

THE ANIMAL SHELTER GUIDE TO THE MUTT-I-GREES® CURRICULUM



www.education.muttigrees.org

An initiative of The Pet Savers Foundation, the program development arm of North Shore Animal League America.
Developed in collaboration with Yale University School of the 21st Century.



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FOREWORD

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A Mutt-i-gree® is any shelter animal who is either looking for a home or has been adopted from a shelter or rescue group into a loving environment. If you work or volunteer at an animal shelter, you're probably a Mutt-i-grees® expert!

North Shore Animal League America coined the word Mutt-i-gree® to change public perception of shelter pets and convey their desirability and availability. The concept evolved to become the Mutt-i-grees® Movement, a sustained campaign to bring an end to euthanasia by increasing both adoptions and spay/neuter programs. The movement also features a unique and crucial humane education element that encourages children - tomorrow's pet owners - to become compassionate and responsible adopters.

Like other social movements, the Mutt-i-grees® Movement represents the coming together of people from various fields who share common goals: individuals who have adopted pets; individuals who work or volunteer at public and private shelters and rescue groups; and educators, parents and concerned individuals who seek a more compassionate and humane world and want to improve the quality of life for people and the animals they love.

One of the first things we all want to see – as a step toward ending euthanasia – is the eradication of “pet factories,” also known as mills. The Mutt-i-grees® Movement places local animal shelters and rescue groups in the national limelight, showcasing their adoptable, adorable animals so people will visit shelters rather than a pet shop when they're looking for a pet. We offer adopters the opportunity to join a national Registry and receive a certificate for their adopted pets. And, in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum we are educating the next generation. We are working with schools, libraries and community-based organizations, as well as with animal shelters and rescue groups who are promoting Mutt-i-grees®. We hope you will join the effort. Together, we can achieve our goal and move toward a more humane and compassionate world.



J. John Stevenson
President, North Shore Animal League America

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INTRODUCTION



We created *The Animal Shelter Guide to the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum* in response to interest from animal shelter professionals across the country who have asked: What is the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum? How can we participate?

The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and its companion publications – *Cats Are Mutt-i-grees® 2* and *Mutt-i-grees® in the Library* – present a unique approach to teaching children to care – about themselves, other people, the environment, and animals. The Curriculum is a hybrid program, linking the fields of social and emotional learning and humane education. Its goals are to enhance students' social and emotional skills and promote awareness of shelter pets.

This dual focus on child and animal welfare is logical from an educational perspective; many children simply love pets and using animals to engage and excite them about school makes sense. From a developmental perspective, research supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Development shows that positive interactions between children and animals result in many therapeutic, health, and educational benefits. And it's not necessary that an actual dog or cat be present

to generate these benefits; even the vicarious presence of animals – talking and reading about them or looking at photos of pets – also induces happy, calm feelings in children...and adults! Because of the inherently powerful link between children and pets and the dual focus on social and emotional learning and shelter animals, thousands of schools are implementing the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, which means that millions of students – as well as their families and educators – are becoming aware of Mutt-i-grees®.

You may wonder how social and emotional learning is relevant to animal shelters and humane education. Social and emotional learning is a relatively new discipline that grew out of research on emotional intelligence. It refers to the process by which children learn self and social awareness, relationship skills, problem solving skills, and ethical decision-making. It supports children's social and emotional competence and enhances academic achievement. It also helps children develop resiliency, compassion, and the ability to work together with others.





Social and emotional learning is the perfect approach to humane education, which at its core involves considering another's perspective, in this case an animal's. Together, the fields of social and emotional learning and humane education share the goal of fostering empathy, compassion, and responsible decision-making. Previous programs have focused solely on either traditional humane education or emotional intelligence/social and emotional learning without recognizing the natural overlap in skills and content between the two.

Mutt-i-grees® is different. In the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum we have selected five themes, each representing a social and emotional competency, within which to teach children about shelter pets and to help them achieve awareness, the ability to manage their emotions effectively, and the skills to understand and collaborate with others. Each of the five themes includes five lessons, for a total of 25 lessons. In a brief discussion of each of the five themes at the end of this guide, we show how we integrate social and emotional skill development with an understanding of and appreciation for shelters and shelter pets.

Shelter professionals agree that the value of humane education is essential to long-term efforts to improving the lot of animals and the shelters that care for them. If children grow up with a fundamental sensitivity and empathy for animals, the idea of spay/neuter, which is crucial to solving the problems shelters face daily, will become the norm. If children learn to respect animals and see the world from their point of view, animal cruelty and neglect will diminish. If children grow to appreciate the fact that adopting a pet saves a life, they will be more likely to visit an animal shelter when looking for a pet as adults.

The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is now in nearly 3,000 schools across the country and Canada, and each day new schools adopt the program. The idea for the Curriculum began in



2009 when North Shore Animal League America, through its program development arm, The Pet Savers Foundation, initiated a course of action based on the concept of the Mutt-i-grees®, defined as any dog or cat, whether mixed-breed or purebred, who has been adopted from a shelter or one waiting to be adopted. The goal was to bring national attention to the desirability and availability of shelter pets.

The first Mutt-i-grees® initiative was the **American Mutt-i-grees® Club**. It was launched to unite owners of shelter pets, a group of more than 25 million, to:

- Raise awareness of the plight of shelter animals;
- Elevate the status of shelter pets;
- Increase shelter adoptions; and consequently –
- Reduce euthanasia rates.

The American Mutt-i-grees® Club has grown since its inception and now includes the **Mutt-i-grees® Registry**, a formal way for adopters to register their adopted pets, receive information, and participate in events and rewards programs. Clearly beneficial to adopters, the Registry is also important as a way for shelters to capture adoption statistics and to underscore the desirability of pet adoption; shelter pets, after all, are as worthy of a certificate of registration as other pets.

Collaboration with Yale School of the 21st Century

In addition to its focus on uniting adult owners of shelter pets, the Animal League extended its efforts to include educating children and youth about Mutt-i-grees®. As part of this educational mission, the Animal League established a collaboration with Yale University School of the 21st Century (Yale 21C) to develop programs on Mutt-i-grees® for implementation in schools and community-based organizations serving children and teens. The goal: to inspire young people to grow up to be compassionate and responsible adults who are sensitive and empathetic to others and aware of the needs and value of shelter pets.

For Yale 21C, the collaboration with the Animal League was serendipitous. The School of the 21st Century is an educational reform program that provides early care, education, and family support from the birth of a child through the school years. It was conceptualized and developed for national dissemination at Yale University's Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy. 21C schools around the country operate autonomously, but they are part of a National 21C Network with headquarters at Yale. Yale 21C coordinates the 21C network, hosts national conferences, and regularly updates its program by adding new components that reflect national and local needs.

One new addition is Yale 21C's extension of its mental health module to include social and emotional learning. The Animal League's goal of using Mutt-i-grees® as a way to introduce the concepts of compassion and social responsibility to children complemented Yale 21C's intention to add a social and emotional learning component and presented an opportunity to collaborate on a unique approach to teach children to care about Mutt-i-grees® as well as about themselves and others.



THE MUTT-I-GREES® CURRICULUM

The collaboration between the Animal League and Yale 21C resulted in the publication of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, as well as other ancillary publications and programs.

The Curriculum, graciously funded by the Cesar Millan Foundation, was created in four phases reflecting its use in different grade levels: Pre-K-Grade 3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7-8, and Grades 9-12. Although it was developed for use in mainstream classrooms, the Curriculum has proven to be highly adaptable and is also being implemented in afterschool programs in schools and libraries and in community-based organizations and publicly supported preschools like Head Start.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS!)

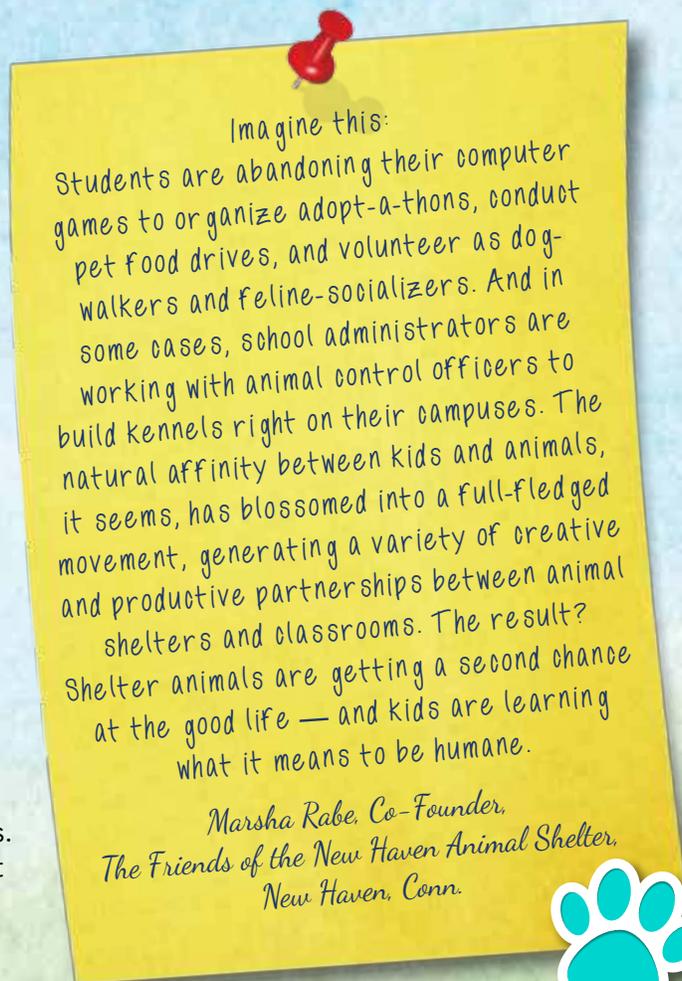
The staff and volunteers of many animal shelters around the country have heard about the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and have wondered about its applicability to their work. We compiled a list of their questions and present them below, along with the answers, to explain further the Curriculum and how animal shelters are involved.

Are animal shelters and rescue groups involved in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum?

Yes. Many animal shelters and rescue groups are already collaborating with schools and libraries in their communities and have embraced the Curriculum. In the next several pages we will show the various ways they are participating and the opportunities that exist for other shelters to become involved.

Do students participating in the Curriculum learn about shelter pets?

Absolutely! In schools that use the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, students – some of them for the first time – learn about and visit animal shelters in their communities and begin to appreciate the life-saving operations carried out by hard-working shelter staff and volunteers. They gain an understanding of the importance of promoting adoptions and how they can help homeless pets. Students also learn that shelter pets are not “rejects” or “damaged goods,” or “just mutts,” but rather are animals who simply need the respect and love that a good home provides. They also explore various related topics, including pet overpopulation and how spay/neuter can address this basic problem facing animals and the communities they live in.

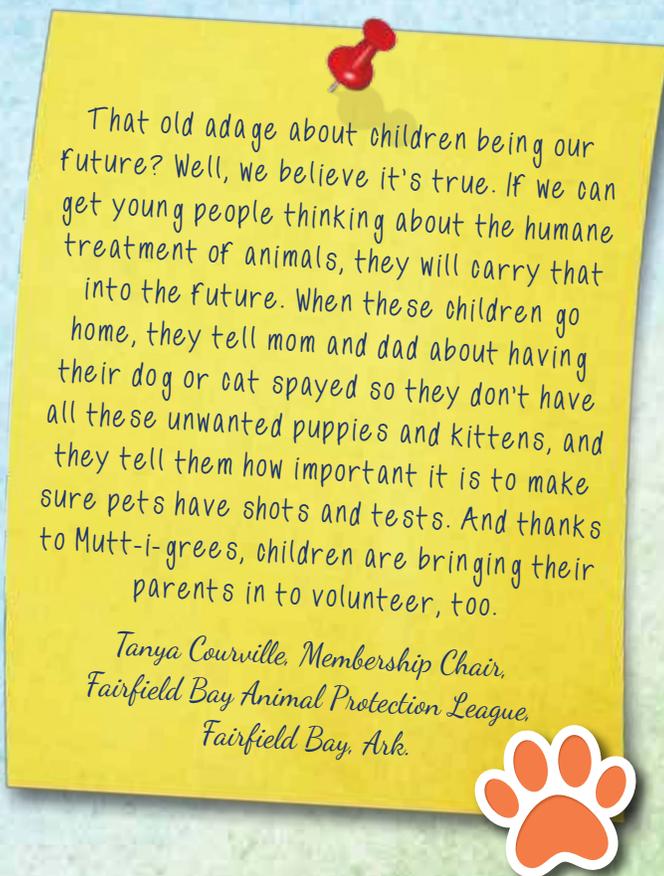


In addition, students learn about pets in general: their behavior, characteristics, and needs. This knowledge is critical to developing and nurturing *empathy*, the ability to see life from another's point of view; the more we know about those around us – people as well as animals – the more we understand and have compassion for them. For this reason, the Curriculum is regarded as an effective approach not only to generating compassion and responsibility toward animals, but also to improving social interactions and addressing bullying behaviors.

What is unique about the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum as a humane education tool?

The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is unique in its approach, combining social and emotional learning with humane education. The Curriculum, which uses stories and activities about shelter dogs to teach social and emotional skills, has the potential to bring the adoption message to millions of students who will come to regard animal shelters as important organizations in their community. In addition, since its launch in 2010, the Curriculum has been extremely popular with teachers, counselors, students, and their families, as well as with humane educators, many of whom have told us about its powerful, even life-changing effects.

The Mutt-i-grees® concept is also highly versatile and includes a focus on cats in the companion publication, *Cats Are Mutt-i-grees® 2*, which, like the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, is used in schools and afterschool programs. The third companion publication, *Mutt-i-grees® in the Library*, provides yet another venue for reaching children and families with the message that pet adoption matters.



