

“10 Benefits of Being a Dog Owner” by Kathy Benjamin



The war between cat and dog people is vicious and will probably never end. Here's some ammunition for the next time you are talking to one of those [horrible cat lovers](#).

### 1. GET SICK LESS!

If our cleaning commercials are to be believed, humanity is in the midst of a war against germs—and we won't stop until every single one

is dead. In reality, the amount of disinfecting we do is making us sicker; since our bodies are exposed to fewer germs we can't build up immunities to them. Fortunately, dogs are covered in germs! Having a dog in the house means more bacteria enters the home and gets inside the occupants (one study found “dog-related biodiversity” is especially high on [pillowcases](#).) In turn, people with dogs seem to get ill less frequently and less severely than people with cats or no pets.

### 2. RESISTANCE TO ALLERGIES!

While dogs can be one of the worst triggers for people with allergies, growing up in a house with a dog makes children [less likely to develop allergies over the course of their lives](#). Even if you were just a fetus when your mother lived with a dog, you are still less likely to be bothered by animal hair and dander, or to develop eczema as an adult.

### 3. BE HAPPIER!

Dog owners are [less likely to suffer from depression](#) than non-pet owners. Even for those people who do become clinically depressed, having a pet to take care of can help them out of a depressive episode, in some cases more effectively even than medication. Since taking care of a dog requires a routine and forces you to stay at least a little active, it is [harder to stay inside](#) feeling down all the time. The interaction with and love received from a dog can also help people stay positive. Even the mere act of looking at your pet increases the amount of Oxytocin, the “feel good” chemical, in the brain.

#### **4. BETTER HEART HEALTH!**

Everything about owning a dog seems to lend itself to better heart health. Just the act of petting a dog [lowers heart rate and blood pressure](#). A Chinese study found that people who own dogs get better sleep at night and are sick less often. Other studies show pet owners have slightly lower cholesterol and are more likely to survive a heart attack.

#### **5. MORE EXERCISE!**

While other pets have positive effects on your health as well, dogs have the added benefit of needing to be walked and played with numerous times a day. This means [most dog owners get the recommended minimum 30 minutes of exercise a day](#), lowering their risk of cardiovascular disease and keeping them in better overall shape than cat owners or people without pets.

#### **6. A MORE ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE!**

Polls show people trust others who have dogs more than just random people walking on the street and are more likely to go up and interact with them. Even if you live alone, having a dog has the same emotional benefit as that of a [human friendship](#).

#### **7. CANCER DETECTION!**

Your dog could save your life one day. It seems that our canine friends have the ability to smell cancer in the human body. Stories abound of owners whose dogs kept sniffing or licking a mole or lump on their body so they got it checked out, discovering it was cancerous. The anecdotal evidence was later backed up by [scientific studies](#). Dogs are so good at this that some of them are trained to detect cancer, in as little as three hours.

#### **8. A REFLECTION OF YOUR PERSONALITY!**

The kind of dog you have tells people a lot about your personality. A [study](#) in England found a very clear correlation between people's personalities and what type of dogs they owned; for example, people who owned toy dogs tended to be more intelligent, while owners of utility dogs like Dalmatians and bulldogs were the most conscientious. Other studies have found that dog owners in general are [more outgoing](#) and friendly than cat owners. But be careful: Dogs also take on their owners' personality traits, so if you fly off the handle all the time, it might explain why your dog is so [aggressive](#).

## 9. LOWER STRESS AT WORK!

The benefits of bringing a dog to work are so increasingly obvious that more companies are catching on. Studies show that people who interact with a pet while working have **lower stress levels** throughout the day, while people who do not bring a pet see their stress levels increase over time. Dogs in the office also lead to people taking more breaks, to play with or walk the dog, which makes them more energized when they return to work. This, in turn, has been shown to lead to much greater job satisfaction and productivity.

## 10. STUFF LIKE THIS!



“10 Benefits of Being a Dog Owner” is very accessible: readers can easily access, or figure out and understand, her intended meaning. Analyze the devices she used to make the essay accessible by filling in the following analysis chart:

Notice	Name	Effect
	The structure is a numbered list	
	She includes pictures	
	Her tone is light and a little humorous	
	She appeals to logic	



## “A DOG HAS DIED”

BY PABLO NERUDA, TRANSLATED BY ALFRED YANKAUER

My dog has died.  
I buried him in the garden  
next to a rusted old machine.

