

APPENDIX 2.2 Sample Opinion Texts

We Need a School Garden!

Ms. McNamara’s second-grade class should plant a garden. Lots of schools have gardens, and our class should start one, too.

If we planted a garden, we would learn a lot about nature. We would learn about the soil, the weather, and the bugs and animals where we live. Before starting the garden, we could research which plants grow well here. Our class could vote on the plants we want in our garden.

We could use our garden for science experiments. We could measure the light and water a plant needs to grow or which plants grow the fastest. We could observe our plants with magnifying glasses and microscopes and learn how roots and stems and leaves work.

The garden would be beautiful for everyone in the school to see. We could plant red roses and yellow tulips and purple lilac. If we planted flowers, our garden would attract bees and butterflies. Bees like plants

that smell good, like lavender, rosemary, and basil. Butterflies like flowers with lots of sweet nectar, like marigolds and zinnias. Our garden might even attract hummingbirds.

We could also grow vegetables. We could plant zucchini, tomatoes, pumpkins, and squash. And we could have an herb garden, with basil, mint, and chives. After harvesting our vegetables, we could eat them. We could learn how to cook what we’ve grown. My favorite field trip ever was when we went apple-picking last fall. When we got back to school, we learned how to cook apple crumble. If we had a school garden, we could pick food and cook it all year.

Building a school garden would be a fun way to spend time outside. In our garden, we would be able to watch the seasons change. It wouldn’t be hard to start a garden, and we wouldn’t need a lot of space. All of us could pitch in and take turns weeding and watering. Having a garden would be great for our class.

APPENDIX 2.2 Sample Opinion Texts (*continued*)

A Classroom Pet Brings Learning to Life

The students in Grade Two should have a class pet. Having a real, living creature to take care of will teach us things that we can't learn in a textbook, and it will fill our classroom with happiness and joy.

The students in Grade Two already study animals in science class. Having a classroom pet will help us learn about animals in a new way. Instead of looking at diagrams, which can be boring, we can see (and maybe even touch) the different parts of a hamster, bird, or rabbit. We will learn how an animal behaves by watching it right in front of our eyes. We can take notes about when it sleeps, how fast it grows, and how often it goes to the bathroom.

Besides science, the classroom pet will be useful for other subjects, too. Grade Two students can write letters to our new friend or write animal-themed poems and short stories. It will be like bringing a textbook to life!

Another great reason to have a classroom pet is that it will teach the kids in Grade Two about responsibility. This is a word that we hear teachers and grown-ups talk about all the time. However, hearing the word

responsibility doesn't mean much until you have something to be responsible for. Our pet will be counting on us for food, water, exercise, entertainment, and love. It will be hard work, but we will learn how to work together, and we will learn what it takes to keep an animal healthy and happy.

Not only will we learn about the day-to-day jobs you have to do to keep an animal alive, but we will also learn about respect and be more aware of the feelings of others. We will understand how our actions affect others, meaning that what we do can really hurt or help someone else. This is an important lesson to learn and will help us be more kind to others inside and outside of the classroom.

Even if we can't have a big pet, like a rabbit, a dog, or a hamster, we could get a fish tank or bring in animals to visit for a day. If we can't have a pet in the classroom, we could go on field trips to animal sanctuaries or a farm. Being around animals for any amount of time reminds us that we share the world with many living things and helps us learn and grow.

APPENDIX 2.2 Sample Opinion Texts (*continued*)

Field Trips Help Learning

Which sounds better to you: watching a dull movie explaining dinosaur skeletons or seeing the enormous bones of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* up close? Field trips make learning more fun. Instead of staying in the classroom, teachers should take students to amazing places with fascinating things.

Sometimes I get bored sitting in class. Field trips are exciting, and I always look forward to them. You get to ride the bus or walk to the place, which is enjoyable. I like traveling near my school because I notice things I've never seen before. Additionally, you can talk with your friends or sing silly songs. Then when you arrive, it's an entirely new place that's *not* the school you go to every day. That's amazing!

Some people might think field trips are expensive, but we can go some places for free. For example, I have been to museums that are free. In many places, you can either explore by yourself or get a tour from someone knowledgeable who works there and knows practically everything. You learn so much in just a little time! There are so many fantastic options for field trips.

Schools should have more field trips. Field trips are a wonderful way to learn. You get to learn on the go, and that's more engaging than sitting in the same old place all the time.

APPENDIX 2.2 Sample Opinion Texts (*continued*)

Letter for a Family Pet

Dear Mom and Dad,

I think we should get a dog because I'm old enough now. If we do, I promise I will love and take care of it. I'll give it lots of attention and exercise, healthy food, and long walks. If we get a dog, it will be my best friend.

We should get a dog because there are lots of adorable dogs in animal shelters who need homes. I called the local animal shelter, and they said they have sweet puppies and older dogs in all different kinds of breeds and sizes. We could also adopt a dog from a rescue group. There is one nearby that has only golden retrievers and another one that has only Alaskan huskies. We could go to the shelter or rescue group as a family and talk to the staff about which dog would be best for us. We could give a lonely dog a friendly, safe home.

I'm eight years old now, so I can take good care of a dog. I would feed it in the morning and at night. I would always make sure it has lots of clean, cold water. I promise to take our dog out for a long walk every day, even if it's raining or snowing. The dog would need me, so I would always be responsible. I know a dog is a lot of work, but I want to do it. I want to give it a bath and brush its coat. I would make sure it's always happy.

If we got a dog, it would be my best friend in the world. We would play together all the time. We would go for long walks and splash in the rain and wrestle in the snow. We would play catch with tennis balls, and I would practice soccer with it. We would go on all kinds of adventures together. At home, I would make sure the dog had a warm bed and a soft blanket. We would read together lying on the carpet, and I would teach him tricks, like playing dead and rolling over.

If we adopt a dog, I promise to take care of it. I promise to love it and make sure it is healthy and happy. Our family would love having a dog, and a dog would love us, too.

Love,
Jenny