Why are schools so interested in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum?

First, kids love it and because kids love it, it works! From the very first time we sent the Curriculum to pilot sites (we had more than 30 schools in different parts of the country test each of the lessons) it's been a big hit not only with students, but also with their parents. And educators have responded in kind because it's much easier to teach when students are passionate, engaged, and empowered. Second, evaluations of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum have shown its relevance to academic instruction; the benefits associated with Mutt-i-grees® include not only increased caring and empathy, but also improved student behavior, learning, achievement, and engagement in school. The evaluations also show that the Curriculum improves school climate, which is linked to such concerns as bullying prevention.

How do schools use the Curriculum?

Preschool and elementary schools devote 30-35 minutes (the time it takes to implement a Curriculum lesson) once or twice a week, specifically for Mutt-i-grees®. Some refer to this as Mutt-i-grees® Time.

With older students, the Curriculum is used in conjunction with health education, character education, life skills, or with various academic subjects such as English, literature, debate, and social studies. Junior high/middle schools and high schools present even more opportunities to use the Curriculum through internships, service learning, and mentoring – older students teaching Mutt-i-grees® lessons to younger students.

Are the lesson plans easy to use?

Yes. One of our goals was to develop easy-to-use lesson plans to facilitate the use of the Curriculum. The lesson plans include scripted discussions, materials needed, and learning-by-doing activities, as well as advanced activities and projects to involve communities and families. In addition, each lesson plan highlights key vocabulary words and readings. And all activities and readings focus on shelter dogs.

The Curriculum website, www.education.muttigrees.org, includes additional resources and activities and provides a forum for sharing information. In addition, the website features a one-of-a kind library of books about dogs and cats for different age groups.

What else is included in the Curriculum?

Besides the lesson plans, there are several other sections in each Curriculum binder:

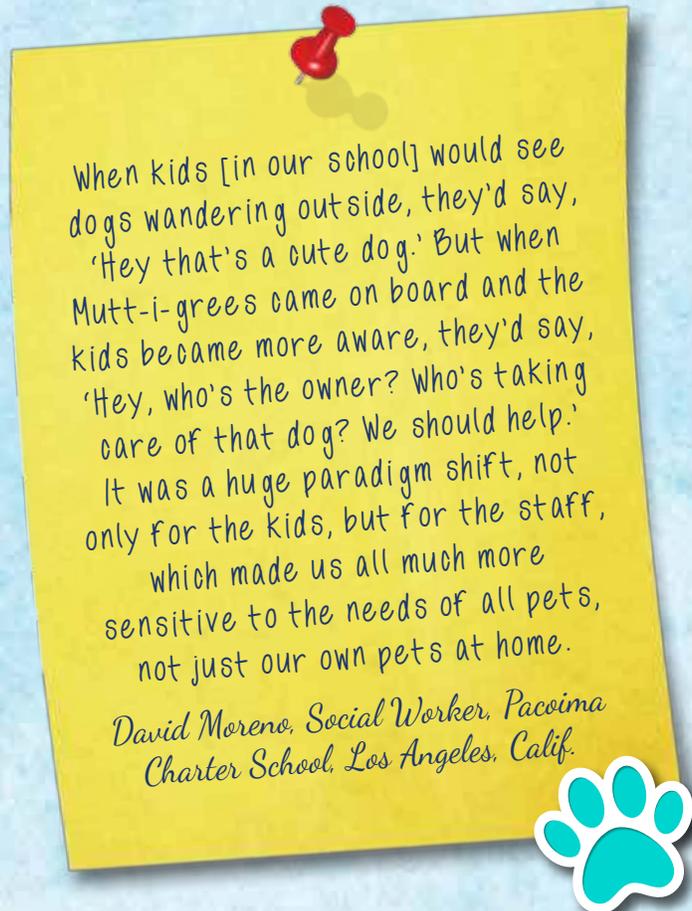
- Feature lessons about dog behavior, characteristics, and needs
- Mutt-i-grees® Club Activities – service learning opportunities that link schools and shelters
- Snapshots – brief discussions of various animal welfare issues like pet overpopulation
- Suggested books, organizations, and websites

Are there other resources teachers and humane educators may use?

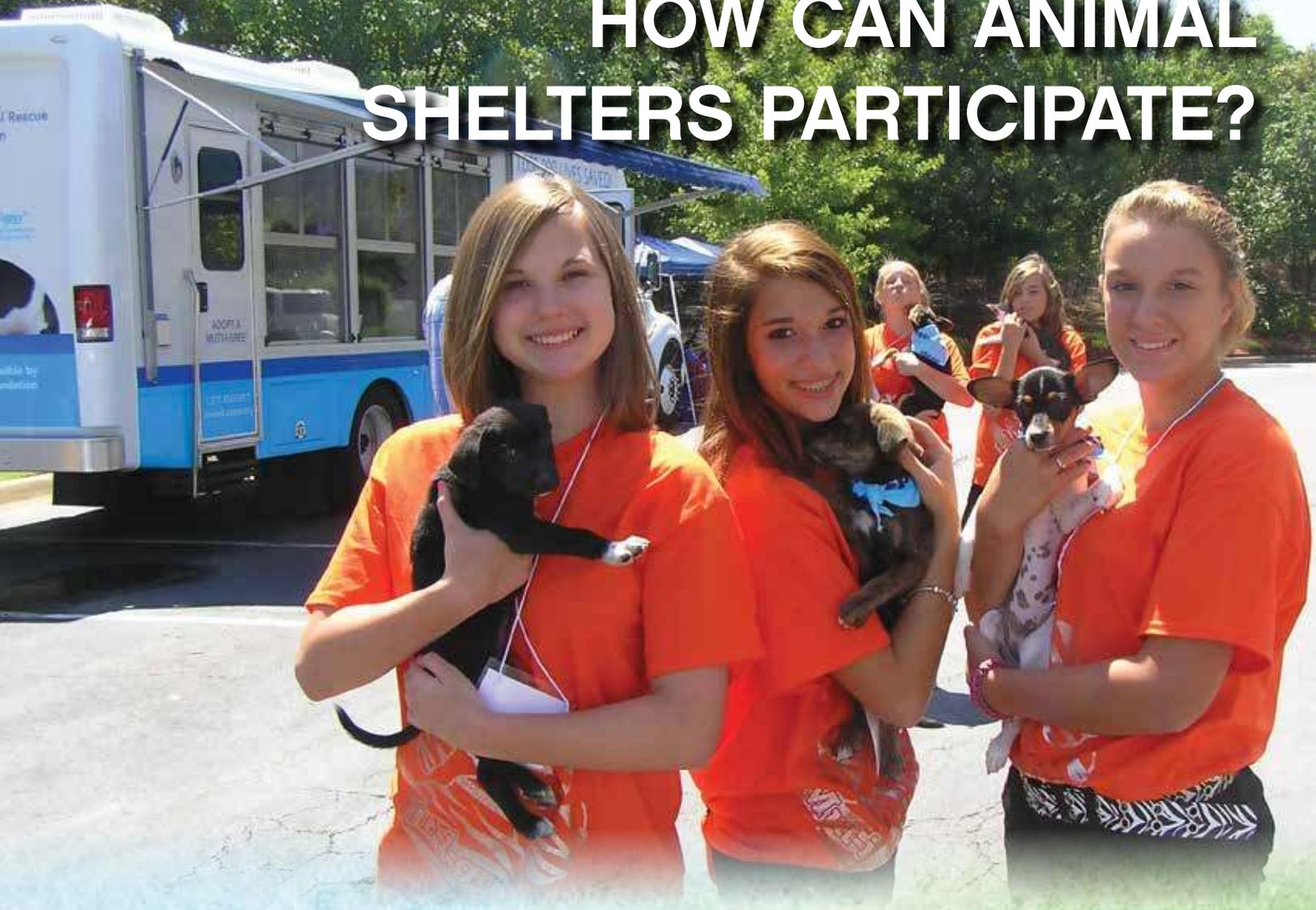
Yes, the Animal League website, www.animalleague.org, provides several more unique resources that teachers rely on, including the Animal League's Puppy and Kitten Cam – an endlessly charming live stream of puppies and kittens!

I heard about the Mutt-i-grees® Internship and Virtual Internship. What's the difference?

In conjunction with the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, the Animal League provides youth programs and internship experiences for students in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. This has been so popular that schools across the country have asked if they can participate, so we developed a **Virtual Internship**. This is a video covering all aspects of shelter operations, from rescuing a pet to finding a home, with grooming and medical care in between. Shelters participating in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum may visit the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum website to access the Virtual Internship.



HOW CAN ANIMAL SHELTERS PARTICIPATE?



As indicated previously, the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum includes opportunities for animal shelters and schools to collaborate in various ways.

Many shelters become part of the program because schools get in touch and want to bring students to visit the shelter. Or, because their students are eager to help shelter animals, teachers may call to inquire about items a shelter may need. Indeed, animal shelters are one of the greatest beneficiaries of the Curriculum because besides promoting pet adoption and community awareness, it inspires young people and provides opportunities for students to raise money and goods for their local shelters.

Help Spread the Word

We know that animal shelters vary in size and resources. Not all have the time, finances, or personnel to host a school visit. However, even small shelters can participate by simply displaying one of the Mutt-i-grees® posters that come with this guide.

Shelters can also support Mutt-i-grees® by being ambassadors for the program. Simply reach out to educators when you get the chance and let them know about the Curriculum. And, make the concept part of your discussions with staff, volunteers, and others so they, too, will become aware of the program and champion its growth. Your role is important. After all, you are the hands-on experts in the field. You see firsthand how compassion, empathy, and action can save and enrich lives, protect the public, and make a difference in the community.



Participate in Adoption Events

Animal shelters may also participate in national adoption events. In many communities, schools and shelters are joining together to promote adoptions during Animal League-sponsored events like the Pet Adoptathon®, Tour For Life®, and the Mutt-i-grees® Pack Parties. These are annual national events and information about each of these is available at www.animalleague.org and www.education.muttigrees.org.

Outreach to Schools, Libraries, and Afterschool Programs

Animal shelters that have staff and volunteer resources will find that the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, Cats Are Mutt-i-grees® 2, and Mutt-i-grees® in the Library are comprehensive resources that may be used to accomplish the following:

- Teach some of the lessons during visits to local schools;
- Provide in-class or assembly presentations;
- Visit a class, taking along a shelter pet to introduce to the students; and/or
- Attend events and workshops at participating libraries presenting Mutt-i-grees® activities to children and families.



LESSONS AND RESOURCES





How to Use the Lessons, Activities, and Other Resources

In schools and afterschool programs, all Mutt-i-grees® lessons are implemented over a period of several months. We provide a sampling of several lessons in the pages that follow for two reasons: one, to acquaint shelter staff with the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and two, to provide content to those of you who have an opportunity to visit schools.

You may select from a range of different activities and ideas. The list of activities is not meant to be exhaustive, nor is it expected that you will conduct every activity. Rather, we suggest that you review the possibilities and make a selection and/or use the activities to inspire other ideas. All lessons and activities may be adapted to fit the interests and developmental levels of the children you are working with.

Those of you who have the opportunity and interest to implement even more lessons may order a complimentary copy of the Curriculum and/or its companion programs by visiting <http://education.muttigrees.org>.

LESSON	Me and my Mutt-i-gree®
Objective	Children will learn about Mutt-i-grees® and their unique traits. Children will also identify similarities and differences among people and dogs.
Rationale	Children will learn about the unique traits of Mutt-i-grees®. In addition, children will also learn to recognize shared characteristics of humans and animals.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppet templates (see website for Downloads) • Arts & crafts supplies
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Similar • Different • Animal shelter • Adoption
Introduction	<p>Today are going to be learning about ourselves and what makes us special, what we're good at, the many different feelings we (and other people) have, how we can be a good friend and think about other people's feelings, and how we can make good decisions. But we are not only going to be learning about people; we are also going to be learning about dogs. We are going to be learning about a special type of dog called a Mutt-i-gree®. Just like people, dogs come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Mutt-i-grees® are dogs that have a wonderful mixture of colors and fur, sizes and shapes.</p> <p>A Mutt-i-gree® is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A word created to convey the unique characteristics and desirability of shelter pets 2. Dog, puppy, cat or kitten that has been adopted or is available for adoption 3. A very special pet – adopting one saves a life <p>ORIGIN: Shelter or rescue group</p>
Discussion	<p>Do any of you have a dog (or do you know anyone who has a dog for a pet)? What color is your dog? How big is your dog? Is your dog male or female? What is your dog's name? Do you know whether your dog is a purebred or a mixed-breed dog? Can any of you name a breed of dog or a type of mixed-breed (Golden Retriever and Poodle–Golden Doodle; Poodle and Cocker Spaniel–Cockapoo)? The teacher can also share information about his/her own dog if he/she has one. The teacher may also create a large graph or table displaying how many students own dogs and the different breeds, sizes, ages, and genders (the teacher can also assign individual students or small groups to tally these figures).</p> <p>Where do you think Mutt-i-grees® are found most often? Unfortunately Mutt-i-grees® are found in shelters awaiting adoption. Animal shelters take care of dogs and cats that are in need of a home. Shelters provide food, housing, and medical care for these animals in need, but the animals need something else, too. Animals in shelters need a home where they can have love and companionship. They wait at the shelter until someone adopts them and they can have a permanent home.</p>

