



CREATING CALM, CONFIDENT, CARING KIDS



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Creating Calm, Confident, Caring Kids: The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum

Children and animals have a natural affinity for one another.

Evidence shows that both derive many benefits from their interactions. The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum draws on this resiliency research, social and emotional learning and human-animal interaction to guide our program, which has two goals: enhancing children's resilience and social and emotional competence and promoting awareness of the desirability of shelter pets, referred to as Mutt-i-grees®. Our program reaches children beginning at a young age and provides opportunities for them to learn to care about themselves, other people, and animals.

The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum is a collaboration of North Shore Animal League America and Yale University's School of the 21st Century. The two organizations, one concerned with the welfare of companion animals and the other with the education and social and emotional development of children, have written a unique curriculum that supports the growth of calm, confident, and caring kids while creating a more humane future for all. The program is offered in schools, libraries, and other settings where children and families come together.



Awareness.

What Motivates Us

The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum addresses two sad realities:

- The large numbers of children who attend school each day, weighed down by negative experiences at school or at home.
- The plight of homeless pets awaiting adoption, millions of them euthanized each year in shelters that lack sufficient space.

Our Program Model

Every aspect of the Mutt-i-grees Curriculum reinforces the dual focus of our program. Children learn about shelter pets while also acquiring skills that support their ability to cope with stress, attain self-confidence and empathy, and learn to collaborate and make informed decisions. Each session includes an educational/developmental objective, with hands-on activities, books, and games focusing on shelter pets.



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How Mutt-i-grees Works

We offer the Mutt-i-grees Curriculum for Grades Pre-K through Grade 12. The lessons are organized into five themes that correspond to children's social and emotional skills:

- **Achieving Awareness**
- **Finding Feelings**
- **Encouraging Empathy**
- **Cultivating Cooperation**
- **Dealing with Decisions**

This sample packet will focus on Achieving Awareness. It contains a complete lesson that you can share with your students with step by step instructions. Each lesson plan follows a similar structure in which there is a clear objective and rationale for each session and includes materials, worksheets and hands-on activities. Plus, if you purchase the complete curriculum, there is a digital version of the curriculum that includes interactive materials such as videos, presentations and online activities.

Feelings. Empathy. Cooperation.



Effective for Special-Needs Kids

The Curriculum has proven extremely effective for special-needs students and those on the autism spectrum, providing a means for a more direct and meaningful connection to their environments. In several schools, educators provided alternative education students (with behavior and academic problems) with opportunities to work hands-on with shelter animals, feeding them, grooming them, and promoting their adoption. They report that the experience transforms students within several months; they return to regular classrooms and continue their education with classmates.

Praise from Teachers and Administrators

"I've always considered the Mutt-i-grees Curriculum an asset because it meets the social and emotional needs of the students. But when I saw the impact of actually incorporating dogs and puppies into the classroom, a light bulb went off."

Principal Terri Ahearn - Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Children already have a natural love and curiosity about animals and the curriculum draws upon that love to help transfer those feelings to other children."

Camy Bankemper, Program Coordinator - Cold Spring, KY

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LESSON	1.1 Me and my Mutt-i-gree®
Objective	Children will receive an overview of the Curriculum and learn about the unique traits of Mutt-i-grees®. Children will also identify similarities and differences among people and dogs.
Rationale	In addition to gaining appreciation of the unique qualities of Mutt-i-grees®, children will realize that they, too, are unique.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® Puppet (or substitute your own) • Crayons, paint, markers • Paper lunch bags or paper plates • Construction paper cut into shapes such as ears, eyes, tail • Puppet templates (included in this PDF)
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Similar • Different
Introduction	<p>Over the next few weeks/months, we are going to be learning about ourselves—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 going to be learning about dogs. We are going to be learning about a special type of dog called a Mutt-i-gree®. Mutt-i-grees® are often a mixture of many different dog breeds. Just like people, dogs come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. 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 a boy or a girl? What is your dog’s name? Teacher can also share information about his/her own dog if he/she has one.</p> <p>There are lots of different kinds of dogs. Mutt-i-grees® are dogs that have a wonderful mixture of colors and fur, sizes and shapes. We have a special friend, Mutt-i-gree® Puppet, who is going to help us learn. Bring out Mutt-i-gree® Puppet and let the children see and touch him. Together we can pick a name for our class Mutt-i-gree®. Engage students in choosing a name (teacher may prompt children to consider Mutt-i-gree’s® features, such as color, size, fur when selecting a name).</p>
Discussion	<p>See Readings and Resources for suggested book and discussion prompts.</p> <p>Today, we are going to talk about the parts of a Mutt-i-gree® and how people and dogs have some of the same parts and some different parts. Can you name the body parts of a dog? Do we have some of the same body parts as a dog? (eyes, ears, teeth, mouth) Do we have some different body parts than a dog? (dogs have tails, four legs, paws) Share photos of dogs and ask children to name each body part. Ask/tell what that body part is used for and if children have the same part or the same number of that particular part.</p>



