**Animal Issues**

**Directions:** Use the following issues as a basis for a class discussion. What is your

opinion on these issues?

• **Abuse and neglect** – Millions of abused animals are rescued every year. These

animals have not received adequate food, water, shelter, or medical attention. Most

big cities now have animal control officers who have the power to seize abused

animals and arrest their owners.

• **Illegal capture and trade** – Many animals are captured, traded illegally, and even

killed. Exotic species such as apes, elephants, tigers, and birds are prized for meat,

ivory, fur, or sale as pets. Animal poaching has led to the endangerment of many

species.

• **Overpopulation** – Irresponsible breeding and failure to have dogs and cats spayed

or neutered has led to a serious overpopulation problem and severely overcrowded

shelters.

• **Euthanasia** – Euthanasia is the act of painlessly ending the life of a sick animal.

Issues arise however when owners want their animal euthanized when there is

nothing wrong with it, or when healthy animals are euthanized to make space in an

overcrowded shelter.

• **Exotic species** – Exotic animals have always been prized as pets and for carnival

and zoo exhibits, but because of their unique environmental and nutritional

requirements are difficult to maintain in captivity.

• **Production agriculture** – There has always been heated debate over the methods

used in production agriculture. Problems with overcrowding, transport, slaughter,

and disease were at the forefront of the animal rights movement and continue to be

a main issue.

• **Hunting (legal and illegal)** – At one time hunting was a necessity of life, now

however, hunting is mainly a sport. Legal hunting helps to maintain the population

levels of certain animals. Illegal hunting, often of exotic species, reduces already

endangered species.

• **Education and research** – Animals used for education and research have gotten a

lot of media attention in the last twenty years. Many schools no longer dissect

animals in class and many companies that once tested on animals have discontinued

the practice.

• **Endangered species** – Many species of animals are now endangered due to

pollution, deforestation, urban sprawl, poaching, etc. There are programs and

organizations that focus on the rehabilitation of specific species and because of

them, many animal populations have been brought back to stable numbers.