

Keystone Focus Topic: Author's Purpose  
Extra Credit

Guard Llamas  
by J. Robbins

Livestock, such as sheep, cattle, and goats, are vulnerable to many threats, and predation of valuable livestock costs millions of dollars per year. A guard animal lives with a herd or flock to protect the livestock and deter predators. Shepherds, farmers, and ranchers consider the ideal guard animal to be one that is effective, fearless, cost-effective, and easy to maintain. Surprisingly, guard llamas have proven to fit the bill in most circumstances and can be found guarding animals on farms and ranches across the United States and North America.

Llamas are members of the South American Camelidae family and are used as beasts of burden in many areas of the world. They are well-socialized to humans and bond quickly with livestock. Additionally, llamas react aggressively to members of the Canidae family—including dogs, coyotes, jackals, foxes, and wolves. These attributes make llamas ideal guard animals for a variety of livestock, although they are most widely used to guard sheep. Once llamas become attached to their livestock, they actively protect the animals by chasing, kicking, or spitting at predators and moving the flock to a safe location.

In a study conducted by Iowa State University in 1990, llamas were rated as effective guard animals by 80 percent of sheep owners. Many ecologists and wildlife biologists are also pleased with this practice because it provides a non-lethal way to handle predators. Llamas are also a sound investment for shepherds, farmers, and ranchers because they are long-lived (often living up to 20 years), acclimated to a wide variety of climates, and able to graze on the same land as sheep, goats, and cattle. Although they are not 100% successful against predators, guard llamas can be an effective, economic, and ecologically friendly resource to help livestock owners protect their livelihood.

1. Read this sentence from the passage.

Many ecologists and wildlife biologists are also pleased with this practice because it provides a non-lethal way to handle predators.

The author most likely included this information in the passage to

- A. persuade the reader that all lethal options for disposing of predators should be eliminated.
- B. explain that the practice of using guard llamas has benefits that extend beyond economics.
- C. introduce a counterargument to provide a fair and balanced look at the practice of using guard llamas.
- D. support the main thesis of the passage by including scientific evidence about guard llamas.

2. Which sentence from the passage most strongly supports the author's overall purpose in writing?
- A. A guard animal lives with a herd or flock to protect the livestock and deter predators.
  - B. Llamas are members of the South American Camelidae family and are used as beasts of burden in many areas of the world.
  - C. Shepherds, farmers, and ranchers consider the ideal guard animal to be one that is effective, fearless, cost-effective, and easy to maintain.
  - D. In a study conducted by Iowa State University in 1990, llamas were rated as effective guard animals by 80 percent of sheep owners.
3. The main purpose of the second paragraph of this passage is to
- A. compare the traditional practice of using llamas as beasts of burden with modern practices.
  - B. provide information to support the idea that llamas are useful for guarding livestock.
  - C. introduce the idea that llamas should be limited to living with and guarding sheep.
  - D. condemn the practice of using llamas to protect other animals from dangerous predators.

From the Editor's Desk  
Round Robin Senior High School

Most students think of white sandy beaches and deep blue oceans when they think of Spring Break. This year, however, my vacation involved sheep, vegetables, and knee-high work boots. The owner of Nine Bean Farm, located just ten miles north of our high school, contacted me last month to see if I would be interested in a unique opportunity. I, ever the intrepid reporter, jumped at the chance to star in my own version of the old TV show *Green Acres*.

My farm vacation began at 5 a.m. on Monday morning—which, admittedly, did not make me very happy. After several cups of farm manager Betty Kinkade's strong coffee, I was ready to pitch in and make myself useful. I was handed a shovel and pointed in the direction of the sheep barn. Two hours later, the stalls were free of dirty hay, the sheep were blissfully resting on fresh straw, and my arms and shoulders were aching. I chowed down on farm-fresh eggs, piping hot French toast, and crispy hash browns as a reward for my hard work.

Throughout the week, I learned many valuable lessons about how animals should be treated and how important small farms are to our environment. Nine Bean Farm operates entirely without the use of chemicals, growth hormones, or pesticides, and I have a new appreciation for the intense hard work that organic farming involves. I drove away from Nine Bean with a new determination to pay more attention to the source of the food on my plate.

Almost everyone I know, including friends and family, told me that I was crazy for wanting to spend my Spring Break at a farm. After all, I am a city girl through and through. Farming will most likely never be a part of my life. So, why spend a week of my life mucking out stalls, weeding gardens, and shearing sheep? The short answer is—to experience firsthand the beauty of nature and remind myself that every decision, even

one as simple as what food to eat, impacts the world around me. That's not a bad lesson to take away from a week's vacation.