<p>Learning by Doing</p>	<p>Now each of you is going to create your very own Mutt-i-gree® Puppet. Assist children in creating their own Mutt-i-gree® using the sample templates on the Mutt-i-gree® website and various art supplies. Once completed, ask children to name their Mutt-i-grees® and share them with other students in the class. More advanced students can be asked to write their name a/o the name of their Mutt-i-gree® on the puppets.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<p>Today we learned about Mutt-i-grees®—Mutt-i-grees® are a wonderful combination of different kinds of dogs. Every Mutt-i-gree® is different and that is what makes each one of them special. We also talked about how we have some of the same body parts as dogs, but we also have some different body parts. We were able to create our very own Mutt-i-grees® and we chose a name for Mutt-i-gree® Puppet. From now on we will be learning with [name selected by class].</p>



OTHER RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

<p>Readings and Resources</p>	<p><i>Meet Biscuit</i> (part of the Biscuit series) by Alyssa Satin Capucilli Ask children how Biscuit helped pick her own name. Ask children about the other names Biscuit’s owner considered and whether they have other ideas for a name that reflects Biscuit’s personality a/o looks. <i>Before You Were Mine</i> by Maribeth Boelts and David Walker <i>Martha Speaks: Shelter Dog Blues</i> by Susan Meddaugh <i>“Let’s Get a Pup!” Said Kate</i> by Bob Graham <i>It’s Raining Pups and Dogs!</i> by Jeanne Prevost/illus. Amelia Hansen</p> <p>Additional Readings and Resources can be found online: http://education.muttigrees.org/mutt-i-grees-library</p>
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When you order the complete PreK-3 Curriculum a Mutt-i-grees Puppet is included.





Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum Activity: Pre K 1.1

Create a Mutt-i-gree® Puppet



MATERIALS

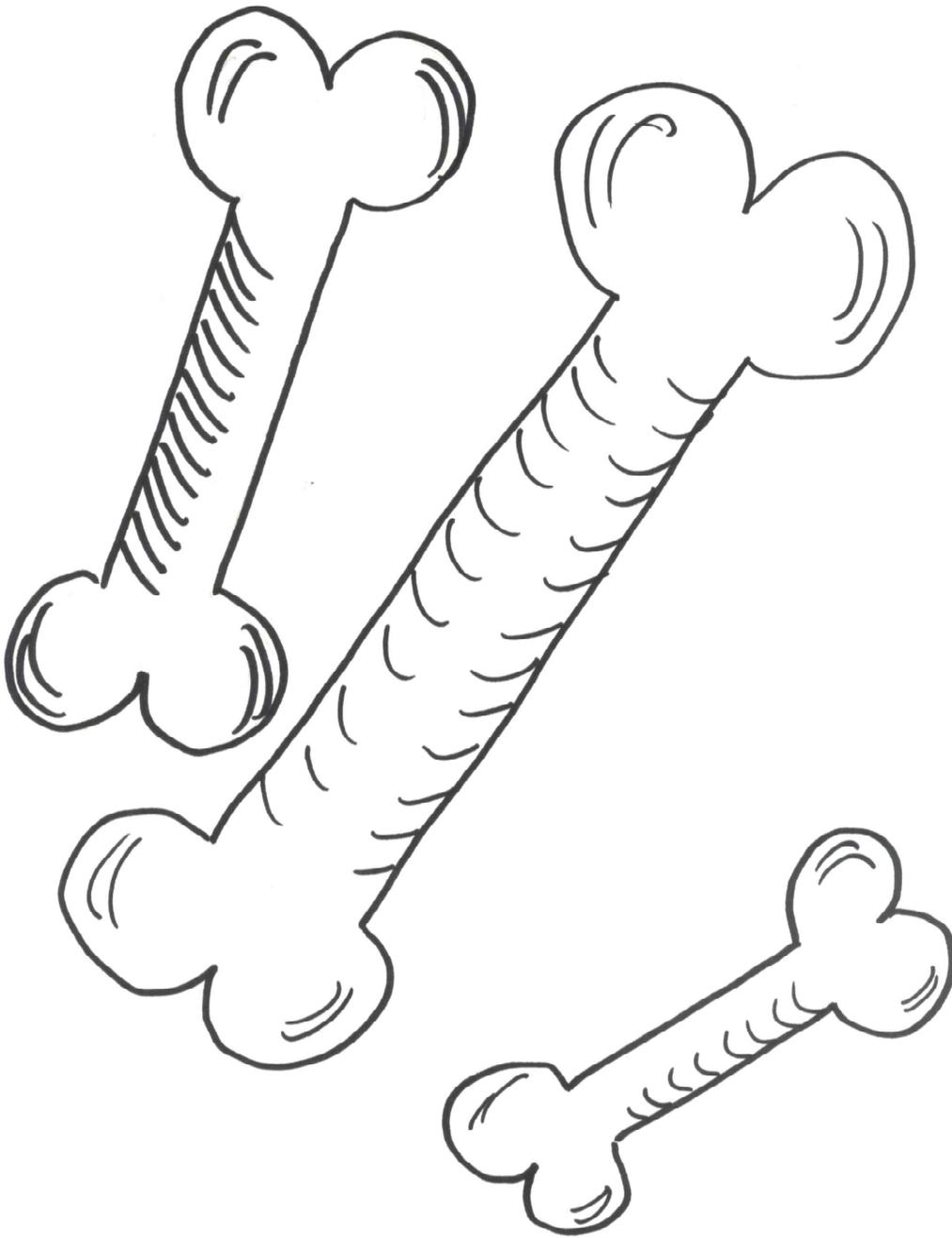
- Paper lunch bags or paper plates
- Crayons, paint, markers
- Construction paper cut into shapes such as ears, eyes, tails
- Attached cutouts to decorate puppets

