

Essay 1—Field Guide: My Pet

Write a one page (250-300 words) “field guide” entry on a pet.

Create a vivid portrait of the pet for your reader. Include specific details about appearance and behavior. Use the *Audubon Field Guide* samples we discussed in class as models. They are available at <<http://classicprose.com/csx.html>>.

Focus on what makes your pet unique. A reader should be able to instantly identify your pet after reading your paper. Do not write about pets in general or about how you feel about the pet.

Organize your essay carefully. Do not just list random details. You might, for instance, divide your essay into two sections, one on appearance, the other on behavior.

Write your presentation in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging.

Make every word count.

Initial Draft Due: February 1

(Bring THREE copies of your essay to class.)

Revised Draft Due: February 8

(Turn in a folder containing your Revised Draft, your Initial Draft with my comments on it, and all the Peer Critiques you received.)

Sample Student Paper

Andy is my dog. He is a white, smooth-haired Bordercollie, three feet tall and fifty pounds. This young dog has an even temperament, often calm, gentle, and obedient. Alert and attentive, armed with sharp hearing and patience, he will sit for hours at the foot of a tree, waiting for the squirrel to climb down. He responds well to training, and will sit, lay down, rollover, go to his basket, go outside, and stay in place when instructed. Andy is so smart that he has trained humans to open the door for him when he paws at the backdoor.

When Andy is in the backyard, he patrols and marks his territory. He instinctively goes to work as a sheepdog; he sniffs the air and surveys the land, seeking any intruders and predators, because his job is to guard and protect. Sometimes he tries to herd the other dogs by nipping at their heels and ears or by posturing and running circles around them. He is happiest when he is performing a task, because he is bred to be a work dog.

When he is off duty, Andy loves to play; he romps around, chases squirrels, tackles the other dogs, chases dragonflies, entices me to play, or just lays contentedly in the sun. Most of all he wants to please, and responds proudly to praise. Andy is agile, quick to dash, able to leap, and faster than Superman at retrieving balls.