SuperScience

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

An Untamed Debate

In "Saving Slow Lorises" (pp. 4-7), you learned that the slow loris has become endangered as a result of the pet trade. Millions of wild animals are kept as pets in the U.S., but not everyone agrees that's a good idea. Read the passage below, taking note of the facts supporting each side of the debate. Then use the organizer on the next page to write your own persuasive essay.

Wild Pets
Should wild animals live in our homes? By Natalie Smith

Major Tepper's family has owned many cats over the past 10 years. One of his favorites is Simba. Major, a teenager, loves to play with Simba and curl up with him.

But Simba is no ordinary cat—he's a lion! The Teppers have raised lions, tigers, and leopards over the past decade.

"When they're [young], they're almost like another house pet," Major says.

But they do grow up—and they can become dangerous. Recent tragedies have led to a debate about whether owning exotic pets should be allowed.

A Wild Debate

Millions of exotic pets—animals that haven't been domesticated—live in the U.S. That includes up to 20,000 big cats, like lions. And the Humane Society believes that about 15,000 nonhuman primates, such as monkeys and chimps, are living in people's homes.

Which animals are you allowed to keep as pets? The answer depends on where you live. Some states have strict laws against owning exotic pets. In other states, you don't even need a permit or license to own one. In recent years, though, some of these rules have been changing.

In May 2017, South Carolina passed a law banning certain pets, including big cats, apes, and nonnative bears. There have been times when these animals have escaped and hurt people. The law was passed to prevent anyone else from being injured in the future.

Too Much to Handle

Officials say unpredictable behavior is a big reason wild animals shouldn't be kept as pets.

"It's dangerous for both humans and the animals," says Adam Roberts. He works for Born Free USA, an animal-rights group. Since 1990, the group has recorded more than 1,000 escapes and other incidents involving exotic pets.

Groups like Born Free also say that many wild animals require special care that few pet owners are able to provide. Animal owners often find that they've taken on more than they can handle and neglect or abandon their pets.

A Bad Rap?

Exotic pet owners say that bad owners, not the animals, are to blame for these problems.

The Teppers' big cats are part of a family business. The adult cats are used in a magic show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Teppers say they know safety comes first when dealing with wild animals. Major and his siblings aren't allowed to get too close to the adult cats.

"People who don't follow the rules are the ones we hear about when something bad happens," says Susan Tepper, Major's mother.

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An Untamed Debate (cont'd.)

When you try to get people to agree with your opinion or point of view, you are attempting to **persuade** them. Persuasive writing is a form of communication in which the writer tries to convince the reader to agree with his or her point of view, or to do something specific.

Use evidence from the article "Saving Slow Lorises" (pp. 4-7) and the passage "Wild Pets" to answer the question: "Should people own exotic animals as pets?" Below, write an essay persuading readers to agree with your view.

■ **START** your essay with a position statement. Clearly state your opinion, or what it is you are trying to persuade the reader to agree with or to do.

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_____

■ **NEXT,** write two reasons that support your position statement. Be sure to explain each of your reasons, using facts to support your position where possible.

REASON: _____

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REASON: _____

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■ **END** your essay with a concluding paragraph. The conclusion should show the reader why he or she should agree with your position statement. Try to include something memorable. To do this, you might ask a question that will make the reader think about the issue after reading the essay.

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