PROCEDURE

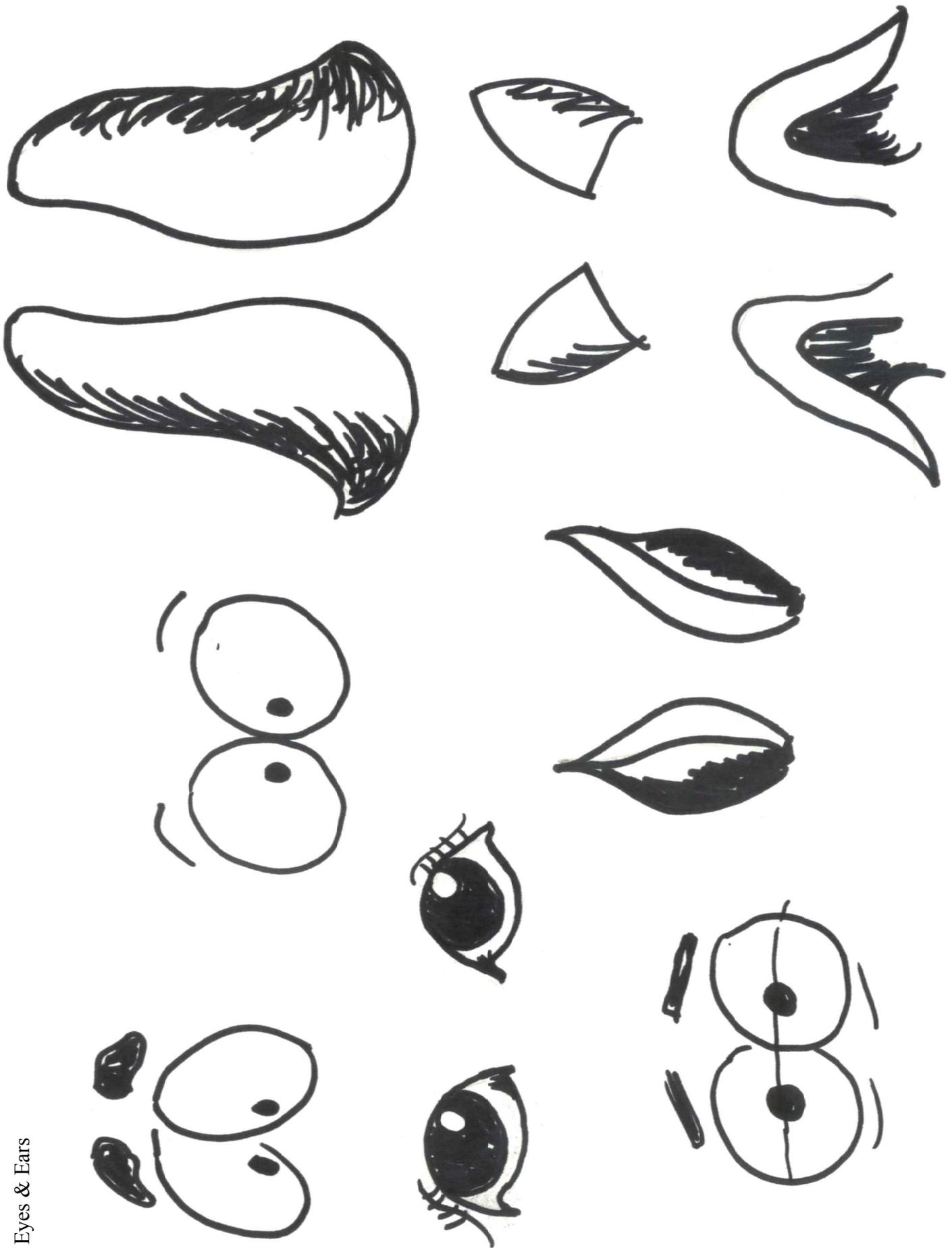
1. Explain that each student is going to create his/her own Mutt-i-gree® Puppet.
2. Hand out the supplies as well as the attached cutouts.
3. Once completed, ask children to name their Mutt-i-grees® and share them with other students in the class. More advanced students can be asked to write their name and/or the name of their Mutt-i-gree on the puppets.



