpoisonous species of frogs in tropical America mimic the coloration of poisonous dart frogs for protection.
- Female gastric-brooding frogs from Australia (who are now probably extinct) swallow their tadpoles, who then develop in her stomach. To do this, she must stop secreting stomach acid and suppress peristalsis (contractions of the stomach).
- Some frog species use a "babysitter" to watch over their eggs until they hatch. In a few species, one of the parents watches over the eggs and sometimes cares for the tadpoles, too.
- In some species, male frogs create choruses during mating season in order to attract more females.

## The Hidden Lives of Pigs



When in their natural surroundings—not on industrial farms—pigs are social, playful, protective animals who bond with each other, make nests, and relax in the sun. Pigs are known to dream, recognize their own names, learn “tricks” like sitting for a treat, and lead social lives of a complexity previously observed only in primates. They’ve been seen showing empathy for other pigs who are happy or distressed. Many even sleep in “pig piles,” much like dogs sleep nestled together. Some love to cuddle, while others prefer to have their space. And they don’t “sweat like pigs”—they’re actually unable to sweat, and they like to bathe in water or mud in order to keep cool.

People who run animal sanctuaries that harbor pigs note that they’re more similar to humans than some might guess. Like us, they enjoy listening to music, playing with soccer balls, and getting massages. They can even play video games!

### What the Experts Say

Pigs communicate constantly with one another. More than 20 types of oinks, grunts, and squeals have been identified, which they use for different situations—from wooing their mates to expressing hunger. Newborn piglets learn to run toward their mothers’ voices, and mother pigs “sing” to their young while nursing.

They also have very long memories. Dr. Stanley Curtis, formerly of Penn State University, put a ball, a Frisbee, and a dumbbell in front of several pigs and was able to teach them to jump over, sit next to, or fetch any of the objects when asked to—and they could distinguish between the objects three years later.

Biologist Tina Widowski studies pigs and marvels at their intelligence: “When I was working with the monkeys, I used to look at them and say: ‘If you were a pig, you would have this figured out by now.’”

Scientists at the University of Illinois have learned that not only do pigs have temperature preferences, but they can also figure out through trial and error how to turn on the heat in a cold barn and turn it off again when they get too warm.

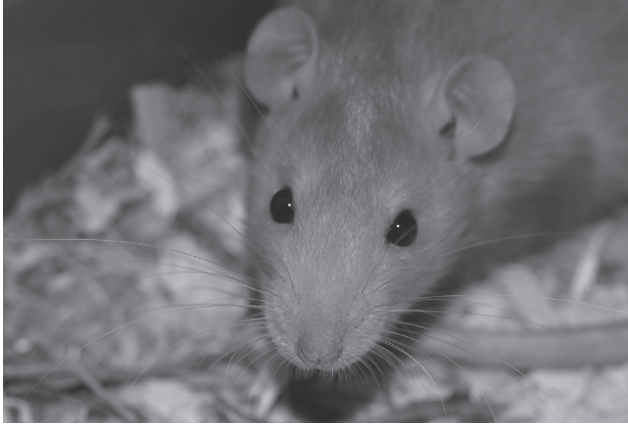
### Pig Prowess

Pigs have been known to save the lives of others, including their human friends. According to BBC News, a pig named Pru saved her guardian’s life by dragging her out of a muddy bog. “I was panicking. I didn’t know what to do and I think the pig sensed this,” she said. “Without Pru I wouldn’t have been able to get out of the mire.”

In addition to Pru, there’s Priscilla, a pig who saved a young boy from drowning, and Spammy, who led firefighters to a burning shed to save her calf friend Spot. And Lulu the pig found help for her human companion, who had collapsed from a heart attack. A pig named Tunia chased away an intruder, and another, named Mona, held onto the leg of a suspect attempting to flee until the police arrived.

Many who have ended up in sanctuaries found their new homes after jumping off slaughterhouse-bound trucks and escaping. And in England, a stone carving of a pig named Butch was placed at a historic cathedral after he and his friend Sundance escaped from a slaughterhouse and roamed the countryside for several days before being captured. Fortunately, a national outcry against their slaughter allowed the duo to go to a sanctuary.

## The Hidden Lives of Rats and Mice



Rats and mice are highly intelligent. They are natural students who excel at learning and understanding concepts. Rats are considerably smaller than dogs, but they're at least as capable of thinking about things and figuring them out as dogs are. While rats are much smaller than elephants, they have excellent memories. And although their eyesight is poor, once rats learn a navigational route, they never forget it.

### Social Smarts

Both mice and rats are also highly social animals. They become attached to each other, love their own families, and easily bond with their human guardians—returning as much affection as is given to them. Many rats even “groom” their human companions' hands and appreciate a massage, a scratch behind the ears, or even a tickle in return.

Recent studies by Jaak Panksepp, a neuroscientist at Bowling Green State University, suggest that when rats play or are playfully tickled, they make chirping sounds that are strikingly similar to human laughter. The rats he studied also bonded socially with the human tickler and even sought to be tickled more. Panksepp corroborates what rat lovers have known all along: “[Y]oung rats have a marvelous sense of fun.”

Male rats like to snuggle and cuddle and are content when curled up in a person's lap. Although female rats are just as affectionate, they tend to be tremendously

energetic and inquisitive. Rats love seeing kind people and will often bounce around waiting to be noticed and picked up. They can form such a strong bond with their human companions that if they're suddenly given away to someone else or forgotten, they can pine away—and even die.

It is estimated that tens of millions of rats and mice are killed in experiments each year in the U.S. alone. With the popularity of genetic engineering, the numbers are increasing. These small, sensitive creatures are not even protected under the federal Animal Welfare Act, which exempts birds, rodents, and coldblooded animals entirely from consideration.

### Did You Know?

- Mice and rats are fastidiously clean, grooming themselves several times a day. In fact, they're less likely than dogs or cats to catch and transmit parasites and viruses.
- Mice and rats are highly social animals. They communicate with each other using high-frequency sounds that we can't hear without instrumentation. They have even been recorded “singing” like birds but at ultrasonic frequencies. They play together, wrestle, and love sleeping curled up together. Much like us, if they don't have companionship, they can become lonely, anxious, depressed, and stressed.
- Rats have clearly demonstrated empathy. In one ethically questionable study, the vast majority of the rats tested chose to help another rat who was being forced to tread water, even when they were offered the opportunity to receive a chocolate treat instead.
- Rats can recognize expressions of pain on other rats' faces and react to them.
- Mice and rats are so smart that they can recognize their names and respond when called.
- Mice are choosy. They like variety and pick through their food, eating the tastiest parts first and separating out what they dislike.
- Female mice with litters vigorously defend their nests and their young.
- If not forced to live in a dirty cage, a rat's skin has a very pleasant perfume-like scent.



