

A close-up photograph of an orangutan's head and shoulders, perched on a tree branch. The orangutan has dark brown fur and is looking down. The background is a blurred forest scene with tree trunks and foliage.

## Topic

Zoos Are Cruel and All  
the Animals Should Be  
Released into the Wild.

# Zoos: The Context



In May, 2019 a Canadian zoo owner in Quebec was charged with animal cruelty when a member of the public reported that the animals were kept in poor conditions and expressed concern for their welfare.

Zoos began their life as 'menageries', typically an enclosed space used to keep exotic animals in captivity. Menageries often belonged to rich aristocrats and royalty as a sign of their wealth and power.

Modern zoos often incorporate scientific research, educational exhibits and conservation efforts but many activists argue that zoos are unnatural, cause unnecessary stress to animals and argue that animals are simply kept for human entertainment.

**Do you think zoos should be closed down and their animals released into the wild?**





“These horrendous places should stop kidding themselves by suggesting that zoo visits are educational. Most visitors don’t spend much time reading the information boards – they just look at the animals and move on. Animals often show signs of stress at being forced to live in captivity, many are made to live in unnatural climates and there’s just something wrong about forcing animals to live a life where people stare at them all day for entertainment.”

**What Do You Think?**  
**Who do you agree with? Why?**

“People don’t understand the good that a zoo does. There are education centres for school visits that provide people with a chance to see animals that they’d otherwise never see in the wild. Zoos are also really important for research and conservation efforts too. A lot of money is invested in preserving natural habitats and zoos play an important role in looking after endangered animals.”



## What Do You Think?

Who do you agree  
with? Why?

# For and Against

Considering different points of view as well as your own, consider why some people would want to keep zoos open while others would want them to close permanently.