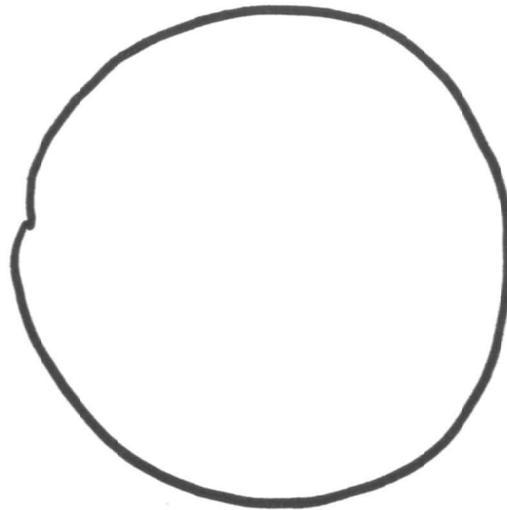
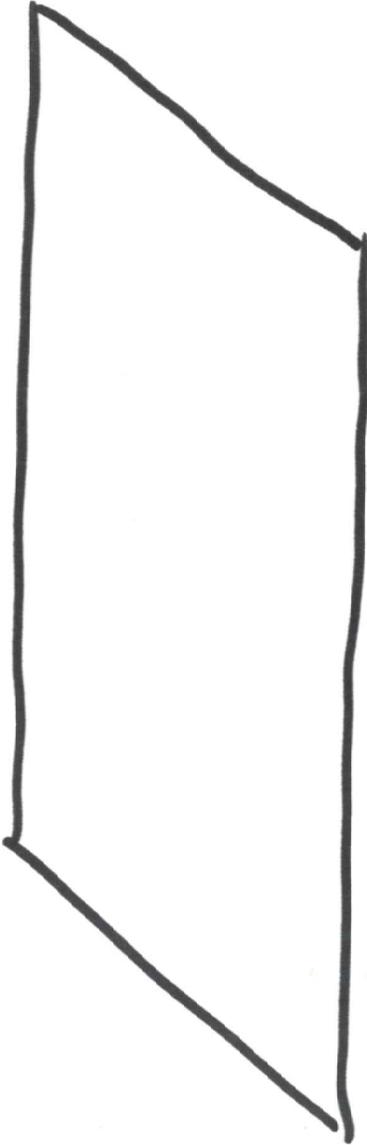
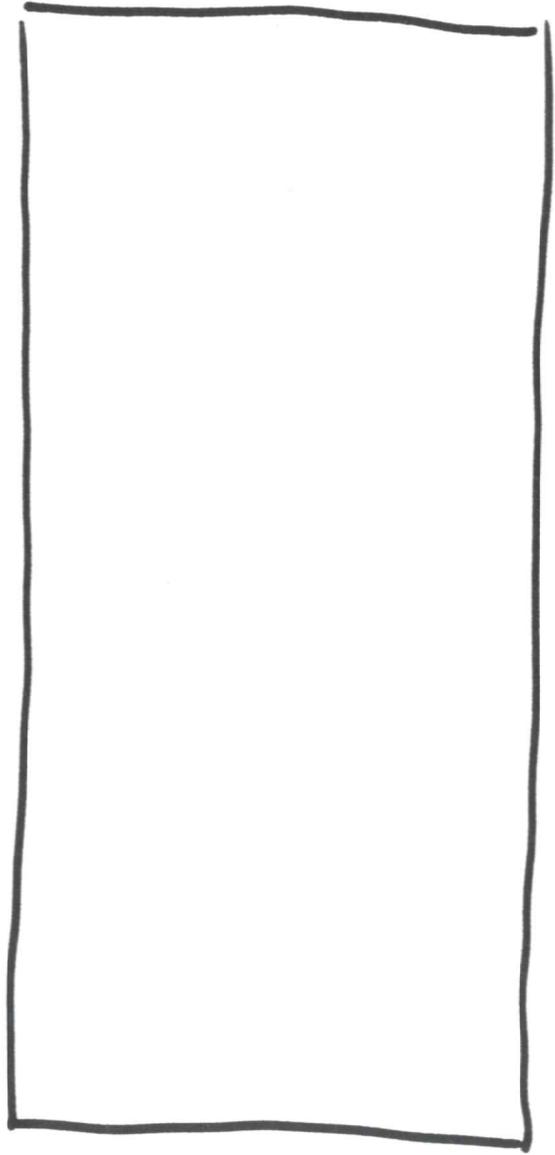