## The Hidden Lives of Sheep



Sheep are gentle, sensitive animals who are emotionally complex and highly intelligent. The following recent studies have found that sheep and humans have many things in common.

### What the Experts Say

Keith Kendrick, a professor of medicine at Gresham College in London, found that sheep can distinguish between different expressions in humans and can detect changes in the faces of anxious sheep. He also discovered that they can recognize the faces of at least 50 other sheep and can remember 50 different images for up to two years.

Professor John Webster of the University of Bristol found that, like humans, sheep visibly express emotions. When they experience stress or isolation, they show signs of depression similar to those that humans show, hanging their heads and avoiding positive actions. Like us, sheep experience fear when they're separated from their social

groups or approached by strangers. Sheep's heart rates have been found to increase by 20 beats per minute when they're unable to see any members of their flock and by 84 beats per minute when approached by a man and a dog.

### Captivating Personalities

When PETA staff members Carrie and Jackie visited the Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary in Maryland, they found out just how captivating sheep and lambs can be. Playful and puppy-like, the sheep wagged their tails when they were stroked. They affectionately nuzzled and head-butted the women in order to get their attention.

One sheep, named Adam, who loved to cuddle and have his face stroked, made a big impression on the two staff members. "Adam was set to be a religious sacrifice before being rescued in the Washington, D.C., area. I couldn't even begin to fathom such a hideous fate for the sheep who was softly stroking my neck with his warm, fuzzy face," recalls Jackie.

Carrie also found that spending time with sheep was an eye-opening experience: "I had always seen sheep depicted as herd animals who didn't have individual personalities. While I knew that this wasn't true, my experience with such affectionate and personable sheep truly made me understand what unique animals they are and how horribly cruel it is that they suffer so greatly in wool production and live export."

### Cruelty in the Wool Industry

Although sheep are intelligent, social, emotional beings—just as humans are—the wool industry continues to abuse them in ways that would warrant cruelty-to-animals charges if dogs or cats were the victims. When they're still lambs, sheep in Australia—the world's leading exporter of merino wool—are subjected to *mulesing*, a cruel mutilation in which farmers carve skin and flesh from the animals' backsides, often without giving them any painkillers. Every year, millions of unwanted Australian sheep are loaded onto extremely crowded multitiered cargo ships and sent on a terrifying journey to the Middle East or North Africa, where their throats are cut—often while they're still conscious.

## The Hidden Lives of Turkeys



Many people think of turkeys as little more than holiday centerpieces, but they are social, playful birds who enjoy the company of others. They relish having their feathers stroked and like to chirp, cluck, and gobble along to their favorite tunes. Anyone who spends time with them at farm sanctuaries quickly learns that turkeys are as varied in personality as dogs and cats.

Take Mayflower, for example. After being rescued from a Pennsylvania auction, where he was about to be sent to slaughter for someone's Thanksgiving dinner, he

befriended Lucy and Ethel, two chickens at a sanctuary in Middleburgh, New York. He was smaller than they were when he arrived but quickly grew to be four or five times their size. That doesn't bother them though—they still do everything together, including cuddling up for naps, foraging in the grass, and enjoying fresh fruits and veggies.

### Talking Turkey

- Wild turkeys can fly at speeds of up to 55 miles per hour and run at speeds of up to 25 miles per hour. Their natural life expectancy is up to 10 years, but on industrial farms they're slaughtered when they're just 5 months old.
- When not forced to live on filthy factory farms, turkeys spend their days caring for their young, building nests, foraging for food, taking dust baths, preening themselves, and roosting high in trees.
- People who care for turkeys at sanctuaries call them "natural detectives." They are naturally curious, always checking out new sights and smells, and they enjoy greeting visitors.
- Male turkeys (aka "toms") are bigger and have more colorful plumage than female turkeys (aka "hens"). The males attract females with their wattles (colorful flaps of skin around their necks) and tufts of bristles or beards that hang from their chests.
- Turkeys are born with full-color vision just like that of humans, and in nature they stay with their mothers for up to the first five months of their lives. These gentle birds are by nature very bonded to their young—mother turkeys courageously defend their family against predators.
- Erik Marcus, author of *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*, has spent a considerable amount of time with turkeys at farm sanctuaries. He reports, "Turkeys remember your face and they will sit closer to you with each day you revisit. Come back day after day and, before long, a few birds will pick you out as their favorite and they will come running up to you whenever you arrive. It's definitely a matter of the birds choosing you rather than of you choosing the birds. Different birds choose different people."

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 'Challenging Assumptions' Video: Agree or Disagree?

*Instructions: Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by checking the appropriate box. There are no right or wrong answers.*

1. Some forms of discrimination are more acceptable than others.  
 Agree  Disagree
2. It's OK for humans to exploit other animals because we're more intelligent than they are.  
 Agree  Disagree
3. Words are just words—they don't matter.  
 Agree  Disagree
4. The fight for human rights and the fight for animal rights are closely connected.  
 Agree  Disagree
5. It's not effective to fight for multiple causes. If you want to make real progress, you should focus all your efforts on the one cause that means the most to you.  
 Agree  Disagree
6. Everyone should strive to do as little harm to others as possible—even when it's inconvenient.  
 Agree  Disagree



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 'Challenging Assumptions' Video Graphic Organizer

*Instructions:* As you watch the video, take notes on each section. You can use the key below to organize your thoughts. Jot down a sentence or phrase from the film to help you remember your thought, then add a question mark, an exclamation point, a star, or a heart to indicate why you wrote it down.

- Use a question mark (?) to indicate that you have a question about something.
- Use an exclamation point (!) to indicate that something grabbed your attention or surprised you.
- Use a star (★) to indicate an important point.
- Use a heart (♥) to indicate that something made you feel a strong positive emotion or that you can relate to it personally.

<b>Why Do We Treat Animals 'Like Animals'?</b>
<b>The 'Animalization' of Humans Throughout History</b>
<b>Are We Really So Different?</b>
<b>When We Witness Oppression, We Should Never Let It Go Unchallenged</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **'Challenging Assumptions' Video: Key Takeaways**

*Instructions:* Take some time to write down your final thoughts about the video. What stands out to you as the main idea? What were you surprised to learn? How did the ideas presented make you feel? What questions do you still have?

