

Short Paper # 2

Are Animals Capable of Using Language to Communicate

Many people believe that animals are capable of communicating via “language”. However, the majority of scientists who study animal communication argue that such claims are based on weak evidence and that, in fact, there is stronger evidence to the contrary. Why do many people believe the claim? That is, what types of behavior do they observe in animals that make them believe animals are capable of communicating via language? What is some of the evidence against such claims? In your paper, you should describe some of the defining features of language and discuss how these features have been used to either support or refute claims of animal communication via language.

You should refer the material in the textbook, including material from the section on animals and language but also material in the earlier part of the chapter that does not explicitly focus on animals. As well, you should include information from the two sources demarked with asterisks on the Reference list below. And, in addition, you should cite information at least one of the additional five references to support your argument.

Your paper will be graded in terms of your ability to integrate across the required sources to develop a logical argument. In addition, your paper will be graded on clarity of presentation as well as on APA formatting and citation style.

The body (not counting title or reference page) of your paper must be between 3.25 and 5.25 pages in length (using proper APA formatting of 12pt TNR, double-spaced without any extra spacing between paragraphs, 1” margins all around). If your paper is too short or too long, your grade will be reduced by 10% per page. In addition to the body of your paper, you should also include an APA-style title page (complete with proper header) and an APA-style reference page.

Finally, do not include quotes, first names of authors/researchers, or titles of references/webpages within the body of your paper – if you do include any of these items, your grade on the paper will be reduced by at least 10%.

This paper is worth 5% of your final grade in the course (see note below). You may submit it anytime via Moodle upload before the end of classes this semester (11pm Friday Dec 14th). But if you turn it in by beginning of class Dec 10th, I will return that Thursday and you can use the feedback on your literature review and for your third short paper (if you elect to do submit one).

Note: According to the syllabus, you were to complete three short papers, each worth 5% of your final grade. I will drop your lowest short paper grade, counting only the best two towards your final grade. As such, if you are happy with your first short-paper grade, you may elect to only complete one of the last two short-papers.

References

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