

READ THE PASSAGE Think about the evidence the author presents to support the ideas in the passage.**Babe: Could It Really Happen?**

In Dick King-Smith's novel *Babe: The Gallant Pig*, a pig herds sheep better than dogs do. Could that happen in real life? Are pigs as smart as dogs? According to Farm Forward, an advocacy group for sustainable family farms, pigs can do anything dogs can. In support of this conclusion, they point out that the makers of the movie *Babe* did not use any tricks in making the film. They just taught the pig to do the things that they wanted it to do.

How intelligent are pigs? Pretty smart, according to Dr. Stanley Curtis of Penn State University. The scientist taught pigs to play a video game by operating the joystick with their snout. Remarkably, they learned the game more quickly than chimpanzees. Giving human gamers a run for their money, the pigs hit their game targets 80% of the time! Farm Forward also tells of a successful study in which pigs were taught to adjust thermostats.

One pig farmer claims that a sow (a mother pig) in a pen with her piglets kept mysteriously escaping from the enclosure. After finding the lonely sow and her piglets back out with the herd several times, her keepers installed a spring-loaded latch, which could be opened only by pressing a ring and lifting a hook. The sow and piglets kept getting out—always when their keepers were not looking. Finally, the keepers hid behind a shed and watched. After looking to see that no one was watching, the sow depressed the ring by biting it, and then raised the hook. If a sow can figure out how to unlatch a gate while no one is looking, herding sheep is a piece of cake.

STRATEGY PRACTICE How does the author organize the information about pigs?

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. What did the sow do just before opening the latch?

2. Why did the author begin the text by discussing a fictional pig?

3. What evidence did the author include to prove that pigs are clever, social animals?