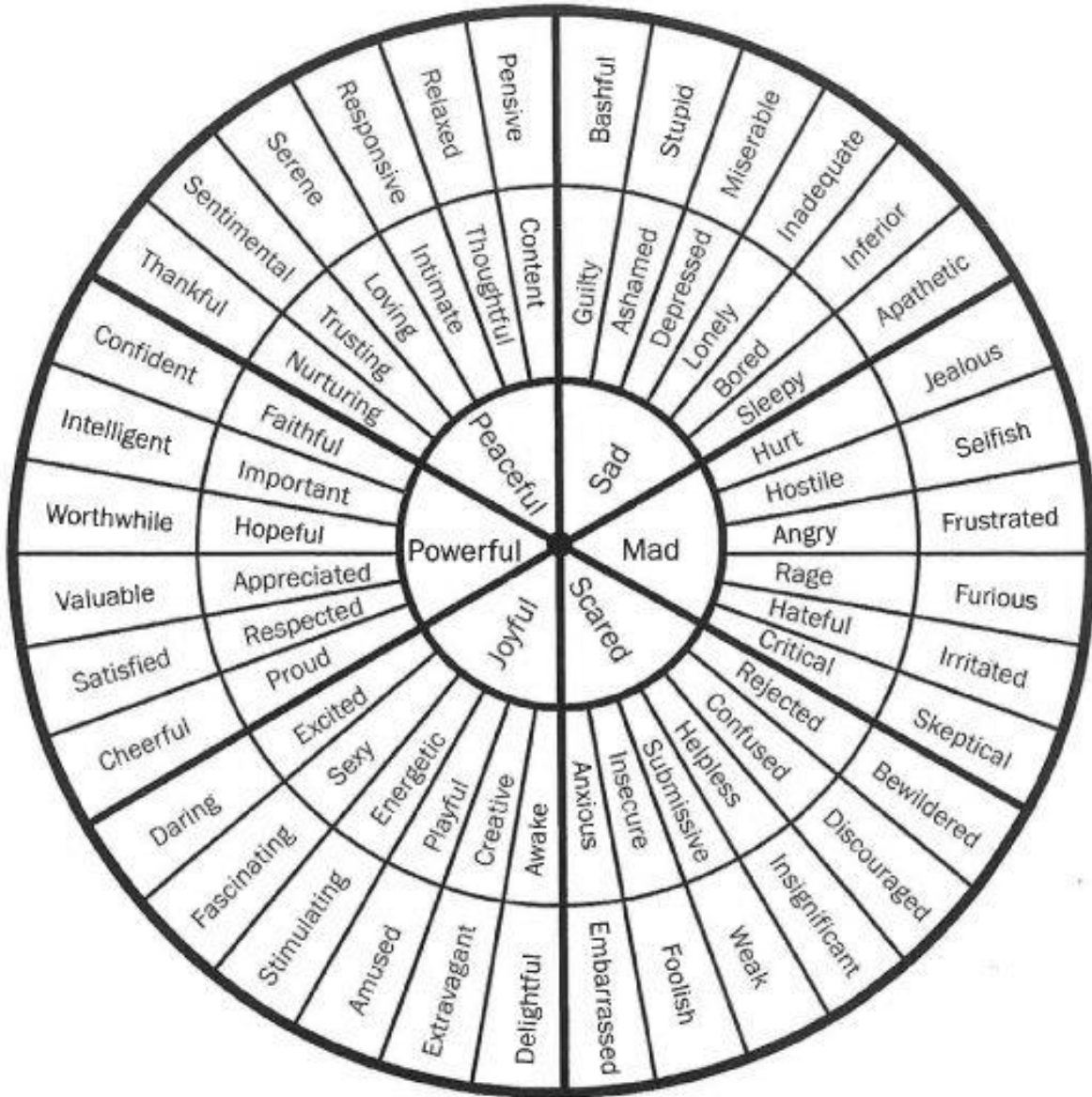
Some day I'll join him right there,  
but now he's gone with his shaggy coat,  
his bad manners and his cold nose,  
and I, the materialist, who never believed  
in any promised heaven in the sky  
for any human being,  
I believe in a heaven I'll never enter.  
Yes, I believe in a heaven for all dogdom  
where my dog waits for my arrival  
waving his fan-like tail in friendship.  
Joyful, joyful, joyful,  
as only dogs know how to be happy  
with only the autonomy  
of their shameless spirit.

There are no good-byes for my dog who has died,  
and we don't now and never did lie to each other.

So now he's gone and I buried him,  
and that's all there is to it.

**Directions:**

Color in the words that describe the tone of the poem "A Dog Has Died" by Pablo Neruda. Out to the side of the words you colored in, write the words and phrases from the poem that create the tone you colored in. Use a dictionary as needed.