<p>Learning by Doing</p>	<p>Now each of you is going to create your very own Mutt-i-gree®. Assist children in creating their own Mutt-i-gree® using the sample templates on the Mutt-i-grees® website and various art supplies. Once completed, teacher can ask children to share their Mutt-i-grees® with other students in the class and describe their different parts and traits.</p> <p>Children then can create Me and My Mutt-i-gree® books (using construction paper and attached with staples or string). Children can use beginning pages to draw or paste pictures of themselves and their Mutt-i-gree®. Teachers can adapt this task as necessary to reflect students' varying developmental levels; for example, younger students may focus more on illustrating the books, whereas older students may focus more on creating narrative text.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<p>Today we learned about Mutt-i-grees®. Every Mutt-i-gree® is different and that is what makes each one of them special. We also talked about how many Mutt-i-grees® are in need of homes and live in animal shelters where they receive food, medical care, and companionship of other animals and people.</p>



<p>Readings and Resources</p>	<p><i>Before You Were Mine</i> by Maribeth Boelts and David Walker <i>A Dog's Life: Autobiography of a Stray</i> by Ann M. Martin <i>Martha Speaks: Shelter Dog Blues</i> by Susan Meddaugh <i>Buddy Unchained</i> by Daisy Bix/illus. by Joe Hyatt <i>"Let's Get a Pup!" Said Kate</i> by Bob Graham</p>
<p>Family and Community Involvement Activities</p>	<p>Interview a Mutt-i-gree® owner. Provide some question prompts including: What breeds make up your Mutt-i-gree®? Where did you get your Mutt-i-gree®? Do you know what happened to your dog before you got him/her from a shelter? How/why did you pick this particular dog? Why did you give your dog his/her name? Children who own Mutt-i-grees® as pets can also complete this exercise. Children can write up answers (and even include a picture) and teacher can showcase around the classroom, have children include in their Me and My Mutt-i-gree® book or invite children to share responses via class discussion.</p>
<p>Advanced Activities</p>	<p>Why would that be? Ask children why they think mixed-breed dogs are found in shelters more often. List common perceptions/stereotypes about particular breeds of dogs and of mixed-breed dogs. The teacher can have children work together as a class or divide the class into small groups and assign each group a particular breed. Have children research whether these perceptions/stereotypes are accurate; prompt children to consider where they might find information about particular breeds and how to assess the validity of the information source. Encourage children to think about their own experiences with different dogs and whether these confirm or dispel stereotypes. Facilitate discussion of why misperceptions or stereotypes persist and what can be done to change them.</p>

LESSON	Inside the Canine Mind
Objective	Students will learn about canine needs by taking the perspective of a dog, thus enhancing their understanding of empathy.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers with Internet access • <i>How Much is the Doggie in the Shelter?</i> worksheet • Calculators
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Energy level • Financial responsibility • Commitment • Compatibility • Consequences
Overview	Thinking about life from a dog's perspective encourages students to put the needs of others before their own needs, thus enhancing their understanding of empathy. Learning about the needs of dogs and the responsibilities associated with dog ownership will enable them to consider options and consequences to make informed choices. The importance of considering options and consequences applies to all decision-making situations students may face.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In deciding whether owning a dog is the right choice for your family, it might be helpful to think about life from a dog's perspective. What might you want or need from your owner? How might you feel if your needs aren't met? What else is important to think about when adopting a dog? • Deciding to adopt a dog is a big choice and one with a lot of consequences. Adopting a dog can be a wonderful experience, but it's a decision you need to think a lot about. • If you do decide to get a dog, be sure to select one that is compatible with you and your family, not just a dog you find cute or charming. Adopting a dog that matches your family's energy level will ensure that you will enjoy a lasting relationship with your dog. Strong relationships aren't based primarily on looks, and you want this one to last a long time! Think about it: How would you feel if you were a high energy dog, but your owner sits in the house and plays video games instead of taking you for walks? • Owning and caring for a dog is a lot of work. It's also a huge financial responsibility and requires a long-term commitment. Encourage students who own pets to share their experiences with the class. For example, is walking the dog one of their responsibilities? Who takes responsibility for feeding and grooming their family's pet(s)? Does your family share these responsibilities? • If adopting a dog isn't possible for your family (you live in an apartment complex that doesn't allow dogs, for example), what else can you do to help? How does thinking about things from a dog's perspective influence your desire to help shelter animals? • Making a decision about owning a dog provides an example of the various options and the consequences underlying all decisions we make.



LEARNING BY DOING:

Choose one or more of the activities below. Additional activities can be found online: <http://education.muttigrees.org/mutt-i-grees-curriculum-strategies-activities>

Investigate	<u>The best choice.</u> Ask students to imagine a friend has decided to get a dog, but he can't decide what type of dog to get and where to get it from (shelter, breeder, pet store). Have students write a persuasive letter or email to this imaginary friend encouraging him to adopt a dog from a shelter rather than buying one from a pet store. Why is going to a shelter the best choice? Encourage students to share their letters with the class.
Apply	<u>How much is the doggie in the shelter?</u> Adopting a pet is a big financial responsibility. Do you have any idea how much it costs to own a dog? Ask students to guess how much they think it might cost to care for a dog for one year. Then, using the <i>How Much is the Doggie in the Shelter?</i> worksheet, have students estimate the cost of owning a dog. Were their guesses close? Were they surprised at how expensive it is to own an animal? Encourage class discussion.
Create	<u>I have a dream...</u> Have you ever noticed that dogs twitch, moan, whimper, or growl while they're sleeping? Studies show that, like humans, dogs have rapid eye movement (REM), but no one knows if they dream. What do you think? What might a Mutt-i-gree® dream about? Have students create a comic strip, short story, poem, or drawing taking the perspective of a dog and showing what they think dogs might dream about. Encourage discussion of students' own hopes and dreams, and highlight how each student may have unique aspirations. Sharing their hopes and listening to the aspirations of others enhances perspective taking.
Closure	Adopting a dog is a big responsibility. Thinking about life from a dog's perspective and identifying the consequences of such a big decision can help us to determine whether it's the best choice for us. And, if you do decide to get a dog, remember, adopt, don't shop! The notion that actions are associated with consequences applies to all decisions we make.





The Best Choice

Dog Dialog: Know Yourself, Know Your Dog; How to be a Good Friend...to a Dog; Responsibilities to Dogs and People; Are You Ready for a Dog?

How Much is that Doggie in the Shelter?

The Dog Economy Is Global – but What Is the World’s True Canine Capital?
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/11/the-dog-economy-is-global-but-what-is-the-worlds-true-canine-capital/265155/>

I Have a Dream

The Hidden Life of Dogs by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas

Do Dogs Dream?

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/201010/do-dogs-dream>

What It’s Like to Think With a Dog’s Brain:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/inside-dog-dog/story?id=10494333#.UF9W40L-DzI>

Brain Scans Reveal Dogs’ Thoughts:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=brain-scans-reveal-dogs-thoughts>

The Secrets Inside Your Dog’s Mind:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1921614,00.html>



How Much is the Doggie in the Shelter?



Consider the expenses in the table below (can you think of anything else?) and create a budget or list of estimated expenses for a dog for one year:

TYPE OF EXPENSE	COST
Food/Treats	
Routine veterinary visits	
Toys	
Grooming	
Supplies	
Preventative medication	
Obedience classes	
Boarding	
Emergencies	

If the average lifespan of a typical dog is 12 years, how much will it cost to own a dog for its lifetime based on your estimate?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Animal Aid

Animals need our help to stay healthy and safe; animals in shelters need our help to find permanent homes. Even though we may not be able to adopt an animal from the shelter, we can help the shelter publicize the importance of adoption and the need for adoptive families. Have children create a brochure and/or public service announcement for a local shelter. Instruct children that this should be targeted to other children and their families and facilitate discussion about content and format.

A Special Bond

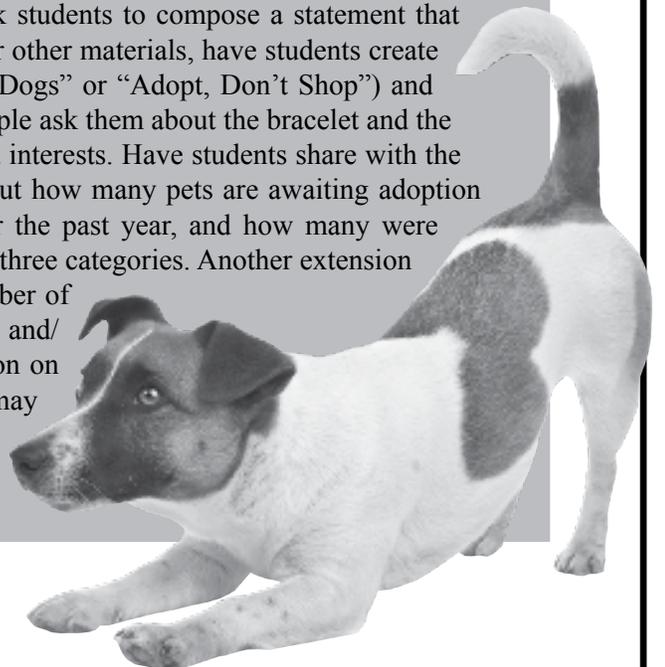
Some of the same words we use to describe our friendships with people can be used to describe our relationships with dogs. What qualities would you look for in a dog? If you have or would like to have a dog, what qualities do you want the dog to display/embody? What does a dog owner need to do to be a good friend to his/her dog? What are the similarities between human and canine friendships? How are the roles of pet owner and friend different? *Encourage discussion and record student answers on the board.*

Create Your Own Mutt-i-gree®

For decades, breeders have been combining breeds to strengthen certain characteristics and minimize others. For example, why would a breeder want to combine a Golden Retriever and a Poodle (also known as a Golden Doodle)? Mutt-i-grees® are often heralded for having unique qualities and temperaments due to their diverse origins. If you were going to select a dog what qualities would you want to be most prominent? Have children research different breeds and consider how their varying traits and temperaments might be combined.

Wear Your Heart on Your Wrist

A similar phrase (wear your heart on your sleeve) was used by Shakespeare to describe individuals who express emotions freely. The phrase is adapted to “wear your heart on your wrist” to provide a personal way to share beliefs and promote a cause. Following the discussion on shelter pets and the role of pet shops in enabling the puppy mill industry, ask students to compose a statement that takes a stand about Mutt-i-grees®. Using ribbons, beads, or other materials, have students create bracelets incorporating the statement (e.g. “Help Rescue Dogs” or “Adopt, Don’t Shop”) and wear it for a week. Ask students to monitor how many people ask them about the bracelet and the extent that it opened avenues for conversations and shared interests. Have students share with the class. To further expand this activity, students may find out how many pets are awaiting adoption at their local shelter, how many have been adopted over the past year, and how many were euthanized. Different colored beads would represent these three categories. Another extension possibility: Have students create graphs showing the number of people commenting about the bracelet/message over time and/or the types of comments made, and prepare a presentation on the outcomes of the activity. At a later date, this activity may be used to promote other social and environmental causes and anti-bullying messages.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Each Dog Has a Story (Worksheet provided on page 20)

After looking at shelter websites or visiting a shelter, ask students to select one or more shelter dogs, research their background, and write a short story about them. Is their history known? Did they come from a puppy mill? Why are they up for adoption, and what kind of home are they looking for? Looking at the photos of the dogs, students may give the dog a name and, in absence of factual information, imagine the dog's story. Another option: Students may create a social networking page for these animals. Use the *Profile a Pooch* worksheet to get started. The collection of profiles students create may be displayed in class or compiled in a class album and posted online.

No-Sew Pet Blankets (Pattern provided on page 19)

Some animals in shelters may have been rescued from horrible circumstances, such as puppy/kitten mills or dog fighting rings and, though they are resilient, they may feel frightened or anxious at first. There are many ways to calm and soothe a scared animal. For example, some shelters play classical music to promote a sense of calm. Providing a soft space for animals to sleep is another way to add comfort to animals that might be afraid of their new surroundings.

- Ask children to think about how Mutt-i-grees® in a shelter may feel. Might they feel lonely, scared, cold, or afraid? Encourage discussion of ways to calm these feelings. How might a blanket help?
- What do you do when you feel scared or lonely?
- Do you (or did you) have a blanket or stuffed animal that comforts you?
- Are there any smells that comfort you or music that makes you feel calm?

Mutt-i-gree®, Mutt-i-gree®, What Do You See?

You can often find cats perched in a window watching what is going on outside. Imagine you are a cat looking out a window ... what do you see? What might you be thinking about? Encourage children to think creatively to decide where they would be (at home, at school, in a library or bookstore, etc.) and use their imagination to describe what they might see happening outside and how they might be feeling. Have children write a short story or poem from the point of view of a cat and share with the group.

Here's What I Was Feeling...

Have children bring in pictures of their own pet dogs showing feelings or cut out pictures from magazines of dogs displaying emotions. Children can draw and attach thought bubbles to these pictures and write what feeling the dog is experiencing. Children can also draw a scene around the dog's picture that provides contextual clues about why the dog is feeling a particular emotion.