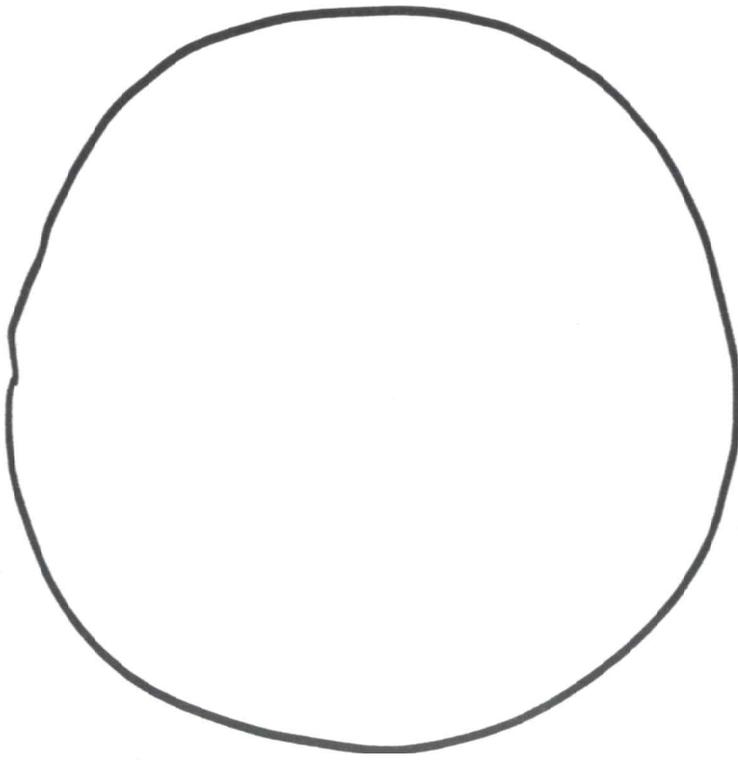
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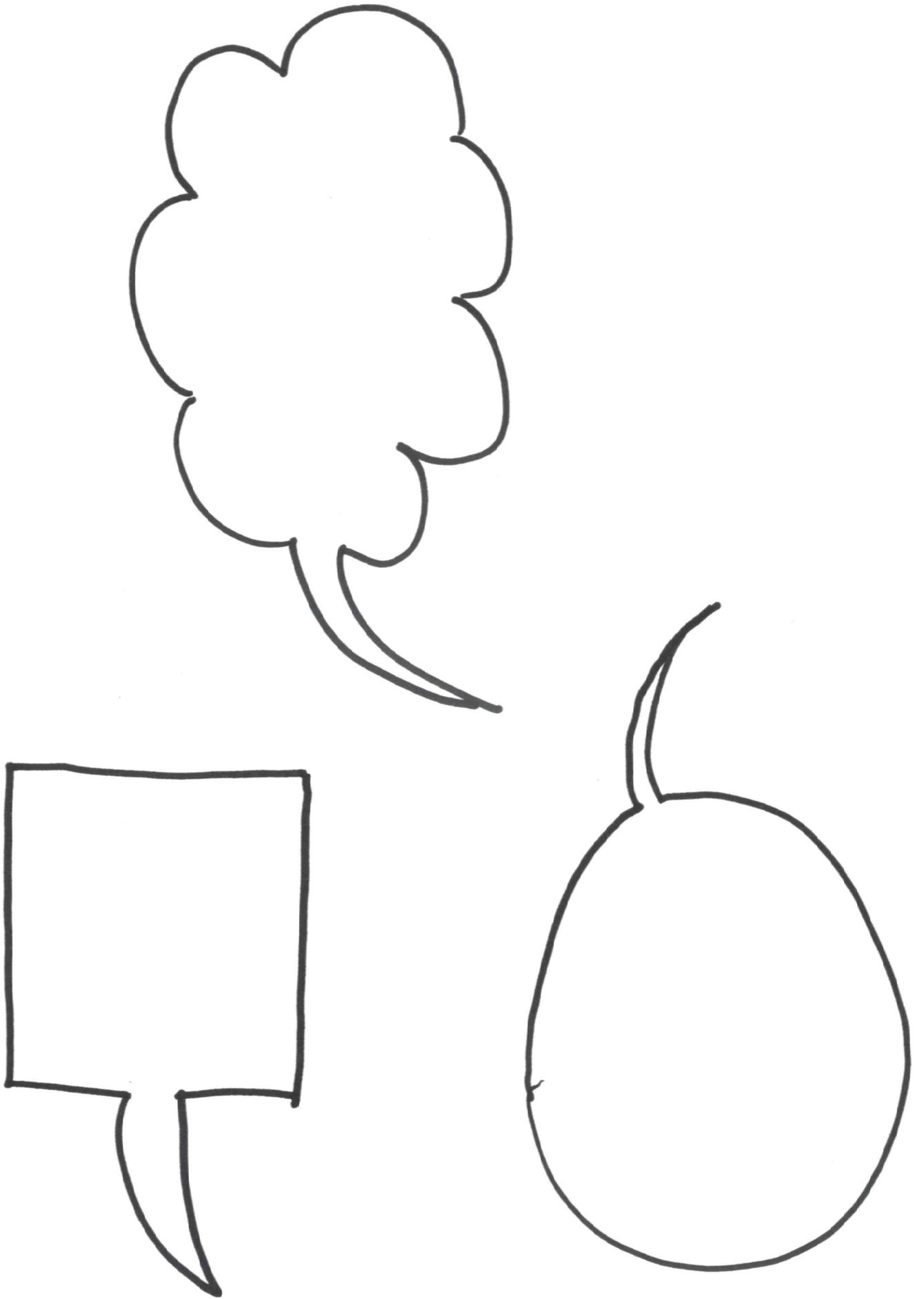


