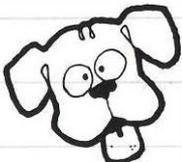
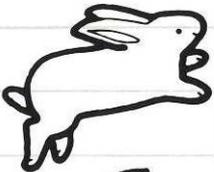
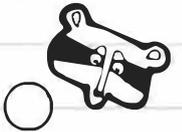
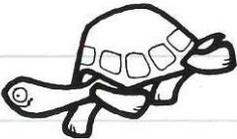
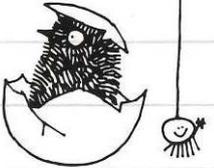
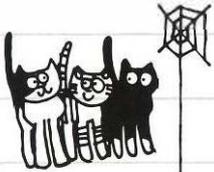




# Begin at the Beginning: Humane Education Story Starters

by Willow Soltow



Getting students to write isn't always easy. Many youngsters feel uncomfortable when faced with the prospect of putting their ideas and beliefs on paper. Knowing how to begin often presents the biggest stumbling block. You can use the following story starters to help youngsters overcome that most difficult part of writing a story—the very first sentence. It may not be exactly *easy* from there, but we hope our story starters will provide some fresh ideas for your students and, at the same time, motivate them to examine their feelings about animals.

The story starters below are divided into two groups—one to encourage perspectives on animals from a human point of view, the other to encourage youngsters to pretend to feel the way an animal might. Subjects include pets and wild animals. Depending on your needs, you can let students choose from an entire group of story starters or use these introductory story lines to create more story starters of your own. Either way, they should provide your young authors with a means of improving writing skills and broadening their understanding of animal needs.

## A Human Viewpoint

1. I had always been afraid of dogs until that day...
2. What was that scratching noise? It sounded like an animal. It was coming from somewhere inside the house....
3. It was too big to be a hen's egg or even a duck's egg. What could it be?...
4. I never thought I'd see my pet's name in the newspaper headlines. But there it was—and this is how it happened....
5. The best friend I ever had was not a person at all, but a \_\_\_\_\_....
6. Dolphins are very intelligent animals, the old man had told me. But I never really knew just how intelligent until that morning on the beach...
7. He was the runt of the litter. Nobody wanted him—except me....
8. Lost on a desert island. There were no people at all. I was all alone—or *was* I?...
9. The forest was dark. It was too late to find my way home. Suddenly I saw a pair of bright eyes watching my every move....
10. I could hear the neighbors' dog crying. I knew they had left it without food or water again. I couldn't stand it anymore, so I...

## Through Animal Eyes

11. The best day of my life was the day my new owner took me home from the animal shelter....
12. The kitten sat outside the window, looking in at the warm fire....
13. Life in the nest had been fine, but it was time for me to try my wings. That's when my adventure began....
14. I had spent all of my life in a cage. Suddenly I was free....
15. Life had been pretty calm in the Atlantic Ocean until that day the first whaling ship arrived. I had never seen such a thing. I swam near to get a closer look....
16. Dear Friend,  
I've never written a letter to a human before. But I am a \_\_\_\_\_—and I've got some things on my mind that I want to tell you about....
17. They were taking me away from my mother—away from my littermates. It was the worst thing that had ever happened to me....
18. Oh no! Here came those children again! Stomping through my beautiful forest....
19. People don't seem to like us spiders. But if it weren't for us, you'd be sorry. Let me explain why....
20. I'd had a pretty good life for a turtle. Then that boy caught me and put me in this box. What would become of me now?...