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This is a FAKE research paper. It's
only intended to demonstrate MLA
format.

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Mr. Fontenot

AP English Lang.—1st

Although not part of MLA, I want
you to also put your period.

18 November 2010

Man's Best Friend and That Darn Cat

The average cat is like a houseplant with attitude. You would hardly notice him at all except for the air of superiority and disdain emanating from his pores and stinking up the room → with feline arrogance. He can hardly be bothered to greet you when you come home, perhaps even resenting the intrusion on his meditations on hair balls. Now, the dog, on the other hand, is the proper companion for a human. She lives, breathes, and eats for you. O.K., she doesn't eat for you, but she lives and breathes for you, which is more than can be said for the cat, who would rather watch squirrels through the window with the steely gaze of a serial killer. One can imagine a cat bragging to a friend, "A squirrel once tried to drink out of my water bowl. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti." Yet cat lovers are a loud minority, devoutly arguing for the cat's superiority over the dog. When both sides of the issue are considered objectively, however, the dog is clearly the preferable pet.

Cat lovers' main argument for cat superiority lies in the contention that the cat is smarter than the dog. According to *Cat Fancy* magazine, "The independence of cats shows them to be more intelligent than dogs. Whereas a dog will fawn all over you simply for returning from the mailbox, a cat has his own world. He is no bourgeois, sucking up to his superiors, hoping for a reward. He is, himself, a member of the elite" ("Cats Are Superior" 44). Another bit of evidence cat lovers like to cite to show the higher mental powers of cats is, paradoxically, their resistance to training. Jon Katz explains that the dog's amenability to learning tricks can be equated with a simple child's desire to please her parents. The cat resists training because he realizes the inanity

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of the activity. He will not fetch a ball simply so his master can throw it again. He will not play dead to amuse the neighbors.

Dog lovers place most of their dogma in dog superiority behind her usefulness to humans. Aside from stupid pet tricks, she can be trained to herd sheep, lead the visually impaired, or guard the house. Dogs have been heroes in numerous incidents around the world, as documented weekly on the Fox television show, *World's Most Heroic Dog Deeds*. Viewers have been treated weekly to tails such as the terrier that tamed the thief, the poodle that penned the poacher, and the Dachshund that jumped in front of a moving bus, attempting to save his master ("Dale the Dachsund"). But not all tails of canine heroism make it to national television. A sheltie in Shelbyville, Missouri saved the life of a young teen who had fallen into a river. The boy's baggy pants were weighing him down in the fast moving current, but Laddie was able to pull the boy ashore by pulling on his nose ring ("Local Dog"). Dogs have also been known to extend people's lives by giving them love they may be unable to get elsewhere ("Cats Are Not All that," 37). People who never marry die sooner than any other group. Single people with dogs, however, live an average of seven years longer (McGruff). No one suggests the same health benefits from cats. One wonders if a cat would even notice if his owner died.

Another argument of the dog lover resides in the loyalty of dogs. Dogs have been known to "wait for days for the return of beloved masters, not realizing that their owners have died" (Hagrid 230). Having been lost, they have made vast treks across hundreds of miles to return to their homes, even crossing barriers like rivers and mountain ranges (Hagrid 178). Moreover, dogs will maintain their loyalty, even when mistreated, as the following tail from the documentary *Dogged* reveals:

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For a variety of selfish reasons, we decided we just couldn't keep Major anymore,
so with broken hearts we drove to the country. It was very hard to do, but we said

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our goodbyes and got back in the car. As we drove away, I watched the confused expression on Major's face turn to fear as he started running after the car. We cried for three days, then decided we had to go back to find him. When we went to the car, we heard Major's familiar bark and saw him running up the driveway, ecstatic to see us. He held no grudge and taught us a valuable lesson. (98-99)

To the dog lover, no other animal is so completely forgiving, so resolutely loyal as the dog. Cats simply do not compare.

Having explored the dispute on both sides of the issue, it is clear that the dog lovers' arguments are vastly superior. Cat lovers try to pass off the flaws of cats—their haughty attitude and inability to be trained—as evidence of their heightened intellectual powers. This is rationalization at its finest. If you only want something to sit motionless in the windowsill for hours, buy a plant. But if you want unconditional love and loyalty, if you want utility and bravery, if you want a true pet and friend, you want a dog. Perhaps a cat may make a fairly decent secondary or "back-up" pet, but the dog's prominence in the American home should not be questioned.

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Sources are alphabetized by the first word when they're in the correct format, unless the first word is "A," "And," or "The."

Use a hanging indent for your sources. Note each source is indented the opposite of a paragraph—the first line is not indented, each additional line is.