



A WAY WITH WORDS



What comes to mind when you hear the word *beast*?

Something hairy and scary? Cruel and wild?



Long ago, that's what people used to refer to animals as. As we've learned to appreciate animals, our word choices have also changed. The same should hold true for how we speak about companion animals and the people who care for them. Animals are entitled to have dignity and to be treated with respect. Surely those of us privileged to share their lives should consider ourselves as **guardians**, rather than **owners** (implies that animals are either merely inanimate objects or goods).

- Read the paragraphs below and underline the words that change the perception. The first one is done for you.
- Then answer the questions below the blocks.

I am this dog's owner. We saved it from the pound. It was roaming the streets when the SPCA dogcatcher caught it. They told us that the dog had to be housebroken.



I am this dog's guardian. We adopted him from an animal welfare shelter. He was roaming the streets when the Animal Welfare officer picked him up. The staff told us that the dog still needed housetraining.

How does the wording on the left hand block, portray animals and shelter staff in comparison to the right hand block?

Why would SPCA staff get upset if people said they had **rescued** or **saved** animals from the SPCA?