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/3mQnPKn](https://bit.ly/3mQnPKn)

## Angela Davis Delivers the 17<sup>th</sup> Steve Biko Memorial Lecture

(40:13–43:24)

When Muhammad Ali refused to be inducted into the military in 1967, we could not know at the time that this would become an iconic historical moment, as was the raising of the fist by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the Mexico Olympics in 1968. Perhaps Colin Kaepernick's refusal to stand during the singing of our militaristic national anthem that is replete with aural images of bombs bursting in air, perhaps this will become another such moment. Or perhaps the actions by the girls at Pretoria High School, and we've seen many images of Zulaikha Patel. This moment may very well be the historical conjuncture we have been waiting for.

We cannot really know.

But we cannot let it pass without asserting our collective agency in order to begin to purge our societies of racisms, including Islamophobia and settler colonialism as well as anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, assaults against immigrants and refugees, and the unremitting capitalist assault on our environment and on our food sources and on the sentient beings who endure pain and torture as they are transformed into food for profit, food that generates disease in humans whose poverty compels them to rely on McDonald's and KFC for nourishment.

Even though there are never guarantees that we will reach the futures we dream, we cannot stop dreaming. We cannot stop dreaming, and we cannot stop struggling. Not even if—and I say, *when*—we begin to see the crumbling of capitalism, there will always be vibrant legacies. There will always be unfulfilled promises. There will always be unfinished activisms. Thank you very much.

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/3300RZm](https://bit.ly/3300RZm)

## PETA Reveals: Why Feminists Must Reject All Violence, Not Just Violence Against Humans

I'm about to share a scenario with you that may be disturbing but which I think is important for every one of us to think about.

Picture this: A group of men grabs a terrified young female. They take her into a room, hold her down, and rape her. She struggles and cries out, but she is helpless to escape their assault. Nine months later, she gives birth, but she never even gets the chance to caress her newborn. This same group of men come in and steal her baby. She wails out in anguish as her baby disappears from her sight forever.

Now, if you ordered your coffee with cow's milk this morning, you paid for this abuse.

I know it sounds harsh, but it's absolutely true.

Foods many people consume every day—meat, eggs, cheese—are the products of rape, imprisonment, reproductive control, kidnapping, and abuse. Yet many people who consider themselves ethical, conscious people, many people who consider themselves feminists—are unthinkingly supporting this violence towards females every single day by consuming these cruel foods.

I know, because I used to be one of them.

I was a member of the Feminist Student Union at The George Washington University. I performed in *The Vagina Monologues*. I devoured feminist theory. I remember thinking that I felt so enlightened and socially conscious. I even considered myself something of an animal rights advocate, because I had been vegetarian since I was 7. Yet I still consumed milk, cheese, and eggs.

Then, one day my mind was blown and my world changed forever when a friend gave me a copy of the book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* by Carol J. Adams. Never before had I thought about the link between eating meat and the patriarchy. Yet I found myself agreeing with the author when she said that both women and animals are objectified, then fragmented into body parts, and then consumed, either literally or metaphorically.

And if you think about it, the entire factory-farming system is built on exploiting female bodies. Consider the pork industry, for example. Here, mother pigs are treated as nothing more than breeding machines. In order to force them to churn out tons of babies—who are then taken away, fattened up, and sent to slaughter—these mother pigs are forcibly impregnated and kept in metal crates so small that they can't even turn around.

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/3300RZm](https://bit.ly/3300RZm)

They develop painful ulcers on their shoulders from the constant pressure of lying, nearly immobile, on the cold, hard floor, and their bright minds spiral into depression and madness because their life is spent doing nothing more than looking out from behind bars.

Cows on dairy farms are treated in much the same way. They are violated over and over again. They are forcefully impregnated on what the industry calls a “rape rack”—yes, that is what they actually call it, a rape rack—only to have their beloved calves torn away from them so their milk can be stolen and sold for human consumption. Hens on egg farms are kept in tiny wire cages so small that they can’t even spread their wings—just so their eggs can be stolen and sold.

When their “usefulness” runs out—so when they can no longer breed or produce massive quantities of milk or eggs—these females are then rounded up, sent to slaughter, and their flesh chopped up for humans to dine on. Every single one of these animals is an individual with feelings, desires, and families—just like you and me—yet here they are treated as if their lives count for nothing, except for what their bodies can do for us.

Being confronted with all this shook me to the core. I had had the audacity to call myself a feminist—yet here I was paying for others to systematically exploit and abuse these females in the worst possible ways. How could I condone the same violence and hatred towards animals that the patriarchy inflicts upon women? Was I so superior to a mother cow and her calf that I had the right to take away her breast milk that was meant for her baby?

The answers to these questions were settled for me during an internship in Washington, D.C., where I lobbied for animal rights legislation on Capitol Hill. Here they had the interns watch the documentary *Peaceable Kingdom*. This film shattered any remaining excuse I had had for not being vegan. I will never forget one scene, in particular, where a calf is torn away from his mother. The baby kicks and screams, but workers drag him away by his legs. I’m very close to my own mother, so imagining this happening to us when I was a baby completely broke my heart.

I knew then I couldn’t deny my complicity in this abuse any longer. Every splash of milk in my coffee, every slice of cheese pizza I ate was subsidizing horrific exploitation and suffering. I knew then I could never support the dairy or egg industries again.

So now, at an incredible time when amazing women are rising up and sharing their stories and saying “time’s up” on abuse and exploitation, it’s time for feminists and every decent person to say “no more” to the ways that our sisters of other species are being systematically exploited in the food industry.

It’s time to acknowledge that imprisoning billions of victims—cows on dairy farms,

**TRANSCRIPT**



Video: [bit.ly/3300RZm](https://bit.ly/3300RZm)

sows on pig farms, hens on egg farms—solely because they are female is the *opposite* of feminism.

We have the opportunity to make a conscious, ethical, feminist decision three times a day. Simply by what we put on our plate, we can choose to exploit and enslave or we can choose to empower and liberate.

I am a feminist *and* I am vegan, because I reject violence towards all females. I believe that everybody has a right to live life as they choose and to be treated with dignity, respect, and equality. Will you join me?

Thank you.

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/362aAjM](https://bit.ly/362aAjM)

## PETA Reveals: Animal Rights Is Not a 'White Thing'

I've lost count of how many animal rights demonstrations I've been to and how many times I've been on the news.

But every time I'm at a protest and a reporter takes a photo of me, I'm grateful because I know it's gonna help animals in two ways. One: It's gonna make people think about what I'm protesting—for example, the abuse that animals in circuses go through. And two: When people of color see what I'm doing, hopefully it reinforces their own activism.

