



Should dogs be kept on leads in parks?

Most parks allow dog owners to walk their dogs on the fields for free. For many years there has been great debate about whether or not dogs should be kept on leads during this time.

Firstly, it is far safer for children playing in the park if the dogs are kept on their leads; some dogs may be aggressive therefore they are more likely to bite humans. It is known that 50% of children, mostly boys, are bitten by a dog each year. In addition to this, if a dog is kept on their lead they are less likely to run away. When using a lead the owner is able to keep their dog at their side at all times. Shockingly, over 500,000 dogs in the United Kingdom go missing each year due to owners not using leads. Also, the majority of cats are frightened of dogs. If dogs are kept under control then cats are also able to freely explore and exercise in the park. Studies have shown that cats appear more comfortable to leave their house and garden when dogs are restricted by a lead.

On the other hand, it is very well understood that dogs require exercise every day. Therefore, dogs need the space and freedom to run around and fully exercise their body. This is not possible when being held on a lead because dogs are able to run three times as fast as humans. Furthermore, dogs need to be able to socialise with other dogs. This allows them to build friendly relationships with other canines. Research suggests that dogs are less aggressive when they frequently interact with other dogs. Finally, many people believe the use of leads to be cruel. This is because there is the risk of choking if a dog tries to run. Dogs are well known for suddenly bursting into a sprint when they see something of interest; therefore the collar and lead around their neck could be dangerous.

In conclusion, I feel that dogs should be kept on a lead when in public parks, especially at peak times, as this is much safer for both humans and dogs. Ideally, there should be areas created especially for dogs within all parks.

Questions

1. What percentage of children are bitten by a dog each year?
2. What are dogs less likely to do if they are kept on a lead?
3. Do more or less than 300,000 dogs go missing each year due to not wearing a lead? How do you know?
4. How would keeping a dog on a lead impact the lives of local cats?
5. Give one reason why dogs should not be kept on a lead.
6. What does the word 'socialise' mean in paragraph 3?
7. What is the author's opinion on the argument? Where is this revealed?

Should Homework Be Banned?



Anyone who has ever been to school knows what it is like to be sent home with piles of homework. For years, teachers have been setting extra maths, spellings and other assignments to be completed outside of regular lesson times. But with the increasing pressures of modern day life, there is a growing call for homework to be banned. Here are some of the arguments for and against.

Many people see homework as an important part of school life; almost like an extension of the lesson. If the teacher cannot fit everything that is needed to be taught into the lesson, then being able to set homework is essential. This way, pupils can continue the learning at home, which in turn helps their understanding and knowledge of the subject. In fact, recent research shows a positive link between the amount children do for homework and their achievement levels.

On the other hand, aren't children entitled to a break from learning? After spending all day at school, a few hours 'downtime' spent watching television, playing computer games or exercising outside is essential for a healthy, fun-loving child. In fact, the government's own health guidelines recommend people aged between 5-18 should exercise for at least 60 minutes a day. Where are children going to fit that in if they are busy doing homework every evening?

While there are a lot of people that understand that argument, the fact remains that children go to school to be educated and many parents welcome the chance to support their child's education at home. Practising spelling or helping their child read gives parents the opportunity to play a part in their child's learning. It also gives them a clearer understanding of how their child is progressing. Similarly, a lot of children enjoy doing homework with their parents. Why introduce a blanket ban if some children and parents actually enjoy it?

The flip side of the argument is that many parents feel overwhelmed with the amount of homework their child brings home. With so many after school activities and clubs on offer, they feel there isn't enough time to fit everything in. Furthermore, due to ever-increasing government expectations, parents sometimes feel unable to help their child as the work is too hard or on a subject matter they are not familiar with.

In conclusion, there are many strong arguments for and against banning homework from schools. If it helps a child's education, then surely homework is a good thing. Then again, time away from studying to play is also incredibly important to a child's wellbeing. On balance, I don't believe homework should be banned because it really is an important part of learning. However, I also believe there should still be time in the day for fun! Therefore, perhaps schools should come up with a compromise: keep homework, but don't set so much!

Questions

1. Why do you think the title of the argument is phrased as a question?
2. What could be meant by the 'increasing pressures of modern-day life'?
3. Why might a teacher be in favour of homework? Can you give evidence for this?
4. How much exercise does the government recommend each day for 5-18 year olds?
5. Give one reason from the text as to why homework should not be set.
6. What is meant by the term 'blanket ban'?
7. Do you think parents would be for or against this argument? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
8. What is your opinion on the matter? Can you explain why you feel this way?