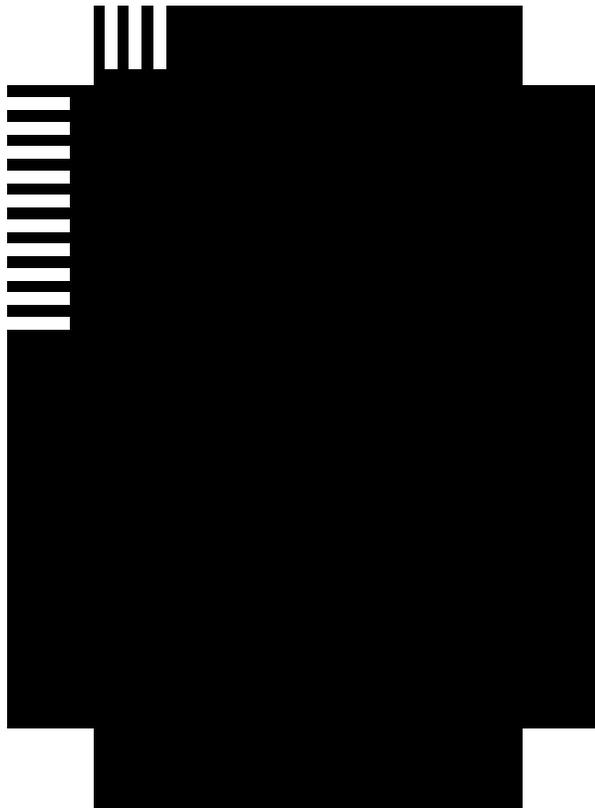
NO SEW PET BLANKET PATTERN

Supplies Needed:

- Two Pieces of fleece fabric (1/3 yard each)
- Fabric scissors
- One 4" x 4" piece of paper

Directions

- 🐾 Place two pieces of fleece on top of each other, lining up the edges so they are even.
- 🐾 Trim off any extra around the edges of the fleece.
- 🐾 Take the piece of 4" x 4" paper and lay it on the corner of the fleece. Cut out the corner through both layers. Do this for all four corners.
- 🐾 Cut 4" into both pieces of fleece at 1" wide. Cut 1" intervals on all four sides.
- 🐾 Starting on one side and using one pieces of fringe from each piece of fleece, tie knots.
- 🐾 Tie knots around the entire blanket.



PROFILE A POOCH



Name:

.....

Approximate Age:

.....

Physical Description:

.....

.....

Previous experience (Puppy mill? Stray dog? Brought to a shelter by a family unable to care for it?):

.....

.....

Education/training:

.....

Interests/Preferred activities (Based on shelter staff interviews or what the dog looks like):

.....

.....

Energy level:

.....

Favorite song or movie might be:

.....

Looking for (what type of owner?):

.....

What else would you like to include?

.....

.....

**SELECTED
DOG AND
CAT DIALOG
FEATURE
LESSONS**





CATS AMONG US

Cats see themselves as special. They often convey the impression that they think they are more graceful, elegant, intelligent, and clever than anyone else around them! But live with a cat for a short time and chances are you'll soon discover that beneath that seemingly haughty exterior is a compassionate being.

The domestic cat we know today – or house cat, as some say – has a long history, and knowing some of it helps us understand the important role cats played in human society, ever since they were honored as demigods so long ago in ancient Egypt. Early Egyptians worshipped a cat goddess

and even mummified cats for their journey to the next world, along with mummified mice! It was the cats' eyes and ability to see in the dark that intrigued early Egyptians. And the cats' skill in hunting mice – and thus protecting the Egyptians' stores of grain – was important and may have first earned cats the affectionate attention of humans. Cultures around the world would later adopt cats as companions.

The domestic cat is a descendant of a species known as *Felis catus*, which appeared around 2000 B.C. *Felis catus* most likely originated from African wild cats or Asian desert cats. There are more than 100 breeds of domestic cats as well as mixed breeds, referred to as random-bred cats.

Just as each one of us is unique, so are cats, and there is no “typical” cat. In fact, cats are as varied in their appearance and personalities as people are. Some are outgoing and social, while others are serene and appear to be secretive. Some exude confidence and enjoy company and others are reclusive and appear shy. Some cats love to be picked up and cuddled, while others prefer to call the shots themselves, landing on a lap when they feel like it but not before. You may have known or seen cats who roll over to invite a belly rub, while others ... well, rub that tummy at your peril! But most cats, as their human companions will happily attest, are striking combinations of all these and other characteristics rolled into one furry, agile animal.

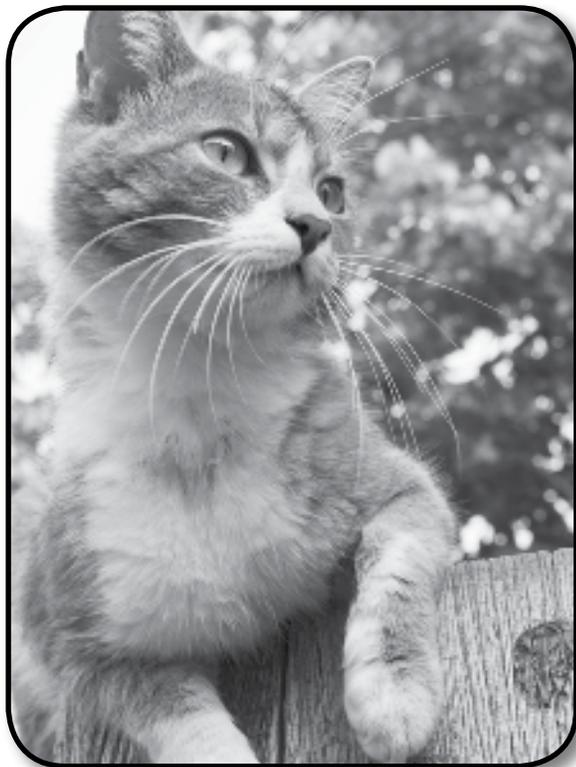
Still, regardless of their individuality, cats share many basic characteristics. Learning about these traits and valuing them for what they tell us about cat behavior is crucial to enjoying their company and having empathy and compassion for cats, especially those in need of loving homes.

Discussion prompts:

- Do you have a cat at home or know someone who does? If so, what makes your cat or the cat you know special or unique? Do you share any of the same characteristics?
- What are your impressions of cats? What unique aspects of cats do you especially like?
- How do you think cats and humans have benefitted from living together over the years?

Key words:

- Individuality
- Characteristic
- Species
- Exude
- Empathy



LIFE ON THE OUTSIDE

Not all cats live in homes. Some cats live outside and are known as feral cats. Their origin is the same as the domestic house cats, but they live outdoors and avoid human company. They look like and are the same species as domestic house cats, but since they have never been socialized, they are fearful and distrustful of people and they don't let anyone come close to them. Domestic house cats – even those who are not very social – do not fear people, and have come to enjoy the comforts of a home.

The numbers of feral cats is not known, but some have estimated that there are could be as many as 60 million feral cats in the United States. Feral cats may live alone but often are found in groups called feral colonies, since they occupy a specific area together. There is considerable concern for feral cats and interest in finding ways to help them as well as to control their growing numbers, a topic we cover in the Snapshots section of this binder.

Stray cats also live outdoors, but there is a big difference between feral and stray cats. A stray cat once lived in a home and may have been someone's pet, but was later lost or abandoned. Sadly, some people acquire kittens or even older cats, only to discard them later. When you hear about cats who were abandoned, do you wonder what might become of them?

Because strays once lived with people, they are easily socialized and generally not mistrustful of humans. However, the longer they live outdoors, the more self-sufficient strays become and, as a result, increasingly more wary of people.

Think about the life of an outdoor cat: foraging for food, being shunned by people, and having to get used to being shooed away. It's not surprising that, with time, strays can become like feral cats. However, if they have not been living outdoors for too long, strays can become accustomed to life as an indoor pet. Many people who have compassion for cats volunteer to rescue strays, seek veterinary care for them, and then try to find them good homes.

Discussion prompts:

- Have you seen cats wandering about in your neighborhood? Can you tell if they are feral cats or strays? How do your neighbors respond?
- Why do people seek veterinary care for stray cats?
- Some people view feral and stray cats as pests. Is this fair? Should we have compassion for feral and stray cats? How can we help?
- Just like stray or feral cats, people are sometimes shunned; they are rejected by the rest of the group. What prompts people to reject others? What impact does it have on both those who are rejected and those who reject?
- Living without human company for a long time may force some stray cats to lose trust. How would lack of socialization affect young children?

Key words:

- Feral cats
- Trust
- Compassion
- Shun/Shunned
- Socialized



IN A CAT'S WORLD

Given their deep-rooted hunting instincts, it's no surprise that cats have highly developed senses. Here are a few facts about how cats experience their world:

Smell: We list the sense of smell first because it is a fundamental to feline survival. Cats have an extraordinary sense of smell, which is at least 14 times that of a human. It's because of this acute sense of smell that they respond so strongly to catnip; the smell of this plant stimulates a cat's social behavior. Cats use cat scent communication to "talk" to other cats. Special glands in the face, tail, and paw pads release a scent unique to each cat. This scent is used to communicate information about the cat as well as mark territory. Rubbing and

scratching release scent and are thus ways for cats to communicate with one another. Not only is the cat's sense of smell extraordinary, their noses are comparatively larger than human noses, and each cat's nose leather is distinct, something like a fingerprint.

Hearing: Cats have excellent hearing and can detect an extremely broad range of frequencies. They can hear higher-pitched sounds than either dogs or humans can. Cat hearing is also extremely sensitive and is among the best of any mammal. Cats have 30 muscles in their ears, while we have only six. These muscles help move their ears, which both amplifies sounds and helps a cat sense the direction from which a noise is coming.

Vision: In relation to their body size, cats have the largest eyes of any mammal. They have excellent night vision and can see clearly at about 1/6 of the light required for humans.

Taste: Cats have relatively few taste buds compared with humans and do not taste sweet flavors. Their tongues are rough and have tiny, backward-facing barbs that help with hunting and grooming. The downside to this useful rough tongue is that anything a cat collects on his tongue will usually end up getting swallowed, which is why cats cough up hairballs. The barbs on the tongue also make it dangerous if a cat gets string or yarn in his mouth; those tiny barbs make it difficult to spit out the string.

Touch: When a cat brushes against someone or her paws touch something, she can feel it, just like other mammals can. However, their sense of touch is enhanced in ways you can't even imagine by their distinctive whiskers. In fact, whiskers play a large role in how cats move through their environments; they help with sensation and navigation that whiskers provide enables cats to move about the dark with total confidence.

Discussion prompts:

- Obviously, humans and cats experience their environments in ways that are both similar and different. When you enter a room for the first time or when you go outdoors, what senses are you likely to use? What senses would a cat use? How would they be alike? Different?
- How do their senses help cats survive?
- Often, our senses work in concert. If we were to lose one of our senses, what might happen?

Key words:

- Sense
- Sensation
- Groom
- Navigate/navigation
- Distinct
- Survival



WATCH THE CAT'S WHISKERS

Whiskers are a defining characteristic of a cat. If you were asked to draw a picture of a cat's head, it will no doubt include whiskers. We learned previously that cats use their whiskers to navigate their environment in the dark. Whiskers also enable a cat to detect movement, maintain balance, and ascertain if she can fit in a small gap.

Even more fascinating is the fact that whiskers serve as the cat's mood gauge; watching her whiskers will tell you how a cat is feeling and when her mood changes:

- When whiskers are not moving but simply resting loosely by the side of her face, it means the cat is content.
- When the whiskers suddenly bunch up backwards and lie flat on her face, this is an indication that something scared or annoyed the cat.

Whiskers are also known as vibrissae and, like cats' fur and nails, they fall out (shed) and are replaced by new ones. Care must be taken not to damage a cat's whiskers, as this will cause the cat to become confused and disorientated.

Discussion prompts:

- Watching a cat's whiskers can give clues as to how he is feeling. What do you look for when you are trying to figure out how another person may be feeling?
- What do you find to be fascinating about a cat's use of its whiskers?
- In what ways are whiskers critical to cats?

Key words:

- Navigate
- Detect
- Gauge
- Fascinating



PLAYTIME: THE HUNT IS ON

Cats are complex, intriguing animals; some even call them mysterious. They are small, compact, tidy, and mostly quiet. They love to sit in laps but prefer not to make fools of themselves by showing exuberance – except, of course, when they play. Then, some of them throw caution to the wind, flying head over paws in pursuit of a laser light, a catnip mouse, or a Ping Pong ball. Cats need play to expend their energy and to bond with people. People also need the interaction with cats to appreciate their amazing physical skills, to be entertained, and to feel connected to their feline.

For domestic cats, play is more than fun, games, and exercise; it's the manifestation of their most basic instinct and nature as hunters. It's in their nature to stalk, capture, and kill prey. Evolution has designed cats to be carnivorous predators, which means that cat games are predatory games. They may look like a lot of fun when done in the context of play, but for the cat, it's as if she's practicing hunting. Cats will stalk, chase, and attack almost anything that moves –

and sometimes things that are perfectly still! Cats often treat their prey as a trophy they proudly present to their owners – perhaps you know people who have found such gifts from their cats!

Have you ever been awakened in the middle of the night by a tap on your face or a swat to your feet? Because nocturnal behavior is part of a cat's hunting heritage, pet owners often find that their cat gets very active and playful in the evenings and late at night. "My cat is keeping me awake at night!" is very common complaint among cat owners. Some people may attribute this to the cat being annoying or spiteful, when in reality being fully awake at night is part of the cat's true nature. Thoughtful cat owners can address this issue by providing adequate exercise and stimulation. This may not be easy, however. Cats – like us – can become cozy and comfortable at home and resist exercise. This is especially true of cats during the day when they would prefer to go on sleeping. Play, however – and the exercise and mental stimulation it provides – is so crucial for feline health that cat owners are advised to devote plenty of time to playing with their cats.

Indeed, many cat owners often capitalize on cats' love of play by engaging them with a toy or spending time petting them. Even when they are away from home, some cat owners may leave toys and treats for cats to find so they are not bored.

Discussion prompts:

- Cats are being true to their nature in many of their behaviors. What does it mean to be true to your nature as a human being and as an individual?
- What is human nature and how is it similar/different from cat nature?
- All animals play. Child psychologists refer to play as the child's work – what do we learn from play? How does it bring us together? How does it open us to new experiences?
- How is play important to a cat? To people?