Shapes



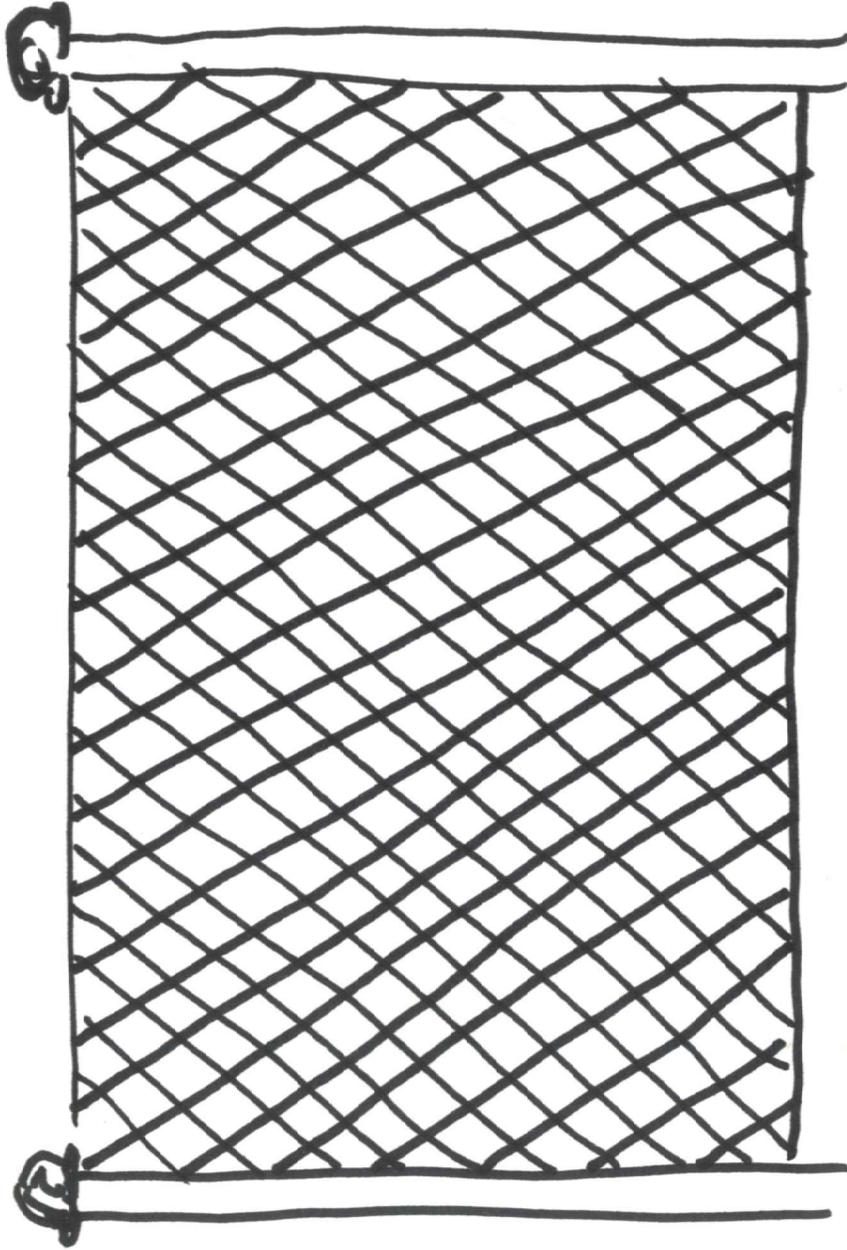
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Bubbles



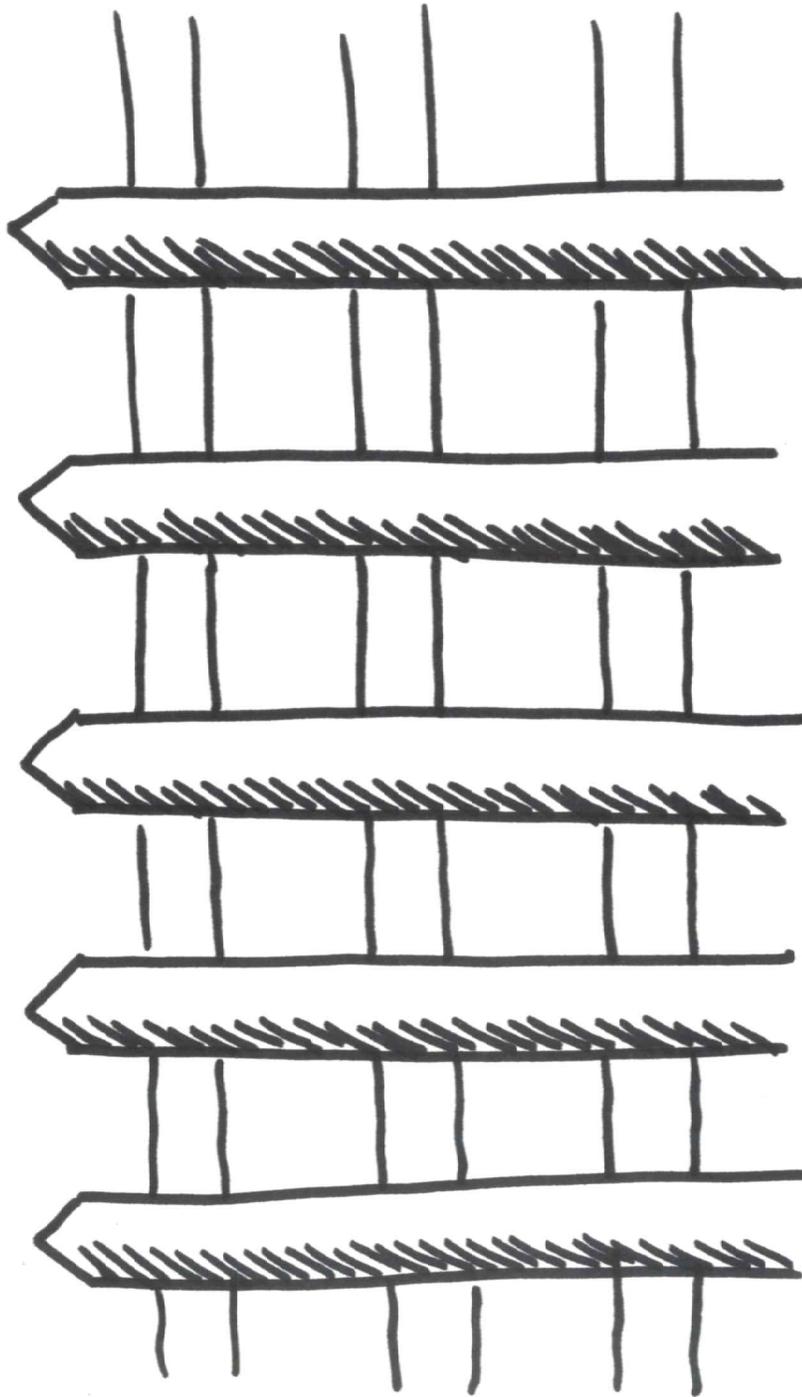
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Fence