When you hear the words "animal rights" or "vegan," many people think it's a "white thing," and that couldn't be further from the truth. But I understand where that idea comes from. When I first started out in the movement, I will say I felt lonely. I would show up to the protest and stand with the other activists, and no one looked like me. No Black girls. But then I started Googling, and I saw amazing Black activists who were writing really insightful blogs about animal rights and being vegan. It was inspiring. I realized there's different forms of activism. Just because everyone isn't able to show up and protest in person doesn't mean they aren't committed. To think only white people care about health, animals, and the planet is absolutely false. There are so many Black vegans who've contributed to the cause that when we call it a "white thing," we leave out our own people who are making a difference.

Growing up, I didn't know anything about the animal rights movement. So I was my own one-person movement. Dogs tied outside in the backyard was something I saw all the time. Neighbors and even some family members had dogs chained outside, all alone with no human contact and fed nothing but scraps. I hated seeing that. I was quick to say something. I called animal control, too. People told me to mind my business, but I knew in my core I had to speak out.

In the summers, I would spend time on my aunt's farm in North Carolina, where I fed pigs, cows, and chickens. My favorites were the piglets—I thought they were so cute. I would say, "I want a pig." Family members would say, "That's food, not a pet." I would yell, "I wouldn't eat a pig!" Ironically, I ate bacon pretty much every day on almost everything. So now that I'm vegan, I make sure not to pass judgment on someone else who doesn't know what I know now. I remember what it was like being perfectly happy eating bacon and not making the connection to those piglets.

I understand it can be difficult for communities like mine who live in oppressive environments to see past our own suffering enough to recognize the suffering of other animals. I get it. But it doesn't have to be one or the other. As a woman of color in this movement, I feel it's so important that we have a safe space to talk about animal issues *and* the everyday struggles we face. To me, going vegan is the best of both worlds: It helps the animals, and it also fixes health issues in our communities, like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.



## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/362aAjM](https://bit.ly/362aAjM)

In Black communities, many of the foods we grew up eating were unhealthy. These bad food habits have been passed down through generations, so many of us don't see there's a better, healthier way to eat. I want to get my people to see that we're being exploited by these food companies who do not have our best interest at heart. And our lack of knowledge about going vegan is literally killing us.

I also believe that once a person makes the connection and sees where their food comes from, their mind will begin to change. I've seen it happen many times.

I knew a guy who played football throughout high school and college. He ate beef, chicken, and pork daily. This was a guy who said, "I'd never stop eating meat." I started cooking him vegan meals that blew his mind. We watched documentaries like *What the Health* and *Forks Over Knives*, and he started to question all the food choices he had been making. After eating vegan for about a month, he gave in and had a cheeseburger. And that was a big mistake. As soon as he ate it, his stomach started to hurt. He felt tired and nauseous. That's the moment it totally clicked for him. That's when he realized that what he eats affects his health. Then I knew he was ready to learn about what happens to the millions of animals every day just for our taste buds. I showed him the movie *Earthlings*, and it was a wrap from there. The whole time watching, all he could say was "That's wrong." He visited his first animal sanctuary shortly after, and he made the connection that animals are loving, smart, and want to live. He even got involved with animal activism. I saw his heart, mind, and spirit change, and it's all because I took the right approach. I never made him feel judged.

So I'm here to tell you two things.

Number one: We can care about more than one struggle. My activism includes everyone and everything. I can't walk past a hungry dog without helping, and I can't walk past a hungry person without helping. I care about the planet, and my health is super-important to me. I care about it all.

And number two: Animal activism isn't a "white thing." It's a caring thing—caring for all living beings. And with the right approach, I believe everyone can be inspired to be compassionate, no matter their background or the color of their skin.

Thank you.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Video: [bit.ly/2RZjB52](https://bit.ly/2RZjB52)

## **PETA Reveals: Civil Rights Icon Inspired This Lawyer to Push the Boundaries of Animal Rights**

The person who inspired me to become a lawyer was Thurgood Marshall. I never met him, but as a child, I read about how he won civil rights cases and changed the course of history. Well, forget about politicians or movie stars or professional athletes—I wanted to be like Thurgood Marshall. Even as a 12-year-old, I was already thinking about going to law school.

After practicing law for several years, I attended a lecture that I thought was going to be about nonviolence and social justice issues. And it was—just not in the way I was expecting. The title of the lecture was “Did Your Food Have a Face?” And it changed my life. I went vegan that night, and nine months later, I was working for PETA. That was 25 years ago.

As PETA’s general counsel, I’ve dealt with the entire gamut of legal issues. But what motivates me the most is pushing the boundaries of the law and the court system to establish fundamental rights for animals. It’s a whole new frontier, and each case maps uncharted territory.

One example is our “monkey selfie” case. A few years ago, a crested macaque named Naruto took what became a world-famous selfie photograph. Now, Naruto lives in a jungle in Indonesia, and he took the photo using a camera that had been left unattended by a photographer. The photographer published the photo and claimed that HE owned the copyright.

That’s when PETA stepped in. Naruto didn’t accidentally trigger the camera—he did it intentionally. And the experts who have been observing and studying his troop of macaques for years will tell you that these monkeys are incredibly intelligent and they’re fascinated by their reflections. They even grab motorbike mirrors and look at themselves. So it was clear that when Naruto saw the camera lens, he recognized it was his reflection.

When he clicked the shutter, he saw the reflection change, so he pushed the shutter again and again, each time seeing his reflection change, and he made a series of photographs.

In this situation, the law is clear that the copyright belongs to the one who takes the photo—it doesn’t matter who owns the camera. And nothing in copyright law prohibits an animal from owning a copyright. So we sued on Naruto’s behalf, asking the court to award the copyright to him and to allow PETA to administer the copyright for his benefit and for the benefit of his community of macaques, who are critically endangered from being killed illegally for bush meat and from their habitat being destroyed by human encroachment.

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [bit.ly/2RZjB52](https://bit.ly/2RZjB52)

I have to tell you, I had a great experience when I had an opportunity to visit the reserve where Naruto lives and got to see him in person—what was obviously the most unique attorney-client meeting of my entire career. My guide pointed out that everywhere I went as we studied the macaques, they assigned a lookout to watch me. Well, on the third day, a monkey ran by me and swatted me on the leg. The guide said that when the monkeys determine that a newcomer isn't a threat, they "tag" him into the group, which is apparently, what had just happened. So I passed the audition. What a huge honor! They might not have known that I was there to help them, but at least they knew I wasn't on the wrong team.