Key words:

- Instinct
- Predatory
- Nocturnal
- Expend
- Stimulation
- Resist
- Devote



PART OF THE PACK

Learning about how dogs behave in nature can help us better understand and care for them in our homes and communities. Humans are all part of one species: homo sapiens. Though we may come from different places, speak different languages, and look different from one another, we are all similar in the fact that we are human beings. Dogs, too, belong to a particular species of animals: canis familiaris.

There are many different breeds of dogs and many mixes of these breeds, but all dogs are part of this same species.

Like humans, dogs are social animals and live as part of a family. In the wild, dogs form packs, which become their families. Dogs have a “pack mentality” – they think about the good of the pack rather than what is best for each individual dog. Packs are stable and organized, and this originally helped dogs survive in the wild. Each dog has a role within the pack – Alpha, Beta, etc. One dog is the pack leader (Alpha dog) while the rest are followers. Pack leaders show dominance over the other dogs in the pack. Dominance does not mean that one dog thinks he is better than the other dogs; rather the pack leader shows consistent leadership by setting and reinforcing rules. Dogs naturally look for (and up to) a strong and fair leader. This social order within the pack lets dogs know what to expect and where they stand – knowing this, dogs acquire a sense of security and confidence.

Though they may no longer live in the wild, dogs still maintain a pack mentality; a pack may be simply a dog owner and his dog or a dog and several family members or a family with more than one dog. From birth, dogs learn their place within the pack and who is in charge, creating a natural balance within the pack. Since leadership is very important to dogs, the pack leader is respected and obeyed; if a dog does not perceive a leader, it will try to become the leader! When dogs live with a family, dog owners need to take on the role of pack leader by calmly but firmly showing dogs that they make and maintain the rules. If dog owners do not take on the role of pack leader – in other words, if they do not set the rules and consistently expect these rules to be followed – their dogs will try to take the leadership role and may become unstable, difficult to control, and anxious. Some early signs of lack of balance: dogs pulling on a leash during a walk or otherwise refusing to obey commands.

- What might happen when there are two leaders in the house (two parents)?
- How do dog owners become leaders?
- How would you lead the pack if you were the leader?

Objective:

In the series of Dog Dialog lessons students will learn about how dogs behave in nature, which will give them insight about canine characteristics and behaviors so they can confidently and effectively interact with and care for dogs. An understanding of dogs’ behavior is essential if students are to have empathy and compassion for dogs. In the first lesson, students are introduced to the concept of pack mentality and learn that dogs are pack animals; they follow the rules established by the pack leader. They will also learn that, although there are differences between people and dogs, both humans and dogs are social, which is why they have bonded so well over the years.

Key Words to Highlight:

Socialize, Pack Leader, Dominance, Leadership, Consistent, Unstable/Instability



NOSE FIRST, THEN EYES, THEN EARS

It's important to honor the way in which a dog experiences the world around him and recognize that it is different from the way we experience the world. Dogs "see" the world differently than people; they begin with their noses, then eyes, then ears. Have you noticed that dogs often sniff you when you first meet them? Sniffing gives a dog a lot of information, and it is how dogs can "get to know" people and other dogs.

Approximately sixty percent of a dog's brain is controlled by his nose, so smell is a dog's strongest sense and the sense he trusts the most. Dogs have several million more sensors in their noses than humans, and dogs can smell things that most humans never even notice because humans' sense of smell is not as highly developed. Dogs not only use their nose to learn what is going on around them, they are also good at distinguishing one odor from another and remembering what they smell. Because of this, police officers, firefighters, and rescue workers often use dogs to help them find things or people, and some dogs

have even been trained to detect disease just by sniffing a person's breath.

Although we rely on our eyes first and foremost, dogs don't rely on sight or sound; rather, they instinctively focus on scent. This is why dogs may not recognize their owners when they are wearing a hat or a hood until they come closer and the dogs can recognize them by their smell.

What do dogs see? Many people think dogs are colorblind, but dogs actually do see color. They just see fewer colors than normal humans do. Dogs also use their vision differently than we do. Dogs' eyes are sensitive to movement and light and they see better at night. Similarly, dogs can hear a lot better than humans and from greater distances, and they are able to hear frequencies that we are unable to hear. Some dog owners report, for example, that their dogs begin barking hours before a thunderstorm. Also unique to dogs is their ability to move their ears to locate sound. Dogs' ears are connected to the nervous system and their hearing is so acute that loud sounds can startle them.

Understanding how dogs use their senses gives us clues about how we should interact with them. Dogs are loyal and would do anything for us, so we have a responsibility to respect the differences between humans and dogs. Remember that dogs rely first and foremost on their sense of smell and may become disconnected from their natural instincts if they are overwhelmed with too many sights or sounds. Knowing about the way dogs use their senses, what do you think is the appropriate way to approach or talk to a dog?

Objective:

Students will consider similarities and differences in how dogs and people experience the world around them and discover that dogs learn about their world by using their nose first. Students will learn that dogs are loyal and trust humans. However, if we do not respect their way of understanding the world, they become confused. Knowing this will help students to take another's perspective – specifically a dog's – and subsequently interact with animals with more competence, confidence, and compassion. This lesson helps illustrate the differences between people and dogs and provides students with guidance on how to interact with and what to expect of dogs.

Key Words to Highlight:

Honor/Respect, Loyalty, Trust, Scenting Ability, Sensor, Detect



DOG TALK

Dogs bark; it's part of their natural behavior. They use their bark to vocalize what they want and need from each other and from humans. Barking is one way that dogs communicate with others. Did you know that dogs and wolves bark differently and for different reasons? Wolves rarely bark, while domestic dogs bark often. Why do you think this is?

If you pay attention to a dog, you will realize that not all barks sound the same. The volume, tone, frequency, and duration of a dog's bark will give you some clues about what the dog is trying to say. Identifying the different types of barks can help us to understand what they are trying to tell us. Often dogs bark to alert us that new people are in the territory they are guarding (for example, your home). By listening and observing dogs, we can learn to distinguish important barks (a stranger is approaching, I want to go out, I am scared, I want to play...) from nuisance barks, such as when a dog barks incessantly. Dogs learn when and how to bark by observing our reactions; if they bark or whine and we give them a treat because we think this will stop their barking, they will learn to do so when they want food or attention.

- What are some reasons a dog might bark? (needs to go outside, wants to play, scared/fearful, excited)
- What are some types of barks? (panic, warning, playful, needs-based) How do these barks sound different? (high pitch, short, long, howl, growl, whine)
- How might a dog's bark allow you to anticipate his/her behavior?
- How might it cause you to change your behavior?
- Can you think of what would make a dog panic?

Visit <http://education.muttigrees.org/dog-talk-video> to see Dog Talk video

Visit <http://education.muttigrees.org/panic-dog-video> to see Panic Dog video

Objective:

Students will learn how dogs use barking to communicate with other dogs and people and that there are variations in barking, depending on what the dog is trying to communicate. Students will learn to pay attention to a dog's bark and use this information to better anticipate and understand a dog's behavior.

Key Words to Highlight:

Vocalize, Communicate, Duration, Domestic, Panic



BODY LANGUAGE: WHAT IS THE DOG TRYING TO TELL US?

We know how dogs communicate with each other and with humans and the ways we can communicate with dogs (using our energy, vocalization). One of the most important ways we can communicate with dogs is by paying attention to both their body language and our own.

Dogs' posture can give us clues to their feelings. Also, paying attention to their facial expressions and some sounds can give us additional clues. Signs of confidence in a dog include an erect, standing tall stance with the tail up and wagging slowly. When a dog's head is lowered and his ears are down, flattened, or relaxed, he is probably calm, submissive, and approachable. Signs of fear include lowered stance, tail tucked under, or tail wagging fast or frantically. Dogs experiencing fear may also bark – as in saying, “keep away.”

When some dogs are aroused, they will raise the hair on their hackles (the area along the backbone, from the shoulder to just before the tail). This doesn't mean they are showing aggression, but they are on alert.

A dog who is trembling, shaking, or has raised hackles could be afraid, uncertain, or nervous. When a dog is afraid, he may feel threatened if you approach him. A dog also communicates via sounds, including barking and breathing. A dog with heavy or rapid breathing could simply be tired. Or, he could be anxious or excited. A dog with his mouth or lips drawn back and rolled up or its teeth bared might be agitated or threatened. When a dog is yawning and looking away from you, he might be saying he has had enough and is finished playing; respect the dog's wishes.

- How might a dog try to show or tell you that he is afraid?
- How might a dog try to show or tell you that he is happy?

Just as dogs communicate with us using body language, we also communicate using our posture and gestures. Dogs observe our gestures, posture, and other cues; paying attention to our body language and how it influences others can help us better communicate with dogs, as well as with people.

- How can our body language cause a dog to become calm or excited? Anxious? Scared?

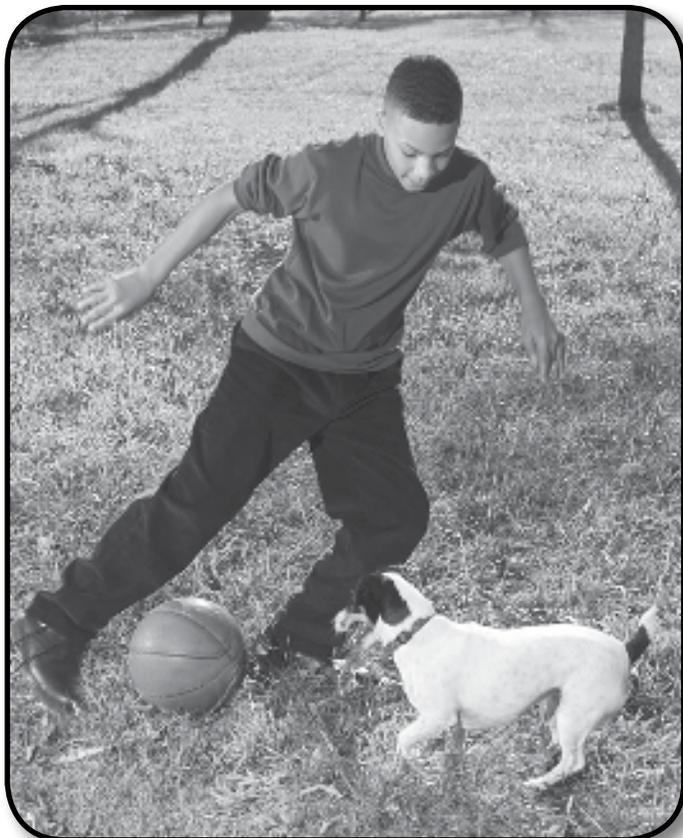
Visit <http://education.muttigrees.org/what-dog-trying-tell-us-video> to see What is the Dog Trying to Tell Us? video

Objective:

Students will learn how to pay attention to and interpret a dog's facial expressions, body language, and sounds. Learning to read and decipher the signals dogs use to convey intention and emotion will help students interact with dogs in a more assured and confident manner. Students will also learn how to pay attention to their own body language as a way of communicating their emotions and intentions.

Key Words to Highlight:

Body Language, Posture, Stance, Hackles



KNOW YOURSELF, KNOW YOUR DOG

We are all alike in many ways, but we are also each uniquely different. Some of us have high energy levels and want to be active most of the time. We might play different sports or participate in many activities. Others may not choose to be as active. We might prefer to read or draw instead. Dogs, too, have different energy levels. Some dogs may have very high energy levels and seem to be constantly moving, while other dogs may have low energy levels and are not as active. The dog's size should not be confused with energy level. Some small dogs may have very high energy levels, while some large dogs may have very low energy levels. Dogs tend to be drawn to other dogs with the same energy level. In

fact, they choose their playmates by their level of energy. You might see a very small dog playing happily with a very large dog simply because they have the same energy level. Dogs don't discriminate based on looks or breed. A dog will never say, "I want to play with her because she is a poodle." Instead, he might say, "I want to play with her because she likes to run and play tug."

- Can you think of an example of a large dog with a low energy level?
How about a small dog with a high or very high energy level?
- What is your energy level? Now think about your close friends...
do you share the same energy level?

We might choose friends who share similar energy levels or with energy levels that complement our own. We usually spend time with people who are compatible with us – this means that each person's characteristics complement the characteristics of another so there is harmony and balance in the relationship. We want to be sure that our dogs are also compatible with our pack. This means existing in a harmonious combination with each other. Ideally, dog owners should have the same or higher energy level as their dogs. A person with a high energy level might be very active and enjoy hiking, running, biking, and so on. A dog with a high energy level would be a good match for this person because they could enjoy these activities together.

- What would happen if a high-energy dog had a low-energy owner?
- Do you know your energy level?

(continued on next page)



DOG DIALOG

KNOW YOURSELF, KNOW YOUR DOG (cont'd)

Objective:

Students will learn to consider both a dog's energy level and their own and how this energy influences behavior.

Like people, dogs are unique and each may differ in various ways. One way this is expressed is in energy level; some people and dogs are high energy and active, while others are low energy and more sedentary. Dogs are born with certain energy levels, including very high, high, medium, and low; at the one extreme, the very high energy level dog is constantly on the move and likes to run, never seeming to lose energy. At the other extreme are dogs that don't seem to engage in or need as much physical activity and prefer to "rest" most of the time. Although energy levels are at times associated with certain breeds, even within a breed and in mixed-breeds individual energy levels vary. How we interact with different dogs depends in part on their energy level; this knowledge will help students better understand how people and animals interrelate and continue to set the foundation for thinking about others and developing empathy. It is also a helpful lesson when a family considers adopting a dog.

Key Words to Highlight:

High Energy, Low Energy, Discriminate, Balance, Complement, Compatible/Compatibility

SNAPSHOTS OF ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

Animal shelter staff interested in teaching students about animal welfare issues may use the following samples to prompt for discussion.



