**File Name: A6R Animals are Smart**

**Argument/Opinion**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

**Introduces claim,** with a bit of context *(some people think we are superior to animals),* which functions as a counterclaim

**Animals** **are Smart**

Some people think that we are superior to animals but I think that animals are as smart as we are. Pets react to your moods and seem to know just when it’s dinner time! Some animals use tools, communicate and think for their own.

If animals can use tools, they must be smart. For instance, a cow named Betty made a hook out of a piece of metal wire. That’s obviously pretty smart but she didn’t stop there. She then used the hook to get treats out of a glass tube. I think this is smart because Betty figured out how to make a tool to get something she wanted. Another smart animal who used a tool was Fu Manchu the Orangutan. Fu Manchu first traded Food for wire with another orangutan and then he hid it in his mouth until the right time. Then he used the wire as a tool to pick the lock on his cage and escape. I think this shows Fu Manchu was smart because he used a tool and he outsmarted humans by escaping from his cage.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claim and reasons**

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

**Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly**

Animals who communicate might be even smarter than animals who use tools. For instance one clever gorilla actually learned sign language! Not only that but she started making her own signs. This showed scientists that she was trying to communicate her thoughts, which takes big brainpower. I think this is smart because when Koko made her own signs it showed that she wasn’t just memorizing signs, she was thinking and making her own signs. Another smart animal who could understand communication was Betsy the dog. Betsy understands 340 spoken words! Not only that, but when someone showed her a picture of something she had never seen before she would go and get the item. I think this is really smart because Betsy didn’t just memorize words she could recognize objects and fetch them. Betsy didn’t really communicate, but I think she understood so much. It’s just as good.

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

For animals who don’t communicate or use tools there is another category: Animals that think on their own. For example, the poison dart Frog. Aside from protecting themselves with poison, they have AMAZING memories! The mothers hide their pollywogs in individual nests all over the jungle and had to remember where each one is and to come back every couple days to feed them! I think that is amazing how they think for their own because every pollywog (up to 35!) is in a different, camoflauged spot and their mom can still remember where each and every one is. Another example of animals thinking on their own is Alex, the African grey parrot. Alex can figure out alikeness and diference between two objects. For instance, when scientists hold up two objects and ask what the difference is he will answer either shape or color, depending on what it was. This is really smart because not only can Alex tell the difference he can tell what is the same about some objects. I’d say that is a pretty smart bird to be able to figure out what was the same and different in his mind, but he also translated that out into words. I’d say these animals are really smart in thinking on their own.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claims and reasons** Writer explains her thinking, relating back to claim

I know that some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that most of the animals I talked about were special, that they were bred in a lab. But animals in natural life are smart too. For instance, a girl in my class named Erin has a farm, and every day her dad goes out at 2:30 AM to milk them. The cows line up at 2:25 am without being told. I think that this is smart because the cows know what time it is, AND line up early without being told. I think this is really smart of the cows. Another real life example of smart animals is my friend Mandy’s Cockatoo. Now, you all know Cockatoos repeat what is said. This Cockatoo, However takes it a step farther. Instead of just saying things at random times, she actually answers the door when the doorbell is rung. She dosn’t open the door, but she does say things like “Hello”, and “Come in.” I think this is smart because instead of just saying random words, she responds with the right words at right time.

Introduces a counterclaim which writer then refutes

My goal of this essay was to convince you that animals were smart. You may have already known this and reading this essay was a waste of time to you. Or, you might have thought animals were not smart and still think that. If that is the case I have failed in my essay. However If you have changed your mind and now think that animals are smart, I have succeeded! I know that animals are smart, especially ones that use tools, communicate, and think for their own.

**Provides concluding statement** that follows from the argument presented

In this assignment, the student has been working with a study of animals and has read several informational pieces. She appears to be responding to a Focusing Question of “What have you learned about how smart animals are?” The writer makes the claim that animals are smart, in spite of anticipation that some might disagree with her.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, and uses credible and relevant evidence to develop the reasons, showing her understanding of her topic. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. She uses phrases (such as “*this shows”* and “*this is really smart because”*) to clarify the relationship between the claim she makes about animals being smart and the reasons and evidence she gives to support the claim. She even includes a form of counter-claim (“*some of you may think that animals are not smart”*), which she refutes, even though use of the counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level.

While the writer occasionally adopts a personal tone, (“*my goal of this essay was to convince you*…”), the overall tone of the essay is appropriately formal. The writer concludes by restating the focus / claim about animals being smart.

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