The copyright lawsuit was all over the media and became a huge topic of discussion and debate in legal circles. Now, we didn't win the initial case, so we appealed. But before the appellate court could issue a ruling, something wonderful happened. We entered into a settlement in which the photographer agreed to donate 25% of his gross revenue from the monkey selfie to charities that will benefit Naruto and his community of macaques and protect their habitat.

So we made history after all: This was the first time an animal will be paid for his own creation, his own intellectual property. And that is huge! And this is what's called "impact litigation." These kinds of cases, even if they're not won, serve as paving stones, preparing the road for where we're trying to go in the fight for animal rights.

Another impact lawsuit was our 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment case against SeaWorld.

Now, most people know that the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution prohibits slavery. But what they don't realize is that by its plain terms, it's not limited to only preventing *human* slavery. So we sued SeaWorld for violating the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment by enslaving five orcas: stealing them from their families in the wild, imprisoning them, and forcing them to work and breed, the very definition of slavery.

The case had support from some heavy hitters, including Laurence Tribe, one of the foremost constitutional scholars of our time. And it stirred up major public discussions about the ethics of captivity.

But the court ruled against us, and that was very hard. I felt responsible, like I'd let those orcas down—especially a few years later when Tilikum, the famous orca from the documentary *Blackfish* who was one of our plaintiffs in the lawsuit, died, still imprisoned in a barren concrete tank.

But here's the thing: When we have these disappointments, I focus on something that my litigation mentor told me about those famous battles for human civil rights during the 1960s and '70s. He said that in cases that push the boundaries of the law, you lose, you lose, you lose ... and *then you win*.

**TRANSCRIPT**



Video: [bit.ly/2RZjB52](https://bit.ly/2RZjB52)

And so each case brings us one step closer to a society that recognizes fundamental rights for animals *in their own right* and not just in relation to how they can be used by humans. They have—and we are demanding—their basic, inalienable right to live with their families and to be free from abuse.

So what does this all mean? It means that animal rights is the next frontier of civil rights.

And so we keep pushing, we keep fighting, and I promise you, one day, we will win.

Thank you.

**TRANSCRIPT**



Video: [bit.ly/3cv1Ofj](https://bit.ly/3cv1Ofj)

## 'Grace': PETA's Banned Thanksgiving Ad

**Dad:** You want to say grace, honey?

**Girl:** Sure. Dear God, thank you for the turkey we're about to eat and for the turkey farms where they pack them into dark, tiny little sheds for their whole lives. Thank you for when they burn their feathers off while they're still alive and for when turkey gets kicked around like a football and killed by people who think it's fun to stomp on their little turkey heads. And special thanks for all the chemicals and dirt and poop that's in the turkey we're about to eat. Oh, and thank you for rainbows. Amen. Let's eat.

THIS THANKSGIVING, BE THANKFUL YOU'RE NOT A TURKEY.

GO VEGAN.

PETA

**TRANSCRIPT**



Video: [bit.ly/33Wodyc](https://bit.ly/33Wodyc)

## **RZA: We're Not Different in Any Important Way**

We are all the same  
in all the ways that matter.  
It doesn't matter what we look like,  
how old we are,  
what language we speak,  
or who we love.

It doesn't matter if we have fur  
or feathers  
or fins,  
the length of our nose,  
or the number of legs.

We're not different  
in any important way.

We all have thoughts and feelings.

We all feel love  
and pain  
and loneliness  
and joy.

We can all understand,  
but we are not always understanding.

We experience ourselves  
as separate from the rest,  
but none of us deserves to be treated with less respect.

Our task must be to break free  
from prejudice  
and to see ourselves in everyone else.



## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [youtu.be/2AXStu22rT8](https://youtu.be/2AXStu22rT8)

## Challenging Assumptions Video

### Hanh:

I spent most of my childhood away from my native Vietnam. I can tell you many an experience of having to navigate a foreign environment and not always being understood. Now, my experience growing up as a third-culture kid was in no way traumatizing, but it does help me understand how language can be used to justify exclusion and allow certain groups to say, “Those who don’t speak our language and don’t follow our customs are less intelligent, less civilized.” When that happens, language—rather than being a bridge to understanding—becomes a weapon against both human and nonhuman others.

### Zachary:

I grew up in rural Illinois, where there was still a Black and a white side of town. And unfortunately, like many places, we had our fair share of racist people. At the root of their prejudice, I feel like they were scared that anyone not exactly like them—perhaps a woman or a Muslim, a Mexican, a person with disabilities, or a member of a different species—would take something away from them or make it seem like their position is less important.

### Hanh:

When I first got involved in animal rights activism three years ago, it was at first with little support from my parents. Once, in an argument with my mom, I referred to the trillions of nonhuman animals exploited and killed every year as “victims.” My choice of word really upset my mom. In her mind, victims meant only human victims. And in fact, the Vietnamese word for victim itself, “nan nhân,” is made up of two Sino-Vietnamese characters, one of which means person—and that is always understood to be “human.”

### Zachary:

A bigoted or racist person uses arbitrary differences between people—like skin color or gender—to divide them, rather than using our similarities to unite them. Just like a speciesist believes that one species is more deserving of love or life than another, when in reality every living, feeling being has an innate desire to live free from harm. Some humans think that they are so different from other animals they don’t even consider them to be individuals but rather inanimate objects.

But they *are* individuals, just like you and me. They have likes and dislikes, thoughts and emotions, languages—even cultures. Many form bonds, especially mothers and babies. Take Dolly and her calf, Dolly II. Dolly was an old, clever cow who, unlike most cows in the dairy industry, lived on a small farm that allowed her to raise her babies. Most farms tear the mothers’ calves away from them so they can steal the milk that those calves would need to grow. Dolly had raised many calves by the time Dolly II came along, and she knew when her daughter needed to be independent and had to go and look after herself.

## TRANSCRIPT



Video: [youtu.be/2AXStu22rT8](https://youtu.be/2AXStu22rT8)

Sometime later, Dolly II had her own calf at the bottom of a faraway hill. Tragically, her calf was stillborn, and she suffered from a displaced womb. Now, a veterinarian was able to stitch up her womb, but in the coming weeks, it was clear that she was weak and depressed.

Then Dolly II disappeared. Workers searched all over for her and eventually found her about three fields away with her mother, Dolly, who was licking her all over. Now at this point, they hadn't been together in ages, but in a time of crisis, a mother was taking care of her daughter. And about after six days, Dolly II had made a full recovery.

Cows are far from the only animals who forge deep relationships. Orangutans, orcas, wolf spiders, and many other animals are devoted parents. Prairie voles, a type of rodent, are one of the animals who stay together and pick a mate for life. During stressful times, they give the equivalent of hugs and kisses. Pigeons are remarkably faithful. One pigeon named Harold remained by his mate, Maude's, side, even when she was sick and unable to fly, risking his own well-being to look after her.