Animal Cruelty



Some people have said that the best way to measure a society is by examining the way in which it treats its animals. While many people treat their pets with love and consideration, others abuse or neglect their animals. Studies show that people who abuse animals are very likely to be violent toward other people, as well. Sometimes animal abuse is quite obvious: The animals might cower in fear or act aggressively when approached by their owners or they might be thin, injured, or have missing fur. Neglect is sometimes less recognizable. Leaving animals alone without food or water, chaining them in a yard, or keeping them outside during extremely hot or cold temperatures are all types of neglect. In some communities people report pets left alone in a car on a hot day. Do you know what can happen when dogs are left in a car? You can help fight cruelty against animals by setting a good example for others: If you have pets, make sure they are safe and that they have food, water, shelter, proper medical care, and exercise. Also, be aware and keep an eye out for abuse or neglect in your neighborhood. As responsible individuals, what else can we do?



Puppy Mills and Kitten Mills



Imagine a factory whose sole business is the production of great numbers of puppies or kittens, keeping costs low, profits high, and ignoring the quality of the “product” and the suffering of the animals themselves.

What you’ve just imagined is called a puppy or kitten mill. But chances are, you can’t begin to imagine the half of it. In recent years, thanks to media exposés and the tireless work of animal rescue groups, the public is beginning to learn about these places, where dogs and cats are housed in filthy, overcrowded conditions without adequate veterinary care, food, water, or sanitation. Experts estimate there are more than 5,000 such businesses in the U.S., most of them in the Midwest and the South. Not surprisingly, puppy/kitten mills are a multi-million dollar industry.

Just for a minute, consider the canines. Breeding dogs live their entire lives in chicken-wire cages stacked on top of each other to reduce waste cleanup. This crude arrangement causes injuries to paws and legs and leads to illness and infection from constant exposure to urine and feces. Female dogs are bred every time they go into heat, which is debilitating for the female and gradually produces smaller and less hardy litters. The puppies are taken from their mothers at five to six weeks, much sooner than is healthy, and sold to brokers who transport them across the country to pet shops. Unfortunately, many of the puppies do not reach their destinations alive. Those who make it to the pet shop window often suffer from chronic and genetic conditions due to bad breeding.

Meanwhile, back at the mill, breeder dogs, male and female, who reach the age of four years old are usually considered past their reproductive prime and are killed or sold at auctions for as little as a quarter to other backyard breeders who hope to get just one more litter from the suffering dogs. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of these animals are saved by rescue groups. And so the cycle continues: more dogs, more suffering, more profits. People who have rescued breeder dogs report that it sometimes can take a year or more for these traumatized animals to relax and allow themselves to be touched. Clearly, puppy mill owners don’t have much use for play and socialization.



Puppy Mills and Kitten Mills (cont'd)

The same scenario plays out at countless kitten mills across the country, although this branch of the industry has received much less attention and publicity.

You are probably wondering how such abuse can continue. Indeed, much of what goes on in pet mills is illegal. The Federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), passed in 1966, regulates most businesses that involve animals, including puppy and kitten mills. However, the standards defined by this law are minimal and would never be considered humane by most people. In addition, the law is a mess of loopholes. For example, the AWA says it's okay to keep a dog in a cage that is only six inches bigger than the dog in each direction. And it's also fine to do so for the dog's entire life. Lack of prosecution by the USDA, which is charged with enforcing this law, means that pet mill operators and their brokers can do pretty much as they please and get away with it.

The fact is we don't need more dogs and cats; there are established, responsible breeders in all 50 states for almost every breed you can name. Good breeders know and love their animals and take proper care of them, including finding responsible homes that can accommodate the specific needs of the breed.

Of course, the best place to find your next pet companion is at your local shelter. You may be surprised at how many purebred dogs and cats are awaiting adoption. They are sitting in shelters from coast to coast, right next to all those lovable mixed-breed dogs and adorable domestic short hairs!



These three Chihuahuas were born in a puppy mill without their front legs. This is an outcome of over breeding and one of the cruelties often found in puppy mills. Fortunately, these resilient dogs were rescued and fitted with wheels and adopted into loving homes, enabling them to lead happy and fulfilling lives.



Backyard Breeders: Buyer Beware!

Always visit your local animal shelter or rescue group before purchasing a purebred dog or cat. Shelters and rescue groups have a great selection of Mutt-i-grees® that will steal your heart.

However, there are established, responsible breeders in all 50 states for almost every breed you can name. Good breeders know and love their animals and take proper care of them, including finding responsible homes that can accommodate the specific needs of the breed. If you want to get a dog from a breeder, beware of backyard breeders.



Backyard breeders is a term that describes another example of irresponsible breeders. These are people who breed animals, often without registration. As is the case with puppy mills, dogs from backyard breeders are bred for looks with little regard to health.

Before purchasing a dog from a breeder, check the breeder's references. The breeder should be able to provide you with a list of satisfied clients. Visit the home or kennel of the breeder to make sure that the animals are well cared for and appear healthy. Make sure that there are not more dogs or cats than the breeder is able to care for properly. Proper care includes quality food, clean water, proper shelter from the heat and the cold as well as available veterinary care.

Ask to see the parents of the pet that you want to purchase. Breeding frequency should be based on the age and health of the mother dog. In general, dogs and cats under the age of one year should not be bred.

Visit the area where nursing mothers and puppies are kept. The area and the animals should be clean and the animals socialized, well fed, and warm with access to veterinary care as needed.

Make sure the breeder has knowledge about the pet you would like to purchase – breed characteristics, temperament, breed-specific health issues, etc., and can provide documentation on the lineage of any pet that is used for breeding.

Be prepared to fill out the breeder's application for the purchase of your new puppy or kitten. The breeder will want to make sure that you are ready for the responsibility of pet parenting and that the puppy or kitten that you select is right for you.

Read the purchase contract closely before buying the dog or cat. Confirm that the puppy or kitten has been properly vaccinated and that your responsibilities and the breeder's responsibilities to the new pet are clearly defined. Confirm that the breeder will take the puppy or kitten back if you are unable to care for it. Make sure that your new pet is spayed or neutered if it is not show quality.

And remember, don't purchase a dog or cat from the Internet or from a pet store! More often than not, these animals come from cruel and inhumane mills or from irresponsible backyard breeders. And of course, don't buy a pet without visiting the local shelter first.





Pet Overpopulation

One of the problems we face as a society is pet overpopulation; there are just too many homeless pets and often not enough shelter space to keep them all. As a result, many unwanted puppies and kittens are neglected or abused or they are euthanized in some animal shelters because there are too few loving homes.

Making every effort to find a loving home for each pet is one way to address the problem. Another way to help is to prevent unwanted births, which is why spaying and neutering companion animals is so vitally important.

Spaying and neutering are routine, affordable surgeries that prevent a dog or cat from having puppies or kittens. Some shelters provide these surgeries for free or for a minimal fee. Increasing numbers of shelters are known as “no kill” because they will not euthanize pets but will instead care for them until they are adopted. The issue of pet overpopulation can be overwhelming and is a continuous challenge.

Did you know that the cost of spaying and neutering a pet is less than the cost of raising puppies or kittens for one year? Can you think of ways to promote awareness of this issue?



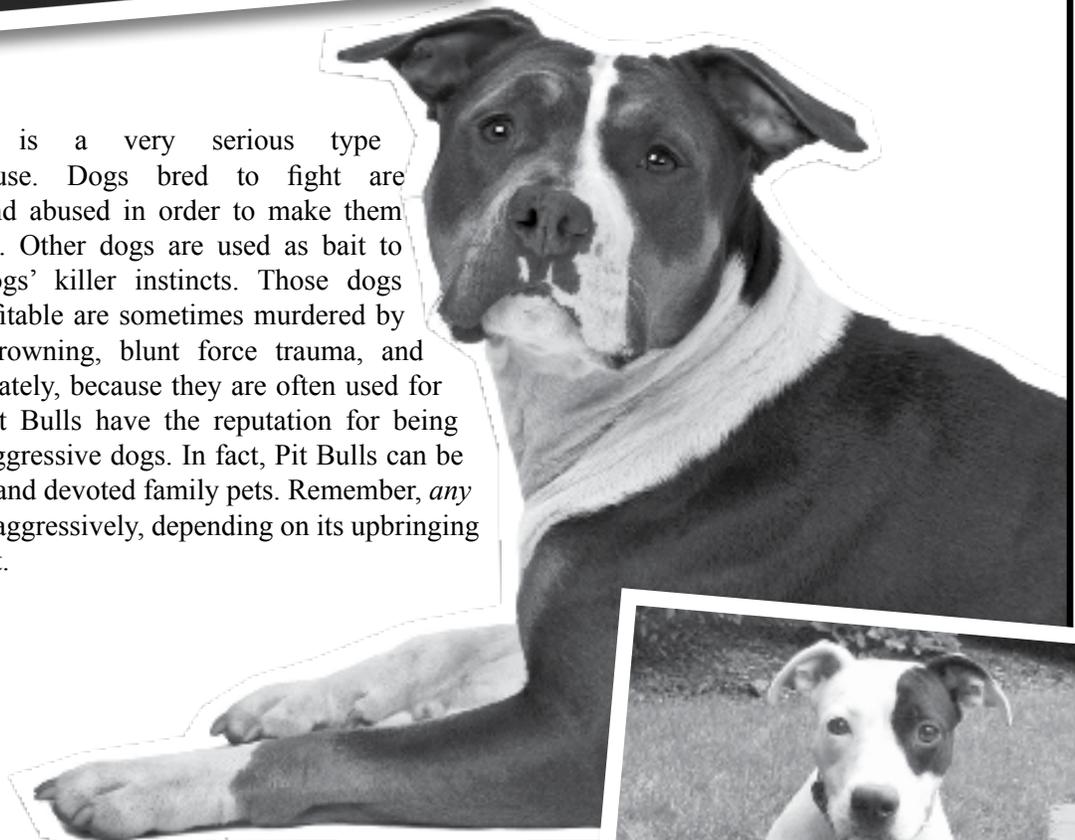


Pit bulls are devoted family pets, but some have been abused and trained to fight even though it is against their instincts to do so.

Dog Fighting

Wild dogs within a pack do not usually fight one another; it goes against the pack mentality. It does not benefit the pack for one (or two) dogs to be injured; this is why dogs do not usually fight in the wild. Unfortunately, there are some people who work against dogs' natural instincts and arrange dog fights as a form of entertainment. Dog fighting is a type of gambling in which dogs are forced to fight one another, sometimes to the death. Pit Bulls are often used for fighting. Pit Bull is a nickname for several breeds, such as American Pit Bull Terrier and American Staffordshire Terrier. They share the same nickname, but they don't look alike.

Dog fighting is a very serious type of animal abuse. Dogs bred to fight are often starved and abused in order to make them "better" fighters. Other dogs are used as bait to test fighting dogs' killer instincts. Those dogs that are not profitable are sometimes murdered by electrocution, drowning, blunt force trauma, and worse. Unfortunately, because they are often used for dog fighting, Pit Bulls have the reputation for being violent and/or aggressive dogs. In fact, Pit Bulls can be extremely loyal and devoted family pets. Remember, *any* dog can behave aggressively, depending on its upbringing and environment.





Dogs in Entertainment

Did you know that movies about dogs can actually influence the population and operation of animal shelters? At times, when a movie featuring a certain breed of dog becomes popular, many shelters see an influx of this breed of dog – people have sought out this certain breed due to its popularity and the way it was portrayed in the movie, only to realize that the breed is not a good match for their family. It is essential when making the decision to add a dog to your pack to be sure that the dog matches your family’s energy level. You want your dog to be a member of your pack for a long time.

An example of one movie that has had an impact on decisions to acquire a dog is *101 Dalmatians*. Dalmatians – known as firehouse dogs – require a lot of patience. Disregarding rules about finding out which type of dog would best fit their lifestyles, some people purchased Dalmatians after seeing the movie, only to give up on them shortly after. Many of the dogs ended up in shelters. A more recent example is the movie *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*. A few months after the movie’s debut, thousands of Chihuahuas were dropped off at animal shelters on the West Coast. The problem caused overcrowding and required the assistance of shelters in other parts of the country that came to the rescue, offering their space and trying to find homes for the dogs.



Stray Animals

All stray animals have stories to tell, but sadly, they can't share them with us. Some may be injured, sick, or pregnant. Others are unsterilized and looking for a mate. Still others have been accidentally separated from their owners. For example, dogs and cats often become disoriented and run away when families move or are on vacation. Sometimes loud noises or odd activity frighten pets and cause them to take off. For example, many animals run away around the Fourth of July because of the crackle and boom of fireworks. Others don't like Halloween, with all those odd-looking strangers invading their territory. And then there are families who begin construction on their homes without considering the effect all



that pounding and in-and-out-the-door foot traffic might have on a fearful housecat or a sensitive dog.

People sometimes abandon pets, especially when economic times get hard and the cost of pet food and vet care becomes a luxury they cannot afford. Some families move

and simply leave their animals behind. Lost or abandoned dogs will usually try to find their owners, or they will stay close to what used to be home, despite being alone in the world for the first time in their lives.

But not all stray animals are lost or abandoned. Some people let their dogs and cats roam, and what looks like a stray is really a pet whose people are irresponsible and simply don't realize — or don't care — about the dangers and problems they encounter on the street. Other strays may be feral animals who were born in the wild.