4. The final paragraph of this editorial primarily serves to
- A. defend the author's decision to spend a week working at a farm.
  - B. suggest that "city girls" should not waste their time working on farms.
  - C. describe the author's decision to purchase only organic food.
  - D. condemn the narrow-minded attitudes of the author's friends and family.
5. What is the main purpose of this editorial?
- A. to introduce readers to the effect of pesticides on the environment
  - B. to defend the author's decision to become a farmer
  - C. to share the author's personal experience with readers
  - D. to persuade readers to purchase only organically grown food

Hypermiling, a term coined by efficiency expert Wayne Gerdes, means improving a car's gas mileage using simple methods. A person who practices hypermiling on a regular basis can achieve a 50 percent or better improvement in a vehicle's official fuel economy estimate.

Improving fuel economy through hypermiling can work for any vehicle. The driver of a 2005 Honda Accord, for example, went from 24 mpg to 35 mpg after adopting hypermiling techniques for one year. Gerdes himself set a world record in 2009 after driving a Ford Fusion Hybrid for 1,445 miles on a single tank of gas. He was able to achieve a fuel economy of 81 mpg, which is more than double the EPA estimate for fuel economy in a Fusion.

Most hypermiling techniques are easy to implement. Driving at lower speeds leads to less fuel consumption. Be sure to drive the posted speed limit—or even slower—to save money. Slowing down also benefits drivers by preventing excessive braking, which reduces gas mileage by as much as 33 percent. Idling the engine for longer than a few minutes can also be costly at the gas pump. Simply by making a few common sense changes, hypermilers can save money and protect the environment.

6. The author mentions the driver of a 2005 Honda Accord in the second paragraph in order to
- A. provide a real-life example of the benefits of hypermiling.
  - B. suggest that hypermiling is a propaganda tool to sell hybrid vehicles.
  - C. show that hypermiling provides only limited benefits to drivers.
  - D. introduce the idea that hypermiling only works on new cars.
7. What is the main purpose of this passage?
- A. to explain the history of hypermiling in the United States
  - B. to persuade readers to adopt hypermiling techniques
  - C. to warn readers about driving over the speed limit
  - D. to inform the reader about Wayne Gerdes' 2009 victory

Old-time music is a genre of North American folk music that can trace its roots to England, Ireland, and Scotland. Generally, this music is played using a combination of a fiddle and one or more plucked string instruments, such as the banjo or the guitar. Dancing often accompanies old-time music, and the style of dancing differs according to the region. For example, clogging is more common in Appalachia, and square dancing is traditional in many Southern states.

In 2000, old-time music experienced a revival in the United States due to the release of the movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, which included several old-time songs on its soundtrack. Folk music schools, such as the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, Illinois, began to train students in the old-time musical style. Additionally, many informal jam sessions began to form across the U.S. to pass on traditional songs and techniques.

The majority of old-time players learn the traditional songs by ear rather than by reading sheet music. Although many songs and tunes are played the same way they have been for centuries, there are numerous regional and local variations to old-time music. Old-time, just like many other musical styles, encourages improvisation, and this makes written notation difficult, if not impossible. Regardless of the challenges that exist in preserving the many versions of old-time songs, the music community is making every attempt to keep this rich tradition alive for future generations.

8. The author mentions the movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* in the second paragraph primarily to

- A. explain an increase in the popularity of old-time music.
- B. encourage readers to support movies about old-time music.
- C. provide information about the first film to include old-time music.
- D. describe the influence of old-time music on Hollywood.

9. Which sentence contributes LEAST to the author's main purpose in writing the passage?

- A. Old-time music is a genre of North American folk music that can trace its roots to England, Ireland, and Scotland.
- B. The majority of old-time players learn the traditional songs by ear rather than by reading sheet music.
- C. Generally, this music is played using a combination of a fiddle and one or more plucked string instruments, such as the banjo or the guitar.
- D. For example, clogging is more common in Appalachia, and square dancing is traditional in many Southern states.

10. The first paragraph is primarily intended to

- A. explain the significance of the fiddle in old-time music.
- B. introduce the topic of the old-time music genre.
- C. reveal the author's preference for old-time music.
- D. portray old-time music as unoriginal and derivative.