**Zachary:**

Speciesists have learned to exploit specific traits of various species. They take advantage of dogs' protective nature, forcing them to live outside and guard their homes, often denying them basic needs like food, water, shelter, or affection. It's the ability of rats and mice to learn quickly that makes them so popular in laboratories. Humans exploit animals for what they can do and then discriminate against them for what they can't.

It's the same thing that we do to each other—we capitalize on what we want, and then we demonize or disregard things that are useless to us or which is unfamiliar. We objectify women's bodies and then shame or punish them for their choices.

**Zachary:**

We celebrate Black musicians and athletes, and then allow our justice system to fail Black people in general. We celebrate cuisine and holidays from other cultures while mocking the people that created them. We disregard people with disabilities, forgetting that we, too, could become disabled at any moment.

**Hanh:**

Since the beginning of time, we humans have deliberately distanced ourselves from everything that connects us to the rest of animalkind, while classes of humans thought to be inferior have been likened to animals. In ancient China, the great philosopher Confucius taught that people who weren't Tang Chinese were closer to animals in their greediness and aggression.

Throughout history, this same type of degrading language has been used by everyone, from the most enlightened moral teachers to the perpetrators of the most gruesome human atrocities. In Nazi Germany, anti-Semitic propaganda frequently

**TRANSCRIPT**

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compared Jews to lice or rats who carry disease, and clearly, we haven't learned. Even now in Vietnamese slang, criminals and so-called "lowlifes" are often called "dogs," who are supposedly our best friends.

When you think about it, the language that we use to talk about other animals is incredibly dismissive and condescending. We refer to most animals as "it," the same pronoun we would use to refer to a table. Usually only companion animals are "he's" and "she's" and even then only the ones whom we've gotten to know well like Mr. Fluffy McFluffsters, the beloved family dog. I could go on and on about the less than dignified names that some animals are given.

Some groups of animals, like fishes, aren't even seen as individuals but one big, uncountable mass. The same word "fish" is used whether you're talking about one, two, or 100 individuals. And we call ourselves "owners" of even the dogs and cats whom we pamper and consider family members.

That's not all. We project a lot of qualities that we dislike about ourselves onto other animals. Growing up, I used to be reprimanded for leaving my room like a pigsty. We use "fat as a pig" and "dumb as a mule" as insults. The equivalents exist in Vietnamese and many other languages. A lot of these stereotypes are the same across cultures. We use a lot of euphemisms, too, to maintain a dividing line between ourselves and other animals. We all have flesh, skin, and hair, but the exact same body parts that we kill other animals for have been renamed meat, leather, and fur instead.

**Zachary:**

Some humans have even taken exploitation even further, using one form of violence to support or justify another. White supremacists use cow's milk as a symbol of their alleged superiority. They share photos of themselves chugging milk and using milk emojis to celebrate their "whiteness." Now, people of color are often lactose-intolerant. So these racists somehow feel that digesting another species' breast milk makes them a part of the "master race."

**Hanh:**

I'll let you in on a little secret: Humans are animals. Well, so it's not really a secret, but when we're talking about animals, we're not imagining ourselves being in that category. And human intelligence and emotions continue to be the measuring stick for how we understand other animals. Groundbreaking studies would show that pigs are as smart as a human toddler—this is something that I used to repeat a lot. But now I realize that even as I would try to show that other animals are just like us, that phrase "like us" reinforces the idea that they'll always be inferior.

So the bigger problem with all this is that these everyday words and usages often go unexamined, because from the moment we were born, we learned that we humans can do with other animals whatever we please, just because they belong to a species different from our own. That's what speciesism is, and it's every bit as unjust as racism, sexism, or any other "-ism."

## TRANSCRIPT



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**Zachary:**

So why draw a line between humans and other animals? Why not take a stand against *all* needless violence, *all* discrimination, *all* injustices? There's plenty of compassion to go around.

We can't put animal rights on the back burner just because racism and other forms of harmful discrimination against humans are on the front burner. Not just because the vast majority of hate that animal advocates like myself receive is from self-identified racists or sexists, homophobes, sport hunters, and grinning trophy hunters or because exploitation of others is all one thing. Animal rights proponents embrace the words of civil rights activist and feminist Audre Lorde, who said, *There is no such thing as a single issue struggle, because we don't live single issue lives.*

**Zachary:**

But there's still another reason: We know so much about animal intelligence and about the cruelties hidden in slaughterhouses, the puppy mills, the circuses, and all the other places animals are being used—once you know that, it's hard to brush that aside.

Bullying and violence don't stop at the human door any more than they stop at the race or gender door.

**Hanh:**

If we're to challenge this false sense of entitlement, if we're to recognize other animals as the unique individuals they are, with unique personalities and interests and rich, complex inner lives, we have to stop treating them as objects and passive caricatures in the very words that we speak.

If we didn't look down upon and talk down to other animals so much, we wouldn't feel so insulted or dehumanized when we're compared to them or when we're reminded that we're not separate from them.

So as you remove other animals from the equation when it comes to what you eat, wear, or use in other ways, I hope you'll also stop to ponder the impact of the words you're using and the portraits you're painting of other animals.

**Zachary:**

Henry Bergh, founder of the ASPCA, won the first court case that saved a child from abuse. And when he was criticized for teaching kindness to animals, it's said that he responded that if you teach a child not to step on a caterpillar, you do as much for that child as you did the caterpillar. When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was criticized for objecting to the Vietnam War, rather than just restricting his activism to only racial discrimination, he responded that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

## TRANSCRIPT



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I agree with Dr. King, and as a Black man, I don't really have a choice on how I feel about social inequality. It's not that I enjoy fighting it—it's just that I often recognize that the cards are stacked against me, and I would rather not stay quiet about it. I came across these words by the late great Maya Angelou and turned them into a personal mantra: *I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.*

And I've relied heavily on this quote for my own personal development. It's helped me choose where to spend my money and how to treat other human beings. And yes, this quote has a lot to do with why I'm vegan. Once I understood that, like humans, chickens, cows, pigs, and all other animals experience pain, experience fear, and value their own lives, I banned products made from exploiting them from my life. I knew better, so—for animals—I did better. Knowing that people can change—even dramatically—I'm determined to open as many eyes as possible.

Living as a Black vegan is a practice in "sankofa"—it's a traditional West African term that means we can learn from our roots in order to help us move forward. If we really want to honor our ancestral brothers and sisters, we must strive to be our healthiest, greatest, most compassionate selves.

