

## **NEWS BREAK**

Article: **Parks are going to the dogs, Seattle residents complain**

Section: **MAIN, A1**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, January 5, 2025** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

***\*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

### **Standards:**

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1**

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2**

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

### **Objectives:**

Students will learn about the current tensions brewing among Seattle Park users and the issue of off-leash dogs in spaces where they are supposed to always be on a leash.

### Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using these pictures?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

### Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“While dog owners **contend** they just want a share of parks for their furry family members, others say unleashed dogs make it impossible for them to use the space at all.”

**Contend Guess:**

**Contend Definition:**

### **Comprehension Questions:**

1. Many residents believe the number of dogs \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ in areas they're not supposed to be, has spiked since the pandemic, turning Seattle's parks and beaches into unsanctioned dog parks.
2. Upset park-goers are submitting \_\_\_\_\_ to the city in record numbers. They're also yelling at dog owners, sometimes face-to-face.
3. It's a conflict that's been brewing for decades as Seattle's growing population, increasingly packed into small apartments, competes for what?
4. And a sharp drop in \_\_\_\_\_ recently may have thrown fuel on the fire.
5. More than 50 respondents to The Seattle Times survey agreed about that, pinpointing the \_\_\_\_\_ as an inflection point. It could be partly because that's when dog owners became less likely to get in trouble.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ increased across the country during the pandemic as many people began working from home for the first time and were told to isolate themselves from other people.
7. Under that theory, the increase should have been more pronounced in Seattle, the \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ capital of the nation, possessing an antisocial reputation.
8. What's also likely to have changed is the number of dogs that don't have a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. In King County, \_\_\_\_\_% of millennials are renters, and the apartments they're renting are getting smaller.
10. Last year, a report from listing service RentCafe showed Seattle had the smallest new apartment size in the nation, an average of \_\_\_\_\_ square feet.
11. Seattle has a higher percentage than any other major U.S. metro area of adults younger than 50 who are married with a dog or cat but no \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Complaints to Seattle's Animal Services about dogs at parks reached an all-time high — \_\_\_\_\_ reports — in 2024. They began to tick up in 2022, then skyrocketed this year after the city began allowing people to report unleashed dogs through its Find It, Fix It app in April.

### **Class Discussion Questions:**

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I think \_\_\_\_\_?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- What are your feelings about dog parks? Have you been to one? What are your feelings about those dog owners that follow the rules and others that let their dogs roam free in parks, when they are supposed to be on a leash? Do you see where tensions could rise?

### **Rule of Law & Civic Responsibility:**

- How does this conflict highlight the tension between individual rights and the collective good?
- What are the responsibilities of citizens to follow the rules and respect the rights of others in shared public spaces?
- How does the lack of enforcement of leash laws impact the rule of law and the perception of fairness within the community?

### **Social & Economic Factors:**

- How do factors like urbanization, housing affordability, and changing demographics contribute to this issue?
- How does the rise of pet ownership as a substitute for child-rearing impact the use of public spaces?
- How do socioeconomic disparities influence access to green spaces and the ability to comply with regulations?

### **Civic Engagement & Conflict Resolution:**

- What are the different ways citizens can engage in the democratic process to address this issue? (e.g., petitioning, lobbying, attending public meetings)
- What are the most effective strategies for resolving conflicts between different groups within a community?
- How can citizens work together to find solutions that balance the needs of all park users?

### **Role of Government & Regulation:**

- What is the role of the government in managing public spaces and ensuring the safety and well-being of all citizens?
- Are current regulations regarding leash laws and off-leash areas effective? What improvements could be made?
- How can the government balance the needs of different groups while maintaining public order?

### **Ethical Considerations:**

- What ethical obligations do dog owners have to other park users and the environment?
- How can we promote a sense of shared responsibility and respect for all members of the community?
- What are the ethical implications of different approaches to managing this issue (e.g., increased enforcement vs. expanding off-leash areas)?

### **Long-Term Sustainability:**

- How can we ensure that city parks remain accessible and enjoyable for all residents in the long term?
- What are the long-term consequences of failing to address this issue effectively?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.  
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