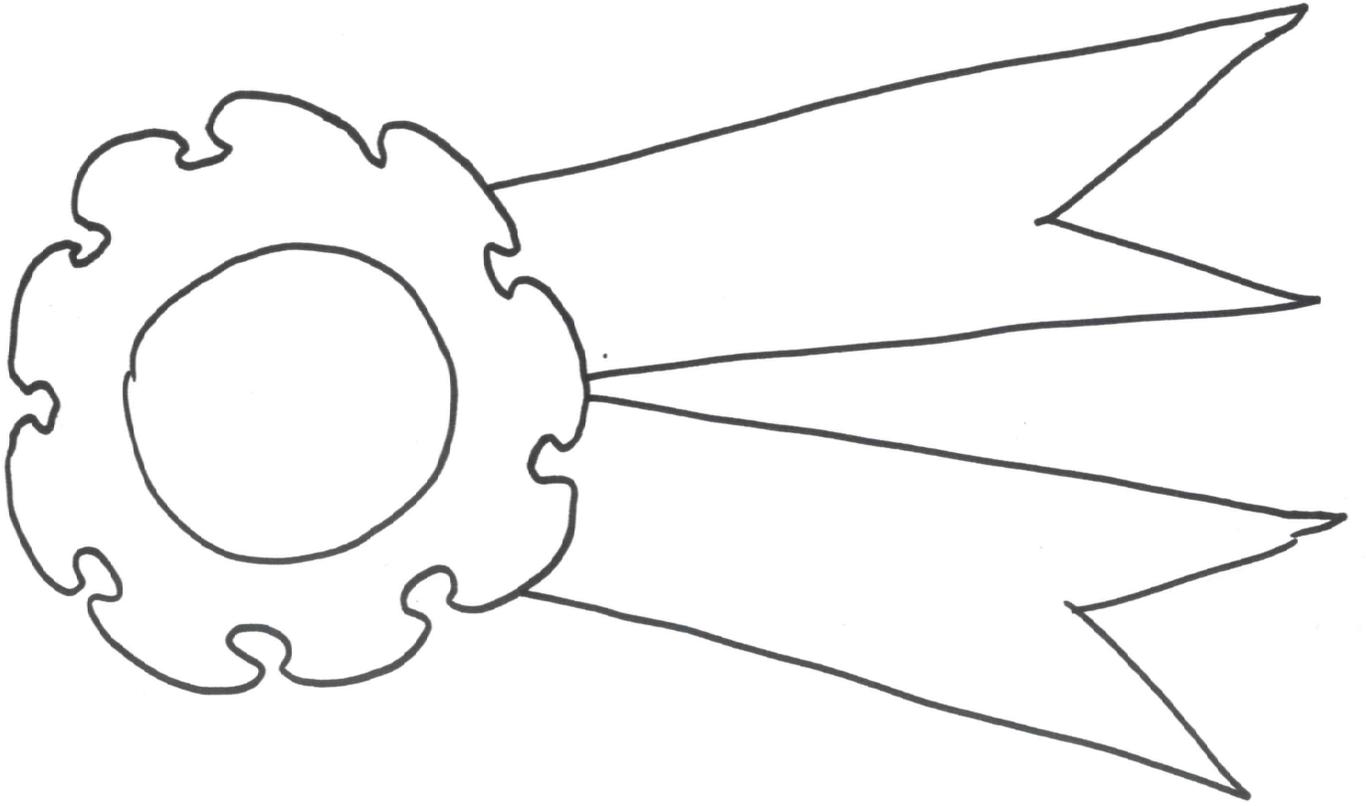
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Fence