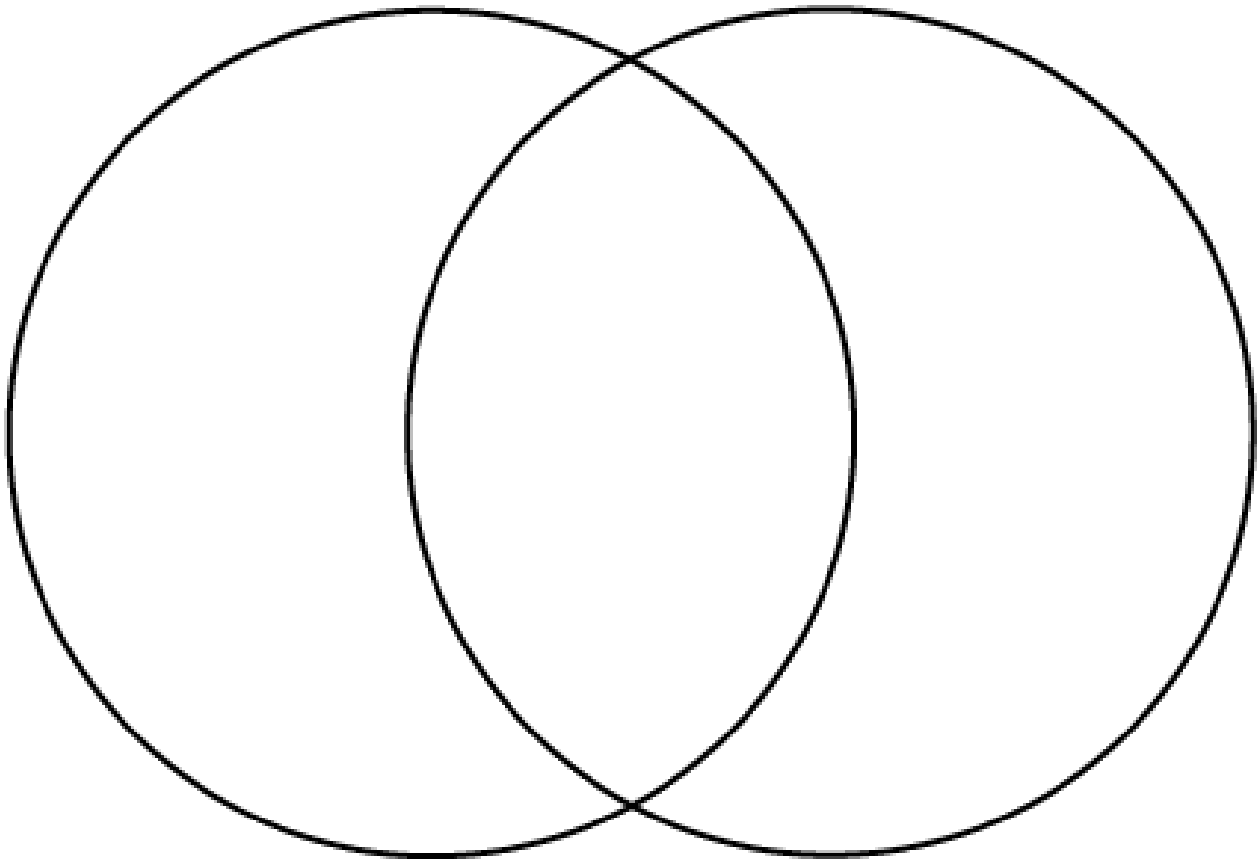


**Both these passages talk about dogs. They show the value of dogs, attitudes toward dogs, dog behavior, and the effect of a dog on its owner. Summarize or paraphrase textual evidence in the Venn diagram below. Put any ideas the passages have in common in the middle.**

**“10 Benefits of Being a Dog Owner”**

**Both**

**“A Dog Has Died”**





**Read** the following quotation:

“What I want you to know is that this is not your fault, even if it is ultimately your responsibility.”  
– Ta-Nehisi Coates

**Think** carefully about the following statements:

Often, people cause problems that other people have to solve. Sometimes, people accidentally make choices so bad that other people have to help them; sometimes, people deliberately harm something that somebody else then has to repair.

**Write** an essay explaining why people take responsibility for other people’s actions, and the effects of creating problems that others have to solve. Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Use the pages that follow to complete your essay.

Start with a hook to grab your reader's attention, then write a sentence explaining your hook:

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Now write your thesis statement. It should be one sentence explaining your viewpoint about freedom vs. safety:

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Now write a body paragraph showing specific, relevant, concrete support. In the top box, put your topic sentence. In the middle box, write support for your topic sentence. It can be a personal anecdote, or something in the news, or something you learned in your social studies or history class, or something you read in a book or saw in a movie or TV show. In the bottom box, connect your support back to your thesis statement:


Now write another body paragraph with another topic sentence, support for that topic sentence, and a transition sentence connecting this support to your thesis statement:


Now write a conclusion. In your conclusion, make a call to action. Tell your reader what they should do, how they should feel, and what they should think about the next time they have to choose between freedom and safety:

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English I Students, you can email your work to [sconnelly@harmonytx.org](mailto:sconnelly@harmonytx.org) or [canderson@harmonytx.org](mailto:canderson@harmonytx.org) to get feedback.

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