Feral Cats

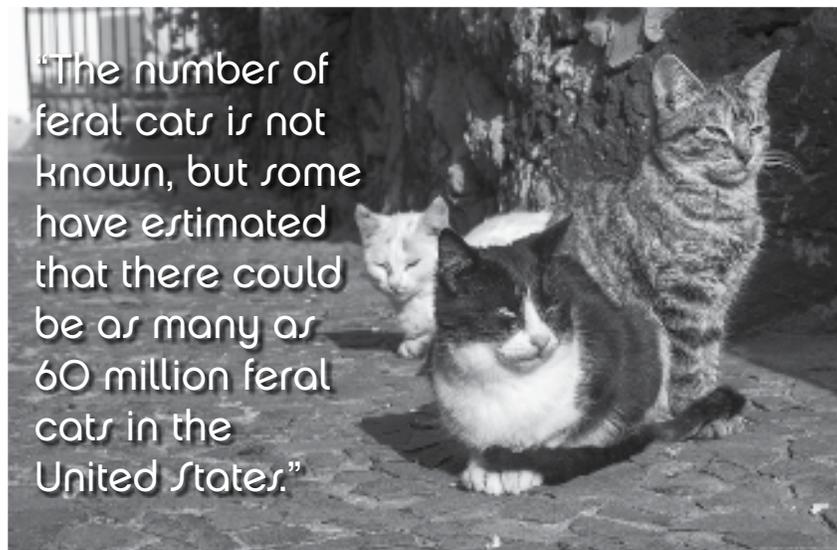
Not all cats live in homes. Some are feral cats. Their origin is the same as the domestic house cat, but they live outdoors and avoid human company because they have never been socialized. As a result, they are often fearful and distrustful of people and they don't let anyone come close to them. Domestic house cats – even those who are not very social – do not fear people, and have come to enjoy the comforts of a home.

The number of feral cats is not known, but some have estimated that there could be as many as 60 million feral cats in the United States. Feral cats may live alone but often are found in groups called feral colonies, since they occupy a specific area together. Today, there is considerable concern for feral cats as well as increasing interest in finding ways to help them and to control their growing numbers.

Feral cat populations present their own unique problems, and many national and local groups have emerged in recent years to try to deal with them. The most common approach is called TNR—Trap, Neuter, Release. Volunteers set traps for the cats, work with low-cost spay/neuter programs to have the cats vaccinated and spayed or neutered, and then, with community cooperation, release the animals



back into their original locations, knowing that, thanks to spay/neuter, population growth is under control.



Volunteers then monitor the cats, making sure they are fed, healthy, and safe. In the process, they often discover that some of these feral cats are actually friendly and adoptable, giving the felines a second chance at life, this time as a pampered lap cat.



Foster Programs

Foster care is an opportunity to care for an animal that's not yet ready for adoption. It's an alternative for caring individuals who can't make a long-term commitment but still want to help rescue animals. Fostering an animal from a shelter can be a truly rewarding experience! As a foster parent you are helping an animal in need, and you're also providing the added space needed to bring another animal to the shelter – that's saving another life!

Which pets might need foster care?

- Kittens and puppies that are too young for adoption
- Cats and dogs nursing litters that need a quiet home
- Pets recovering from surgery, illness, or injury
- Senior pets or pets with special needs

Check with a local animal shelter to see if they offer a foster program. If so, learn about the fostering process: How much time do you need to commit to fostering a pet? What are the qualifications to be a foster parent? How old do you have to be to foster a pet? Is your family eligible? If the local shelter doesn't currently have a foster program, perhaps you can help start one! If you find out that there is interest in starting a foster care program, how would you proceed? What would be the first few steps in the process?





Senior Pets

Most of the time when we walk into an animal shelter, we are immediately drawn to puppies and kittens. Why do you think this is? Research shows that humans are hardwired to connect with baby animals because they look so much like human babies (large heads, soft eyes, small bodies). While puppies and kittens are often the most desired animals for potential adopters, it's important to remember that older dogs and cats also need to be rescued. Older pets can make great companions! Remember, all animals at a shelter are deserving of a loving home, but because they are not as popular as young pets, older cats and dogs deserve special consideration.



When choosing a dog from a shelter, adopters must consider their circumstances – do they have time and space for a dog, young or old? Do their lifestyles match a specific type of dog? For example, dog owners should have the same or higher energy level as their dogs. A potential adopter who has a full-time job and no energy to play with a dog might consider a low-energy dog. A high energy individual may be better with a puppy that needs time and patience during the training period. Older dogs may be low energy, but still require devotion and patience. What are some benefits of adopting an older pet? (Already house trained, already know how to walk on a leash...) What are some ways to make senior dogs more desirable? (Keeping them well-groomed, putting them in the front of the shelter...)

Adopting a senior dog is one way to help. Another is to promote the adoption of senior pets. Pets can be lifesavers for the elderly. They provide companionship and unconditional love for senior citizens who may feel lonely or isolated. In fact, some animal shelters have programs that connect senior dogs with senior owners. It seems logical that senior dogs would be a good match for senior citizens. Does your local shelter offer a program like this? If not, how could you work with the shelter to implement this program? Before establishing such a program or considering other ways to promote senior pet adoptions, consider conducting research to establish the feasibility of the approach. For example, conduct a survey among senior citizens asking them if they would consider adopting a senior pet.





Sanctuaries

In addition to local shelters, there are other places of rehabilitation and refuge for animals where they are cared for in a place of permanent residence. Sometimes called dog sanctuaries, these centers differ from shelters or rescue organizations in that they're often considered to be permanent homes for the animals that live there. They may not offer adoption programs and may have limited visitation opportunities. Sanctuaries must be non-profit organizations and require zoning permits. Severely handicapped dogs for whom foster care is not an option may be candidates for a sanctuary, as are dogs who have been rescued from abusive situations, such as dog fighting rings. What other types of dogs might live there? Are there dog sanctuaries or refuge centers in your area? What are some of the rules and regulations these places must follow?





“When a cat is declawed, a veterinarian surgically removes his claws by amputating the end bones of his toes.”

To Declaw or Not?

Cats have a natural urge to scratch. Scratching helps cats stretch and allows them to shed old claws and sharpen new ones. If you don't have a scratching post, chances are your cat will turn to your furniture or carpet to satisfy his urge to scratch. Some cat owners don't recognize that this behavior is part of a cat's instinct and may believe that the cat is purposely destroying their new couch or chair out of spite, thus causing the owner to consider declawing the cat.

A cat's claws are crucial to his well-being. Claws can help a cat climb to safety and stretch as well as provide psychological comfort through kneading. When a cat is declawed, a veterinarian surgically removes his claws by amputating the end bones of his toes. This would be equivalent to losing the entire tip of each of your fingers at the first knuckle. Recovery takes a few weeks, but even after the surgical wounds have healed, the cat may suffer long-term physical and psychological effects. Although it's common in the United States, declawing is illegal or considered inhumane in many countries around the world, including England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Brazil, Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, and the Netherlands.

Declawing cats is a divisive topic: Some people believe it's cruel and unnecessary, while others think it is a harmless fix for unwanted scratching. What do you think?





Breed Discrimination

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) or Breed Discrimination Legislation (BDL) is the practice of using laws to restrict and regulate dog ownership based on the physical appearance or description of one's dog. This legislation comes from the belief that certain dog breeds are more vicious than others. These breeds include Pit Bulls (American Staffordshire Terriers or Staffordshire Bull Terriers), German Shepherds, Dobermans, Rottweilers, and Mastiffs, among others. Hundreds of cities currently endorse this legislation and many have banned selected breeds altogether. Other cities automatically label certain breeds as dangerous, regardless of their behavior, and require owners to follow strict procedures, such as muzzling dogs in public. Some insurance companies even deny coverage to applicants based on a dog's breed, despite the fact that there is no evidence that this legislation makes communities safer for people or companion animals.

The truth is that these so-called "bully breeds" are often very loyal and intelligent and are actually great family dogs. Unfortunately, some people treat them harshly to bring out aggression. Hence, they have an unfair reputation that sometimes causes people to judge them based on their breed name rather than their personality. Remember, *any* dog can behave aggressively; it all depends on its upbringing and environment.

Do you oppose breed specific legislation? Why is categorizing certain dog breeds as "bad" based solely on physical appearance unfair? How is this related to the way we might treat other students? How might a dog with the reputation of being aggressive/vicious/dangerous suffer? What can we do to help prevent breed discrimination in our community?



RECOMMENDED READING



Recommended Reading: Books for Pre-K and Kindergarten

Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle by Major Brian Dennis, Kirby Larson & Mary Nethery

Major Brian Dennis discovered Nubs, a stray dog whose ears had been chopped, while serving with the US Marines in the Middle East. When he leaves Nubs behind, the dog travels 70 miles across a desert to follow him. Major Dennis eventually raises enough money to ship Nubs to America, where he now lives. Both children and adults will be touched by this heartwarming story of love and devotion.

Dewey: There's a Cat in the Library! by Vicki Myron & Bret Witter/illus. by Steve James

Abandoned in a library book drop slot in the dead of winter, this remarkable kitten miraculously endured the coldest night of the year. Dewey Readmore Books, as he became known, quickly embraced his home inside Spencer's public library, charming the struggling small town's library-goers, young and old. As word of Dewey's winning tail, or rather his tale, spread, the library cat gained worldwide fame as a symbol of hope and proof positive that one small cat could change a town, one reader at a time.

How Rocket Learned to Read by Tad Hills

Rocket the dog learns to read with help from a tiny, yellow bird. When the bird leaves for the winter, Rocket continues practicing. And when his teacher returns the following spring, Rocket greets her with excitement. Parents and teachers can use this book to encourage reluctant readers. The animated illustrations can be used to promote discussion of body language and facial expressions.

Saving Audie: A Pit Bull Puppy Gets a Second Chance
by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent/photos by William Muñoz

Audie, one of more than 50 dogs rescued from Michael Vick's dog fighting ring, shows us that dogs are amazingly resilient. Many people believed these dogs were damaged forever, but thanks to some animal advocates, these victims got a second chance. Both children and adults will appreciate this heartwarming story of survival, overcoming adversity, and second chances – despite his horrible past, Audie has become a Canine Good Citizen and even helps train other dogs! Parents and teachers can use this book to prompt for discussion of breed stereotypes and to discuss resiliency. The book contains full color photos, a Vick case timeline, a list of further reading (books, websites), and information about pit bulls.

Recommended Reading:
Books for Grades 1 – 3

Morris and Buddy: The Story of the First Seeing Eye Dog
by Becky Hall / illustrated by Doris Ettlinger

This true story tells the tale of Morris Frank, a blind man, and his seeing-eye dog, Buddy. Morris travels from America to Switzerland to find a dog who could help him to become more independent. Hall details the challenges Morris encounters as he trains Buddy and learns to trust him with his life. Includes a bibliography and an afterward with captioned photos that explain what happened to Morris and Buddy upon their return to America. Parents and teachers can use this story to introduce the concept of service dogs to children.

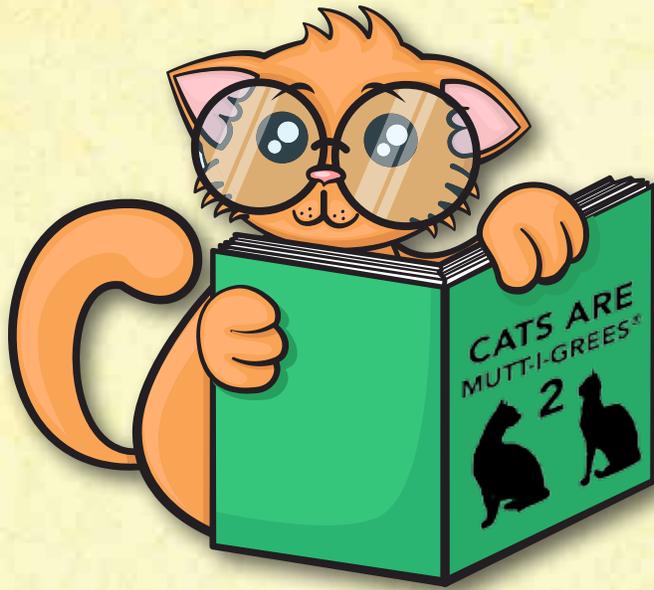
My Dog: A Kids' Guide to Keeping a Happy & Healthy Pet
by Michael J. Rosen

This guidebook is a great reference for both children and adults. It can be used by dog owners as a customizable "owner's manual" or it can be used to educate non-owners about the responsibilities of owning a dog. The guidebook covers everything from the basics of handling, feeding, grooming, and training to dog history and fun facts. Parents and teachers can use the "How to Speak Dog" section to prompt for discussion of body language and canine communication. The book also includes a field guide to 75 popular dog breeds, illustrated with full-color photos and breed facts.

The True-or-False Book of Dogs
**by Patricia Lauber/illustrated
by Rosalyn Schanzer**

This book explores the history of the relationship between dogs and humans by providing thirteen true-or-false statements and information that allows readers to determine the answers. Statements include: "Dogs hear more than we do," "Dogs see what we see," and "A dog's body may tell of its feelings." Teachers can use this book to supplement Dog Dialog lessons or to prompt discussion about the similarities/differences between dogs and people.





Recommended Reading: Books for Grades 4 – 6

Listen!

by Stephanie S. Tolan

This award-winning novel tells the story of a twelve-year-old's mission to tame a dog who's been abused. Told from the point of view of Charley, a young girl coping with a recent accident and the death of her mother, Tolan's novel highlights the deep bond between children and dogs. Teachers can use this book to promote discussion of resiliency and bouncing back from difficult situations, as well as setting and achieving goals.

Everything for a Dog

by Ann M. Martin

This companion to Martin's 2005 novel, *A Dog's Life: The Autobiography of a Stray*, tells the story of a stray dog looking for a good home. The book is told from the perspectives of Henry, who desperately wants the companionship of a dog; Charlie, who is dealing with the aftermath of his brother's recent death; and Bone, a stray dog. Students will relate to the human characters and will enjoy reading chapters told from the dog's point of view. Teachers can use this book to promote discussion of empathy, feelings, and the benefits and responsibilities of dog ownership.