**Hanh:**

Let's all be a little more careful with what we express and how we express it, because our words, as well as our actions, can have very real victims.

**Zachary:**

Those of us working to break down prejudice against animals are the same ones who are advocating for human rights and challenging hate groups. Because we know that oppression in all of its ugly forms is wrong. The women's rights advocate Connie Salamone said, *It's hard to talk about rights if your mouth is full of the bones of a small, tortured bird.*

Let's be strong in knowledge that it doesn't matter who the victim is and that, when we witness oppression, we should not let it go unchallenged—both for the victim's sake and for the sake of our own integrity and consistency. Thank you.

**Hanh:**

Thank you.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Video: [bit.ly/306NkgP](https://bit.ly/306NkgP)

## #IStoppedYouCanToo

Featuring Danielle Solberg

I made the initial decision to work in the field of conservation to help animals through my research.

#IStoppedYouCanToo  
Featuring Danielle Solberg

I soon became aware that even research in the field of conservation often entails the use of animals in a laboratory setting. I started researching wild wolves in Idaho in hopes to conserve and protect them. We used noninvasive methods to track their packs.

Our methods quickly turned lethal for many individuals. They killed all the wolves that we identified. I spoke up for the wolves that the state killed and was blacklisted from the department that manages all conservation efforts within the state as well as from my laboratory research.

The only options I thought I had left in conservation work were curiosity-driven experiments on fish and kangaroo rats in my university's labs. The fish on campus are subjected to filthy, small tanks, where they spend their short lives swimming in circles. After being tormented their entire lives, they're often killed at a fraction of their natural life spans.

The kangaroo rats also live in small tanks for the entirety of their short lives, only to be taken out of their tanks to run on a treadmill and be tormented by humans so they can observe their behaviors. When the rats are deemed useless to the study, just like the fish, they're often killed at a fraction of their natural life spans.

I realized that all animals, regardless of their species, are sentient and deserving of a life free of suffering from unnecessary, unreliable, and cruel experiments. I chose to leave the field altogether when I realized that rather than helping animals through my research, I was directly contributing to their suffering. That's why I stopped, and you can, too.

PETA

#IStoppedYouCanToo

Please share your own story. E-mail [RATSinfo@peta.org](mailto:RATSinfo@peta.org).

# Part 3 Service-Learning Project

## INTRODUCTION

Part 3 of “Challenging Assumptions” will guide you through overseeing a student-led service-learning project. Using knowledge gained in Parts 1 and 2 of the curriculum, students will work collaboratively to identify an animal-related problem in their community, brainstorm possible solutions, and plan and execute one of them to effect measurable change. They will then assess the effectiveness of their chosen solution and identify ways of improving outcomes as well as ways for individuals to continue making efforts to solve the problem.

### STEP 1: REFLECT ON PREVIOUS LESSONS (DAY 1)

Remind students about some of the major assignments they worked on throughout the year and about the overarching theme of *challenging assumptions*. Ask them to spend about 10 minutes writing about the assumptions that they challenged over the last few months. Ask a few volunteers to share what they learned this year. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- Did your understanding of the psychological phenomenon of *cognitive dissonance* guide your behavior this school year? If so, how? If not, describe a particular area in which you might be able to work on aligning your actions with your beliefs.
- What parallels were you able to draw between society’s treatment of animals and the historical discrimination against people of color, women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and others who have been and continue to be marginalized or systemically denied basic human rights?
- In your own words, what is *speciesism*? What impact does it have on society?
- Describe what it would look like to take all living, feeling beings into consideration in the fight for social justice.

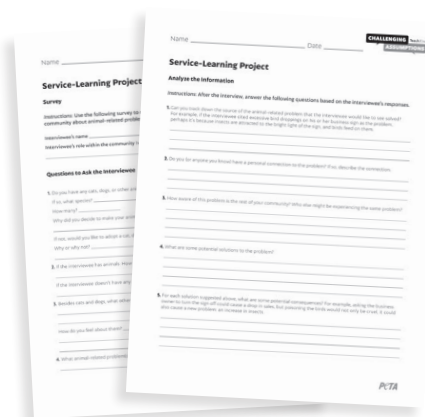
### STEP 2: IDENTIFY A PROBLEM (DAYS 1 TO 7)

Have students complete the [service-learning project](#) survey to begin gathering information about animal-related problems in their community. Have them interview neighbors, business owners, and other members of the community to learn what animal-related problems these individuals have identified and would like to see resolved. Students can use the questions on the survey as well as questions of their own.

Additionally, have students watch and read the news daily to find stories about animals. Have them write down a brief description of each news segment, adding more descriptions whenever they come across new animal-related stories. After about a week, have them write a summary of their observations about news coverage of animals. Are there more positive or negative stories? How many are about cruelty to animals? What similarities do students notice among the stories?

Have students work in small groups to analyze the data collected from the service-learning project survey and their observations about news coverage of animals.

Have each group propose one animal-related problem in their community to work on, using the questions listed below to guide their discussions.



### Questions to Guide Student Discussion

- What conclusions can you draw from the data collected in your service-learning project surveys?
  - Did everyone in your group have similar responses?
  - Did anyone have a response to a question that no one else had?
  - What were you surprised to learn from your groupmates’ responses?



- What conclusions can you draw from the data collected in your interviews with community members?
  - Did the people you interviewed have similar responses?
  - Did anyone have a response to a question that no one else had?
  - Did the roles that people play in your community influence their responses? For example, how might business owners' motivations influence their opinions of wildlife?
  - What were you surprised to learn in your interviews?
- What conclusions can you draw from the data collected in your observations of the news?
  - Did your group have similar observations?
  - Did anyone observe something that no one else did?
  - What were you surprised to learn from your groupmates' observations?

Alternatively, students can choose as their problem one of the areas they learned about during the school year in which the largest numbers of animals suffer the most intensely for the longest periods of time: experimentation, agriculture, the clothing industry, or entertainment.

