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| **Aquariums** |
| The issue of whether aquariums should be allowed to stay open has been widely debated in the community recently. It is an important issue because it concerns fundamental, moral and economic questions about the way Americans use native wildlife. A variety of different arguments have been put forward about this issue. Though aquariums are a source of amusement and education, America should do away with the practice all together. The public does not need to force wildlife into captivity to experience it nor does research prove more successful and accurate when these animals are studied in these restrictive environments, which ultimately leads to the mistreatment of the animals themselves.  It has been argued that marine parks provide the only opportunity for much of the public to see marine mammals (Smith, 1992). Most Americans live in cities and never get to see these animals. It is claimedthat aquariums allow the average American to appreciate unique marine wildlife. *However,* as Smith states,dolphins, whales and seals can be viewed in the wild at a number of places on the American coasts. *In fact*, there are more places where they can be seen in the wild than places where they can be seen in captivity. *Moreover*, most Americans would have to travel less to get to these locations than they would to get to the aquariums on the West Coast. *In addition*, places where there are wild marine mammals do not charge an exorbitant entry fee - they are free.  Many supporters of aquariums suggest that keeping animals in captivity helps further scientific research. Dr. Alison Lane, the director of the Cairns Marine Science Institute, believes this to be true (The Age, February 19, 1993). She *argues* that much human knowledge of marine mammals has come from studies which were undertaken at aquariums; knowledge which has been useful for planning for the protection of marine mammal species. *However,* asJones (1991) explains, park research is only useful for understanding *captive* animals and is not useful for learning about animals in the wild. Dolphin and whale biology changes in marine park conditions. Their diets are different, they have significantly lower life spans and they are more prone to disease. *In addition*, marine mammals in dolphin parks are trained and this means that their patterns of social behavior are changed. Therefore research undertaken at aquariums is generally not reliable and is often inaccurate.  It is the belief of the Marine Park Owners Association thataquariums attract a lot of foreign tourists (The Sun-Herald 12.4.93). This position goes on to emphasize that these tourists spend a lot of money, increasing our foreign exchange earnings and assisting our national balance of payments. *However,* foreign tourists would still come to America if the parks were closed down. *Indeed*, surveys of overseas tourists show that they come here for a variety of other reasons and not to visit places like SeaWorld (The Age, Good Weekend 16.8.93). Tourists come to the United States to see its native wildlife in its natural environment and not to see it in cages and cement pools. They can see animals in those conditions in their own countries *Furthermore*, America should be promoting its beautiful natural environment to tourists and not large, *concrete* marine park venues.  Marine parks are unnecessary and cruel to the animals themselves. The dolphins and whales in these parks are kept in very small, cramped ponds, whereas in the wild they are used to roaming long distances across the seas. *Furthermore*, the concrete walls of the pools interfere with the animals' sonar systems of communication. *In addition*, keeping them in pools is a terrible restriction of the freedom of fellow creatures that may have very high levels of intelligence and sophisticated language ability. *Moreover*, there are many documented cases of marine mammals helping humans who are in danger at sea or helping fisherman with their work.  *In conclusion*, these parks should be closed, or at the very least, no new animals should be captured for aquariums in the future. Our society is no longer prepared to tolerate unnecessary cruelty to animals for science and entertainment. If we continue with our past crimes against these creatures we will be remembered as cruel and inhuman by the generations of the future.  **Bibliography**  The Age, 19.2.93 The Age Good Weekend, 16.8.93 Jones, G. (1991). The Myths about Animal Research in Aquariums. In *Scientific American*. Vol 12, No 3.  Smith, H. (1992). Aquariums: Good for Business, Good for America. In *Leisure Business Review.* Vol 24, No. 4  The Sun-Herald, 12.4.93  **Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.** |
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1. In a couple of sentences, summarize the topic of this essay. What position does the author take?

2. Identify the claim made by the author and write it below.

3. Does the author use facts or data to support his argument? Provide 2 examples.

4. How does the author incorporate the opposition in the paper?

5. Evaluate the sources that the author used. Do they seem credible? Why or why not?

6. Do you think this argument is effective? Why or why not?