

Should We Clone Our Pets?

It's now possible to make exact copies of our pets.
Does that mean we should?

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 810L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to analyze the arguments in two letters and decide which argument is the strongest

Featured Skill: analyzing arguments

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.8, W.1, SL.1

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Connected readings from the Scope Archives:

- "Should We Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth?"
- "Should We Clone Her?"

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Featured Skill Activity: Scavenger Hunt*
- Persuasive Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, Logos
- Essay Kit
- Anchor Chart: Debate Essay Kit Transitions
- Anchor Chart: Argument Essay Checklist
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (15 minutes)

Do Now: Journal (5 minutes)

- Project the following prompt on your whiteboard for students to respond to in their journals as they enter the classroom:

If you could make an exact copy of yourself, another person, or an animal, would you do it? Why or why not?

- Invite students to share their responses. Then tell them that today, they will read and analyze arguments on both sides of a debate about cloning pets.

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *embryo*, *endangered*, *ethical*, *irreplaceable*, *procedure*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- For students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View. Pause at the end of the introduction (before Alexander's and Aunt Sara's letters) to check for understanding. Have students turn and discuss with a partner: *In your own words, what is cloning? When the authors write that pet cloning "isn't exactly straightforward," what do they mean?*
- Have students silently reread the article to themselves.
- Poll the class: "No matter what you personally think about the issue of cloning pets, who do you think makes the better argument: Alexander or Aunt Sara?" Take a poll and tally the results on the board.

- Now trace and evaluate the arguments in each letter:
1. Read the directions in the Scavenger Hunt box on page 19 or at the bottom of the digital story page. If you need to review the bolded academic vocabulary in the box, here are definitions and examples:
 - **central claim (or central idea):** the big idea that the author supports in their argument
Example: School should start later.
 - **evidence:** facts, statistics, and examples that show why a claim should be believed; evidence supports and “holds up” a claim
Example: A study by the Sleep Institute found that 47 percent of kids aren’t getting enough sleep.
 - **counterclaim:** an acknowledgment of a concern or disagreement from those with opposing viewpoints
Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later.
 - **rebuttal:** an author’s direct response to an opposing viewpoint or claim (the “comeback” to a counterclaim)
Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later. ←[counterclaim] While that may be true in some cases, a 2018 study that looked at two schools in Seattle found that students’ sleep increased an average of 34 minutes each night after start times were moved nearly an hour later. ←[rebuttal]

For more argument terms support, see our **Argument Terms Glossary**, found in the Resource Library at Scope Online.

2. **Project Alexander’s letter and do a think-aloud that models each step in the Scavenger Hunt.** (Students can mark along in their magazines with you, or fill in the **Scavenger Hunt** graphic organizer found at Scope Online. This activity is offered on two levels—the lower-level version has students identify central claims and supporting evidence only.)
 - Identify Alexander’s **central claim (or central idea)**.
 - First, ask students: “Based on his letter, how would Alexander respond to the question in the headline on page 17: Should we clone our pets?”
(Alexander would say, “Yes! We should totally clone our pets. I really want to clone my dog Bean.”)

- Think aloud: “I’m going to underline lines that express this big idea: ‘I need your help persuading my mom to clone Bean’ and ‘Yes. Cloning Bean means we’ll be together forever.’”
 - Star two pieces of **supporting evidence**.
 - Think aloud: “Can I find two pieces of evidence Alexander provides to try to convince Aunt Sara that cloning Bean is a good idea? I’m going to star ‘Scientists have been cloning animals for decades. When an endangered ferret was cloned a few years ago, everyone thought it was great!’ and ‘But according to my research, cloning has come a long way from the early days when health problems were common in cloned animals.’”
 - Circle a **counterclaim**.
 - Think aloud: “Where does Alexander acknowledge a concern from the opposing viewpoint? I’m going to star ‘Now I know the cost is going to be a problem. The company I found charges \$50,000. I fully acknowledge that this is a huge amount of money.’ The high cost of cloning is a reason people could say cloning is a bad idea.”
 - Put a double star next to his **rebuttal**.
 - Think aloud: “Does Alexander have a comeback for the viewpoint that cloning is too expensive? Yes. He says, ‘But Bean is a member of our family. How can you put a price tag on a member of your family? To pay for it, maybe Mom could get a loan. Or she could pay for Bean’s tissue sample to be taken and stored, which is way cheaper, and when I’m older, I could pay to have the clone made.’”
3. Have students complete the Scavenger Hunt for Aunt Sara’s letter. They can work independently or in pairs, optionally using the Scavenger Hunt graphic organizer available at Scope Online. Then share out responses as a class. Sample responses:
- **Central claim:** “*But I won’t try to persuade your mom to have Bean cloned, because I don’t think it’s a good idea.*”
 - **Supporting evidence:** Sample responses: “*After all, you describe Bean as a family member—and you can’t replace a family member the way you can replace a pair of sneakers*”; “*So there’s no guarantee that a Bean clone would behave like Bean. There’s a famous story about a bull named Chance—a gentle animal that would pose for photos with kids. When he died, his owners had him cloned. The clone, Second Chance, was nothing like Chance. He attacked one of his owners, nearly killing him*”; “*I would say there’s a difference between cloning an animal to help save a species and cloning a dog just because you want to. Plus, there are already more dogs in this country than we can care for. According to the ASPCA, 3.1 million dogs go into shelters every year. Why not adopt one of these dogs instead?*”

- **Counterclaim:** *Sample counterclaim: “Let’s start with your claim that cloned animals are healthier than they were in the past.”*
- **Rebuttal:** *Sample rebuttal: “That is true—once they are born. A 2018 report by Columbia University found that dog cloning has only about a 20 percent success rate. That means that to get a cloned puppy, a whole bunch of female dogs must undergo procedures that can be stressful. Would it be right to make all those dogs suffer so you can get a clone?”*
- Discuss: Which evidence do you find most convincing in each letter? Least convincing? What do Alexander and Aunt Sara agree about? What do they disagree about? Answers will vary.

3. Write About It: What Do You Think?

(45 minutes)

- Have students revisit the following questions in writing:

Who makes the stronger argument? What do you think about cloning?

Dig Deeper!

- Alexander’s and Aunt Sara’s letters are great texts for exploring ethos, pathos, and logos. Check out our **Persuasive Appeals Reference** page and the **Persuasive Appeals Analysis** graphic organizer in your Resources tab.
- Check out connected readings about cloning endangered and long-extinct animals below. Then discuss: Do these texts confirm, challenge, or change any of your views on cloning?

Connected readings from the Scope archives about cloning:

- Short Read: [“Should We Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth?”](#)
- Debate Essay Kit: [“Should We Clone Her?”](#)