Davonte Reese wanted a dog, but his parents didn’t think he was capable of taking care of one. Then they heard about a company that rents pets. Davonte’s parents were glad the pet rental company gave them the chance to rent a Dalmatian for a day. Renting a Dalmatian helped them realize that Davonte was ready to own a dog. His parents then took Davonte to an animal shelter and adopted a mixed-breed dog named Lucky.

Some people say renting a dog should be illegal. They believe rental businesses are harmful to dogs. People who are against pet rentals give several reasons to support their position. To be happy, they say, a dog needs ongoing contact with one person. In addition, a dog likes to know its home. Dogs and people evolved together, so dogs depend on their human “family.” They have some social skills that are like those of humans. People domesticated dogs to be socially compatible and live with humans. Therefore, people have a special responsibility to ensure that dogs have stable homes, and each dog has a special right to a permanent home with ongoing companionship. Also, they say, who will want rental dogs when they are sick or old?

Marlena Cervantes disagrees with the notion that pet rental is bad for dogs. She has a pet rental business. She buys mostly purebred dogs and then rents them for a fee. A dog can spend time with a different family every day of the week. Whereas people who own dogs leave them home alone, Marlena says people who rent dogs give the animals lots of attention. Also, families like Davonte’s can use pet rentals to make an informed decision about whether to own a dog or not. Marlena’s business also creates jobs.

Some states may make it against the law to rent pets. If you were going to write to a member of your state assembly about this issue, what would you say? Should it be illegal to rent a pet?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
- How did renting a dog help Davonte and his family?
- How does the owner of a rent-a-pet business argue in favor of renting dogs?
- Why are some people against pet rental businesses?
- If you wanted to start a rent-a-pet business, how could you ensure that your business was good for dogs as well as people?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

whereas (conjunction) although, in contrast with the fact that

Sample Sentence: Whereas people who own dogs leave them home alone, Marlena says people who rent dogs give the animals lots of attention.

Turn and Talk: How is middle school different from elementary school? (Try: In elementary school, ______, whereas in middle school, ______.)

capable (adjective) able to do or accomplish something

Sample Sentence: Davonte Reese wanted a dog, but his parents didn’t think he was capable of taking care of one.

Turn and Talk: What is one thing that people say you are capable of? Do you agree or disagree with them?

ongoing (adjective) continuing without interruption

Sample Sentence: Each dog has a special right to a permanent home with ongoing companionship.

Turn and Talk: What is an ongoing argument or debate that you have with your friends?

compatible (adjective) able to exist together well

Sample Sentence: People domesticated dogs to be socially compatible and live with humans.

Turn and Talk: What are some qualities of the people with whom you are most compatible?

notion (noun) idea or belief

Sample Sentence: Marlena Davis disagrees with the notion that pet rental is bad for dogs.

Turn and Talk: Do you agree with the notion that world peace is possible?
Even though the notion of putting unwanted pets to sleep is a sad one, millions of dogs and cats are put to sleep in shelters each year. People disagree about whether pet rental can help save these animals. Some people say that rescuing a shelter pet is better than renting, whereas others say pet rental keeps pets from going to the shelter in the first place. Pet renters can return a pet if it is incompatible with the renter’s lifestyle, or if the renter is incapable of giving the pet ongoing care. This way, the unwanted pet goes back to the store instead of the shelter.

Option 1: About three million pets are put to sleep in U.S. shelters each year. Which of the following shows three million written in standard form?

A. 3,000  
B. 300,000  
C. 3,000,000  
D. 3,000,000,000

Option 2: Cyprian loves dogs, but he knows that he is too busy to take care of a full-time pet. He tries renting a dog and finds that pet rental is compatible with his lifestyle. He recommends the same pet rental business to three of his friends, who try it a week later. They enjoy the experience, and each gets three of their own friends to try it the next week. At this rate, how many customers will the pet rental service have gained within 8 weeks of Cyprian’s recommendation?

\[3^8 = 6,561 \text{ people will try the pet rental service.}\]

Discussion Question: Pets are incapable of defending their rights. Whereas people have many rights, pets have very few. Do pets have the right not to be put to sleep? The right to be spayed or neutered? The right to ongoing care? Does the notion of pets’ rights make sense, or are rights something that only people have? If pets have rights, are those rights compatible with pet rental?
Many people argue that families that rent pets don’t have enough experience with pet needs and behaviors. Others think it is common knowledge that dogs are happy when they wag their tails and afraid when they lower their bodies and look down. Ms. Kahn’s student Shatara agreed with this notion. She shared, “Our poodle, Toots, wags his tail whenever we take him for a walk around the neighborhood, whereas Rusty, our sheepdog, cowers and is never happy about going for walks. My mom says that Rusty’s fear of city noises has been an ongoing problem since Rusty was a puppy.”

Ms. Kahn chimed in, “My family’s dog, Rex, is compatible with urban life, but he is afraid of new people inside our apartment. He’ll actually hide when we have guests.”

This got Shatara thinking about observing the behaviors of dogs. She sketched different ways that dogs held their bodies as she observed them. She was curious about how much she could infer from the posture of dogs. Examine Shatara’s sketches to see if there is enough information for you to make an inference. If so, write it down.

Here are some of Shatara's sketches: Answers will vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Dog Feeling</th>
<th>Inference Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ submissive</td>
<td>Example: I think that sketch #1 shows a neutral/relaxed posture because the ears and tail are drooping down instead of pointing up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ fearful</td>
<td>Your Inference: ______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ neutral/relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ aggressive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ playful</td>
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</table>

Some people might say that sketching is not a very scientific way for Shatara to take notes about her observations. What do you think?
DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A
- Renting a pet should be against the law.

OR
- Renting a pet should be allowed.

OR
- CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________
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13. ___________________________________________
14. ___________________________________________
15. ___________________________________________
16. ___________________________________________
17. ___________________________________________
18. ___________________________________________
19. ___________________________________________
20. ___________________________________________

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

- Can you show me evidence in the text that...
- I believe that...
- You make a good point, but have you considered...
- I agree with you, but...
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

whereas | capable | ongoing | compatible | notion

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