

LEGAL PERSONHOOD



Video Comprehension Worksheet

In most countries, animals are considered _____ under the law. Property is a complex concept, but it can be understood as a thing owned by a _____.

Animals do not have _____ under the law.

Rights are a special way of protecting important interests under the law. Some lawyers in the USA are arguing that animals should have legal personhood so their interests can be represented in a court of law. To do this, the US lawyers have to convince the court that animals can be _____.

The lawyers from the Nonhuman Rights Project argue that at least some animals, like _____ and _____, qualify for legal personhood.

They argue that all chimpanzees like Tommy have certain capacities that they share with human beings. They argue that these shared capacities should entitle them to legal personhood.

One of these capacities is _____ which means that Tommy is conscious of his own individuality and separateness from the environment and other individuals.

The other capacity is _____. Tommy can desire something and intentionally choose how to live his life. He doesn't act purely out of instinct.

The lawyers argue that because animals like Tommy have these capacities they also have rights that protect these capacities, like the right to _____ to protect their autonomy.

If these rights were recognized, lawyers could act on behalf of Tommy or other chimpanzees if they were being held captive, just like a lawyer could act on behalf of a human being.

So far, some US judges haven't fully accepted the argument.

They have said that animals are unable to bear _____ and _____ and to be a legal person and have rights, you must be able to do this. The lawyers at the Nonhuman Rights Project disagree and point out that personhood has already been granted to nonhuman entities like _____ as well as a chimpanzee in Argentina. They also point out that many humans who can't exercise duties are still capable of holding rights, such as _____.

One of the judges who heard the NhRP lawyer's arguments said that chimpanzees are definitely not just _____. If chimpanzees and other animals are not 'things', then what are they?

What do you think? Should Tommy and animals like him be granted legal personhood? Or is it ok for animals to be 'things' and remain as human property?