Write the animal-related problem that each group proposes on the board. Have a member of each group explain why they chose that problem. Here are some examples:

- Chained dogs
- Homeless cats and dogs and overburdened animal shelters
- Sales of betta fish at a local pet store
- Classroom dissection
- A local roadside zoo, marine park, or animal-based circus

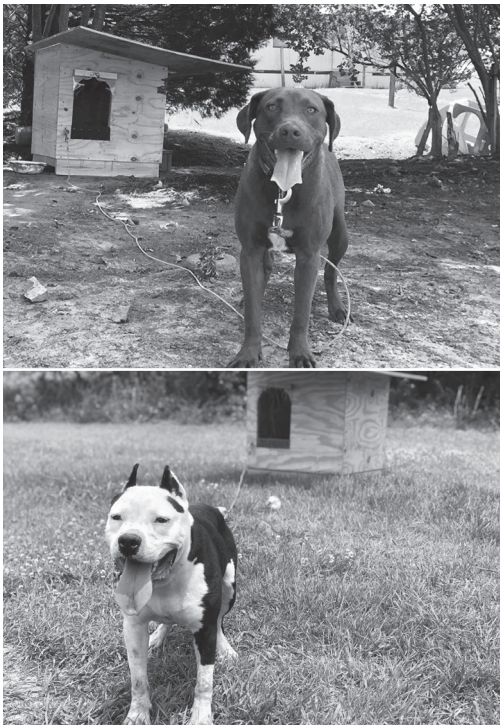
Have students vote to determine which problem they should work together to try to solve for the service-learning project.

### STEP 3: BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS (DAYS 8 AND 9)

Next, have students suggest possible solutions to their chosen problem off the top of their head and write them on the board. Then, have them conduct research on these solutions and others. For example, possible solutions to the problem of chained dogs might include the following:

- Urging neighbors who keep their dogs chained outside to keep them indoors
- Passing out informational leaflets about the problems with dog chaining in the community
- Contacting law enforcement in cases of abuse
- Attending town hall meetings to push for legislation that would ban dog chaining

Remind students to keep in mind Peter Singer's philosophy of equal consideration of interests as they explore solutions to their designated problem. The solutions to any problems within their community should consider the interests of all individuals affected equally, no matter their species. As students brainstorm solutions to their chosen problem, have them discuss the following question: Is the problem occurring because of speciesist beliefs? As a reminder, speciesism is prejudice or discrimination based on species. For example, some people view dogs as cheap security systems rather than as individuals capable of suffering, which is why they keep them chained up outdoors.



#### **STEP 4: PLAN AND EXECUTE A SOLUTION (DAY 10 TO THE END)**

Once students have come up with a list of possible solutions, have them choose one to carry out. Ask them to consider which solution would be the most effective in solving the problem, what resources are available to them, and their timeline. What are their specific goals, and how will they determine whether or not they were successful in achieving them?

For example, working with elected representatives to pass ordinances that ban or restrict tethering is an effective way to help chained dogs. Students may start a petition, write to local newspapers and legislators, and speak at town hall meetings about the need for tethering ordinances in their community.

You can also have students watch [Breaking the Chain](#), a documentary about PETA's Animal Rescue Team and its work to help companion animals in impoverished and underserved areas of Virginia and North Carolina. This film will open your students' eyes to the suffering endured by animals trapped in desperate situations, the challenges faced by PETA's fieldworkers as they do everything they can to help them, and the ways everyone can make a difference for cats and dogs in their own community.

To help dogs beyond their community, students may host a "[Change for Chained Dogs](#)" fundraiser. You can order a fundraiser pack, which includes student-friendly leaflets and stickers to help spread the word, a poster to help students keep track of their progress toward their fundraising goal, labels to put on donation jars at school, and all the information that they'll need to start raising money. Funds collected support PETA's work constructing and delivering sturdy custom-built doghouses filled with straw bedding for dogs whose owners won't let them live indoors or relinquish them to caring people who will.

#### **STEP 5: ASSESS EFFECTIVENESS AND IDENTIFY WAYS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES (LAST DAY)**

Have students compare the outcome of their solution with the goal that they set. Did they meet their goal? If so, what allowed them to achieve this? If not, what could they change about their approach to meet their goal in the future? What problems did they encounter, and how did they overcome them? What measurable change did they make for animals in their community? Encourage students to assess both quantitative data (e.g., how much money they raised) and qualitative data (e.g., living conditions for the animals, feedback from the community, etc.).

Finally, have students brainstorm ways each of them can continue their efforts to solve their designated problem. For example, while the "Change for Chained Dogs" fundraiser is an excellent way to work together to help chained dogs, individuals can keep an eye out for chained dogs in their neighborhoods and use one of the strategies discussed as a solution.

#### **HUMANE FUNDRAISING IDEAS**

Whatever animal-related problem your students choose to tackle, there are many humane and fun ways to raise funds to purchase materials needed to carry out your project. By choosing a humane option, you're setting an example for your students and teaching them to respect life, see the bigger picture, and make compassionate decisions that benefit everyone. Check out these [animal-friendly fundraiser ideas](#).

#### **SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT IDEAS**

There are many ways to help animals in the community—students are limited only by their imagination. Here are some examples:

- [Build doghouses for lonely "outdoor dogs."](#)
- Support your local open-admission animal shelter by organizing a supply drive or volunteering to help care for animals.
- [Get your school to ban glue traps on campus.](#)
- [Cut out dissection in your school.](#)
- Host a cruelty-free fashion show.
- [Get your school to introduce vegan options in the cafeteria.](#)
- Protest animal-based circuses or any other cruel form of entertainment that plans to show up at your school or in your community.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Service-Learning Project

## Survey

*Instructions:* Use the following survey to record information as you interview members of your community about animal-related problems.

**Interviewee's name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewee's role within the community** (e.g., neighbor, business owner, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to Ask the Interviewee

1. Do you have any cats, dogs, or other animals? (Circle one.)      Yes                      No

If so, what species? \_\_\_\_\_

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to make your animal(s) a part of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, would you like to adopt a cat, dog, or other animal? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If the interviewee has animals: How do you feel about your animal(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

If the interviewee doesn't have any animals: How do you feel about the cats and dogs in your neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Besides cats and dogs, what other animals do you see on a regular basis (birds, cows, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about them? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What animal-related problem(s) would you like to see solved in our community, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Service-Learning Project

### Analyze the Information

*Instructions:* After the interview, answer the following questions based on the interviewee's responses.

1. Can you track down the source of the animal-related problem that the interviewee would like to see solved? For example, if the interviewee cited excessive dog waste on the sidewalk outside his or her business as the problem, perhaps it's because dog guardians don't have anywhere to dispose of the waste nearby.
2. Do you (or anyone you know) have a personal connection to the problem? If so, describe the connection.
3. How aware of this problem is the rest of your community? Who else might be experiencing the same problem?
4. What are some potential solutions to the problem?
5. For each solution suggested above, what are some potential consequences? For example, asking the business owner to put up a "pooper-scooper" station with bags and a trash bin for dog guardians to use would cost money, but fining people who don't pick up after their dogs could cause a new problem: less foot traffic nearby and, thus, less business.