How to Steal a Dog

by Barbara O'Connor

After Georgina's family was evicted from their apartment, she began living in a car with her mother and brother. Her mother works two jobs, but still doesn't have enough money for a new home. Georgina is embarrassed that the kids at school might find out, so she thinks of a plan to make some money. In the hopes of collecting a \$500 reward, she decides to steal a dog. In this touching story, O'Connor highlights the hardships of growing up in unfortunate circumstances. In the end, Georgina's plan unravels and her conscience gets the best of her. Teachers can use the themes from this book to prompt discussion of ethics/morals and overcoming adversity.

Hate That Cat: A Novel

by Sharon Creech

A follow-up to Creech's verse novel, *Love That Dog*, this book shows Jack's relationships with his teacher, his parents, poetry, and, most importantly, with the cats in his life. Like *Love That Dog*, it comprises a series of poems written to his teacher, Miss Stretchberry, over the course of an academic year. Teachers can use this book to encourage creative writing and poetry about animals in the classroom.

Recommended Reading: Books for Grades 7 & 8

Racing in the Rain: My Life as a Dog

by Garth Stein

Students will enjoy this adaptation for young readers of Stein's New York Times bestseller, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. Told from the perspective of Enzo (the dog) as he reminisces on his life with Denny (a racecar driver), the book focuses on bouncing back from setbacks and overcoming adversity. Teachers can use this novel to prompt for discussion of resiliency, optimism, and empathy.

Recommended Reading: Books for Grades 7 & 8 (cont'd)

Marley: A Dog Like No Other by John Grogan

In this true story, an energetic golden retriever, Marley, teaches the Grogan family what really matters in life: loyalty, courage, and devotion. Parents and teachers can use this book to complement Dog Dialog lessons about responsibility and to prompt discussion about the death of a pet.

A Mango-Shaped Space by Wendy Mass

Mia Winchell has synesthesia, the mingling of perceptions whereby a person can see sounds, smell colors, or taste shapes. Forced to reveal her condition, she must look to herself to develop an understanding and appreciation of her gift in this coming-of-age novel. Educators can use this book to prompt discussion of grief and loss, as well as accepting others' unique characteristics.

The Mutt Book: Decoding Your Dog's Heritage by David Alderton

This guide promotes the desirability of mixed-breed Mutt-i-grees®. Teachers and students can use this book to determine a dog's genealogy by focusing on the basic characteristics of each of a dog's features - its ears, coat, muzzle, paws, and tail - and basic habits.

Recommended Reading: Books for Grades 9 - 12

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

This award-winning book is told from the perspective of Christopher John Francis Boone, a 15 year-old autistic boy trying to solve a neighborhood mystery. Readers will identify with the real-life situations that Christopher faces and will note that his story may not be so different from their own. Teachers can use this book to promote lessons on empathy and awareness.

The Lost Dogs: Michael Vick's Dogs and Their Tale of Rescue and Redemption by Jim Gorant

This chilling investigation into professional football player Michael Vick's dog fighting operation provides insight into the horror of animal abuse. Gorant describes the torture and execution of Vick's dogs in painful detail, while at the same time highlighting the struggle to rehabilitate the rescued dogs. Teachers can use this book to prompt for discussion of animal abuse and negative breed stereotypes and to discuss decision-making and consequences.





Recommended Reading: Books for Grades 9 - 12 (cont'd)

A Street Cat Named Bob: And How He Saved My Life by James Bowen

"We are all given second chances every day of our lives, but we don't usually take them. Then I met Bob." James Bowen was a homeless musician, performing on the streets of London to survive. But the moment he met an injured stray cat with ginger fur and big green eyes, his life began to change. Together James and Bob the cat faced the world - and won. A true 'tail' of love and friendship to make you smile!

Recommended Reading: Books for Educators

Dogs Don't Bite When a Growl Will Do: What Your Dog Can Teach You About Living a Happy Life by Matt Weinstein and Luke Barber

This book of collective wisdom shows how humans can benefit from the lessons dogs can teach us. The brief chapters describe short scenarios highlighting what we can learn from dogs, including "Dogs Love to Play," "Dogs Don't Get Stuck in the Negative," "Dogs Don't Care About Breed," and "Dogs Go With the Flow." Teachers can use this book to prompt discussion about the various lessons we can learn from dogs.

Dogs & Devotion: A Celebration of the Bond between Dogs and Their People by The Monks of New Skete

The Monks of New Skete, experienced dog breeders and best-selling authors of numerous books on dog training, remind us of the heartwarming lessons that we can learn from dogs in this inspirational book of photographs and meditations. The Monks believe that our canine companions have a lot to teach us about how to live and each meditation reinforces the deep connection between dogs and humans. Written in easy-to-read style with large photos throughout, it is a wonderful addition to any dog lover's library. Teachers can use this book to promote discussion of the lessons we can learn from dogs.

Barking Buddha: Simple Soul Stretches for Yogi and Dogi by Brenda Bryan/photos by Bev Sparks

Yoga teacher Brenda Bryan explains how to practice "doga" – partnering with a dog for stretches, massages, and thoughtful meditations – in this unique exercise program for both you and your dog. Bryan explains that dogs can be enriching yoga partners because of their pack mentality, their emotional healing abilities, and their desire for human companionship. Meditations on gratitude, unconditional love, joy, and inspiration are coupled with explanatory photos in this instructional book. Parents and teachers can use this book to enhance their own yoga practice or to teach children basic yoga positions, both at home and in the classroom.

Walk a Hound, Lose a Pound: How You and Your Dog Can Lose Weight, Stay Fit, and Have Fun Together by Phil Zeltzman and Rebecca A. Johnson

Researchers have maintained that dog ownership is good for your physical and emotional health; dogs motivate us to stay active and alert. Walking a dog is not only the best way to bond with your pet, it's also a time for meditation and reflection. Students and teachers can use this book to learn about exercise and nutritional requirements for dogs and to promote physical fitness in both people and pets.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND MUTT-I-GREES®

In the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and its companion publications, we bridge the contexts of humane education and emotional intelligence/social and emotional learning, while also enhancing children and educators' awareness of relevant humane issues and highlighting the notion that adopting a shelter pet is a responsible choice.

The first social and emotional learning theme - **Achieving Awareness** - seeks to facilitate children's sense of self and awareness of their unique physical, behavioral, and emotional traits. Children engage in activities and have an opportunity to develop a realistic self-perception by identifying both strengths and weaknesses and enhancing their ability to identify and appropriately verbalize wants and needs. Understanding oneself is a prerequisite to understanding others and such self-awareness will enhance appreciation of both strengths and limitations. **We focus on diversity – that each one of us is unique – by highlighting Mutt-i-grees®. Teaching these skills within the context of Mutt-i-grees® can help children acquire an understanding of the special and endearing traits of animals awaiting adoption at a shelter.**



The second theme - **Finding Feelings** - aims to foster children's ability to identify, manage, and communicate emotions. Children will gain an increased understanding of the range of emotions that they and others may experience and how these feelings manifest physically and behaviorally. Children will also learn techniques for handling intense emotions and related strategies to calm and soothe, as well as appropriate ways to convey emotions. Recognizing, accurately labeling, constructively managing, and expressing emotions are key skills that provide a foundation for successful personal and professional relationships. Moreover, these skills enhance children's ability to handle stress, control impulses, and solve problems. **The various emotions expressed by Mutt-i-grees® (e.g., sadness when in a shelter, happiness at the possibility of being adopted) and the impulsivity and calming techniques used with puppies and kittens also provide opportunities for teaching children.**



Lessons comprising the third theme - **Encouraging Empathy** - seek to enhance children's ability for perspective taking, capacity for empathy, and appreciation of diversity. Children learn to use a variety of verbal and non-verbal cues to identify how others feel and gain a greater understanding of the link between thoughts, feelings, and actions. Children also learn how their actions can impact how others feel, how to express remorse, to make amends, and to ask for and offer help. The ability to acknowledge the thoughts and feelings of others

(particularly others different from oneself), is a critical pre-requisite for establishing and maintaining healthy relationships.

Moreover, the capacity to effectively convey an apology and provide support to others is necessary for establishing constructive communication and developing trust and compassion. Traditional humane education efforts focus on teaching children empathy by teaching them about animals' needs. **We extend this instruction by using Mutt-i-grees® to show how our actions and behaviors have an impact on and can make a difference in the lives of animals and people. Students have opportunities to play fun games such as creating skits on how a Mutt-i-gree® might feel or identifying how the room – or person – looks from a Mutt-i-gree®'s perspective.**

The fourth theme - **Cultivating Cooperation** focuses on enhancing children's ability to establish and maintain cooperative and caring relationships. Children learn appropriate ways to engage with others, the characteristics of a trusting relationship, and to value friends and companions. Through lesson content and activities, children learn to work effectively as members of a team. **Several activities are used to demonstrate how the relationship between children and pets involves mutual trust, respect, and affection. Students also work in teams to develop posters and other materials promoting pet adoptions.**

The final theme - **Dealing with Decisions** - aims to enhance children's ability to solve problems constructively, resolve conflicts, and eventually acquire the ability to make ethical, informed decisions. Children learn that decisions have outcomes and consequences for both themselves and others and will begin to take responsibility for their actions by acknowledging these consequences. **Concern for Mutt-i-grees® is included in activities that ask students to think through their options: what would they do if they see a dog tied to a tree without even a water bowl? Or, what would they do if they came across a stray dog or cat in their neighborhood?**



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT...



Internships/Youth Programs

If you have the space and staff to accommodate students, consider inviting local schools and youth groups to visit your shelter and participate in on-site mentorship programs or on-site internships.

Mutt-i-grees® Mentorship Programs are opportunities for teens with a particular interest (medical, pet behavior, grooming, training, shelter operations, etc.) to be paired with one staff member or volunteer who becomes their mentor for the duration of the mentorship. The mentor helps the student develop life skills and experience success through setting and achieving goals. The student is able to cultivate the one-on-one relationship with a mentor, setting the stage to build a trusting, respectful relationship.

Mutt-i-grees® Internships can showcase shelter pets and address the following:

- Why animals are rescued
- How animals are rescued (students may accompany staff on a rescue)
- Where animals are rescued from (e.g. puppy mills, over-crowded shelters, rescue groups, national disasters)
- How the animals are nurtured and readied for adoption (medical, training, grooming)
- The adoption process (matching the owner with the pet that's right for them, checking adopter references)

Participating student-interns are also asked to reflect on their feelings before, during, and after the experience. This opportunity gives students an inside look at the world of animals and is an experiential opportunity to integrate social and emotional learning with humane education.

Mobile Adoption Program

Over a decade ago, the Animal League created the first Mobile Adoption Unit to bring pets out of the shelter and onto Main Street, where they could be seen by many more potential adopters. Mobile adoption units generate tremendous awareness of shelter pets:

- Potential adopters can quickly see how wonderful shelter pets can be
- People can adopt pets without having to visit the shelter
- Making shelter pets more accessible can reduce pet store purchases – which is important since so many pet stores are supplied by puppy mills – large-scale, cruel and inhumane breeding operations
- The units allow you to save more animals



Mutt-i-grees® Registry

The Mutt-i-grees® Registry is one of several important manifestations of the Mutt-i-grees® Movement. By registering your shelter adoptions, the status of the shelter pet will be elevated. Proud adopters can register their rescued pets, receive a certificate, and generate awareness of the importance of rescuing from their local shelter. Shelters and adopters will have the opportunity for Rescue Rewards – free items and discounts, such as pet insurance, pet magazine subscriptions, wellness exams, periodic pet care content and more – that are exclusive only to adopters that have Mutt-i-grees® Registry papers.



Pet Adoptathon®

Pet Adoptathon® Month is a worldwide adoption initiative to raise awareness of the plight of orphaned pets. In 1995, Animal League America created the first Pet Adoptathon® with a simple yet profoundly important goal: saving the lives of homeless animals and finding them permanent loving homes. Since then, over 2,500 shelter partners and rescue groups around the globe joined together to make Pet Adoptathon® a phenomenal success. Nearly a half million animals, to date, have been saved through Pet Adoptathon®, the largest cooperative adoption event in the world. Participating shelter partners receive marketing materials and website and social media promotion.

Puppy and Kitten Cam

Animal lovers are encouraged to save a life and adopt a pet via a streaming video feed that features a sampling of many beautiful and healthy shelter puppies and kittens that are looking for permanent and loving homes. Animal League America's weekly Pet Nursery UStream feed airs live every Thursday from 11:00am – 2:00pm. Viewers are treated to the joyful and entertaining footage of puppies and kittens playing, exploring, and interacting with their mothers. Try this at your shelter as a way to encourage adoptions!

School-Shelter Partnerships

The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum promotes school-shelter partnerships in various ways:

- Encouraging students to become advocates and ambassadors for homeless animals
- Asking students to write letters to local legislators on behalf of Mutt-i-grees®
- Encouraging students and families to visit and/or volunteer at animal shelters

Additional suggestions for school-shelter partnerships can be found on our website: <http://education.muttigrees.org/>.

Tour for Life®

Each year, Animal League America's Mobile Rescue & Adoption Units hit the road for Tour for Life®, a life-saving nationwide journey covering more than 20,000 miles to partner with shelters and rescue groups across the country in order to bring attention to and find homes for the wonderful homeless animals in their care. Participating shelter partners receive marketing materials and website and social media promotion.





NOTES





www.education.muttigrees.org

An initiative of The Pet Savers Foundation, the program development arm of North Shore Animal League America.
Developed in collaboration with Yale University School of the 21st Century.