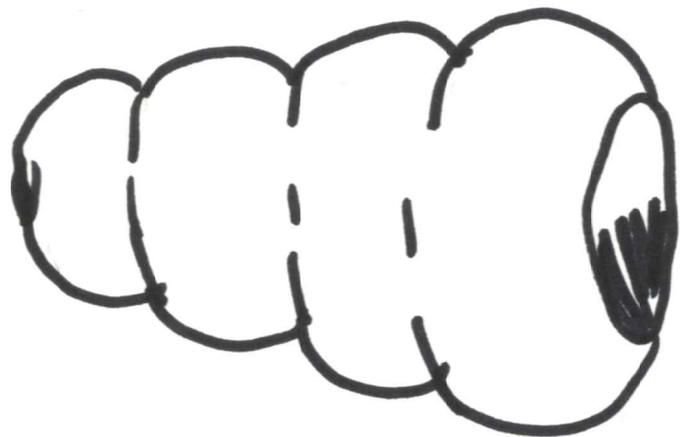
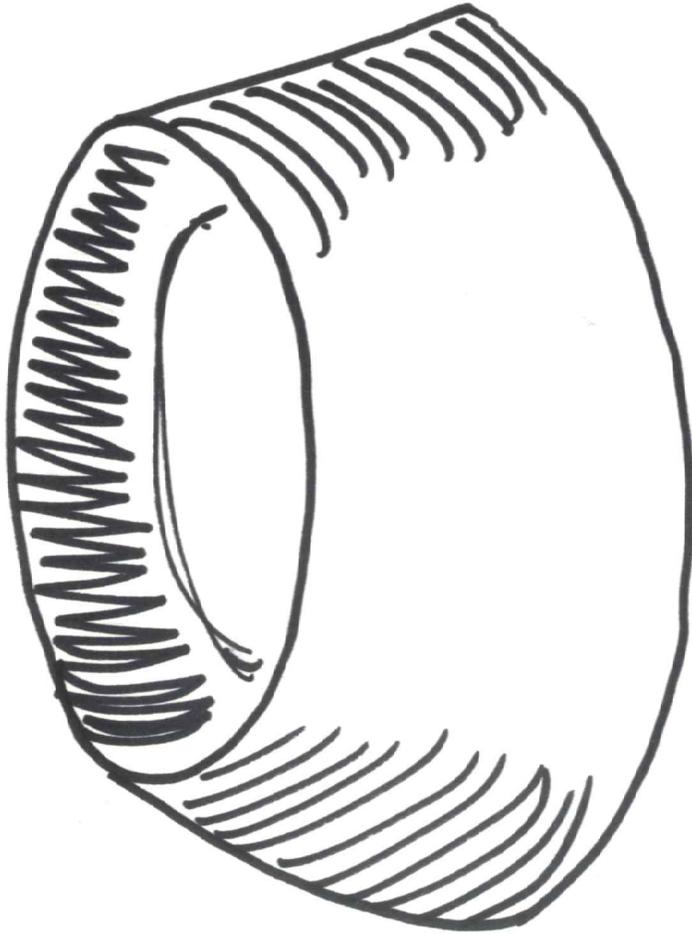


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Ribbon



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LESSON	1.1 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	By gaining appreciation of the unique qualities of Mutt-i-grees®, children will realize that they, too, are unique.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® Puppet (or substitute your own) • Puppet Templates (included in this PDF) • Crayons, paint, markers • Construction paper • Tissue paper, cotton balls, felt • Glue • A hole-punch and staples or yarn
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Similar • Different • Animal shelter • Adoption
Introduction	<p>Over the next few weeks/months, we are going to be learning about ourselves—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 also are 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. We even have a special friend—Mutt-i-gree® Puppet who is going to help us learn. Introduce Mutt-i-gree® Puppet and let the children see and touch him. Our first task is to find a name for Mutt-i-gree® Puppet. Have the class vote on a name. From now on, [name of puppet] will be with us in class.</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>Mixed-breed dogs are often 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>
Learning by Doing	<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, ask children to share their Mutt-i-grees® with other students in the class and describe their different parts and traits.</p>



<p>Learning by Doing (cont'd)</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®. These books will be used again in subsequent lessons, so children can include additional blank sheets of paper or add additional sheets as lessons progress. 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®. Mutt-i-grees® are a wonderful combination of different kinds of dogs. 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>



OTHER RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

<p>Readings and Resources</p>	<p><i>Mutts: Shelter Stories: Love. Guaranteed.</i> by Patrick McDonnell, Neil S. Plakcy and Sharon Sakson <i>The Underdog: A Celebration of Mutts</i> by Julia Szabo <i>The Mutt Book: Decoding Your Dog's Heritage</i> by David Alderton <i>Before You Were Mine</i> by Maribeth Boelts and David Walker</p> <p>*Additional Readings and Resources can be found online: http://education.muttigrees.org/mutt-i-grees-library.</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><u>Why would that be?</u> 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>



When you order the complete PreK-3 Curriculum a Mutt-i-grees Puppet is included.

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Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum Activity: Grades 1, 2, 3

Make a Mutt-i-gree®



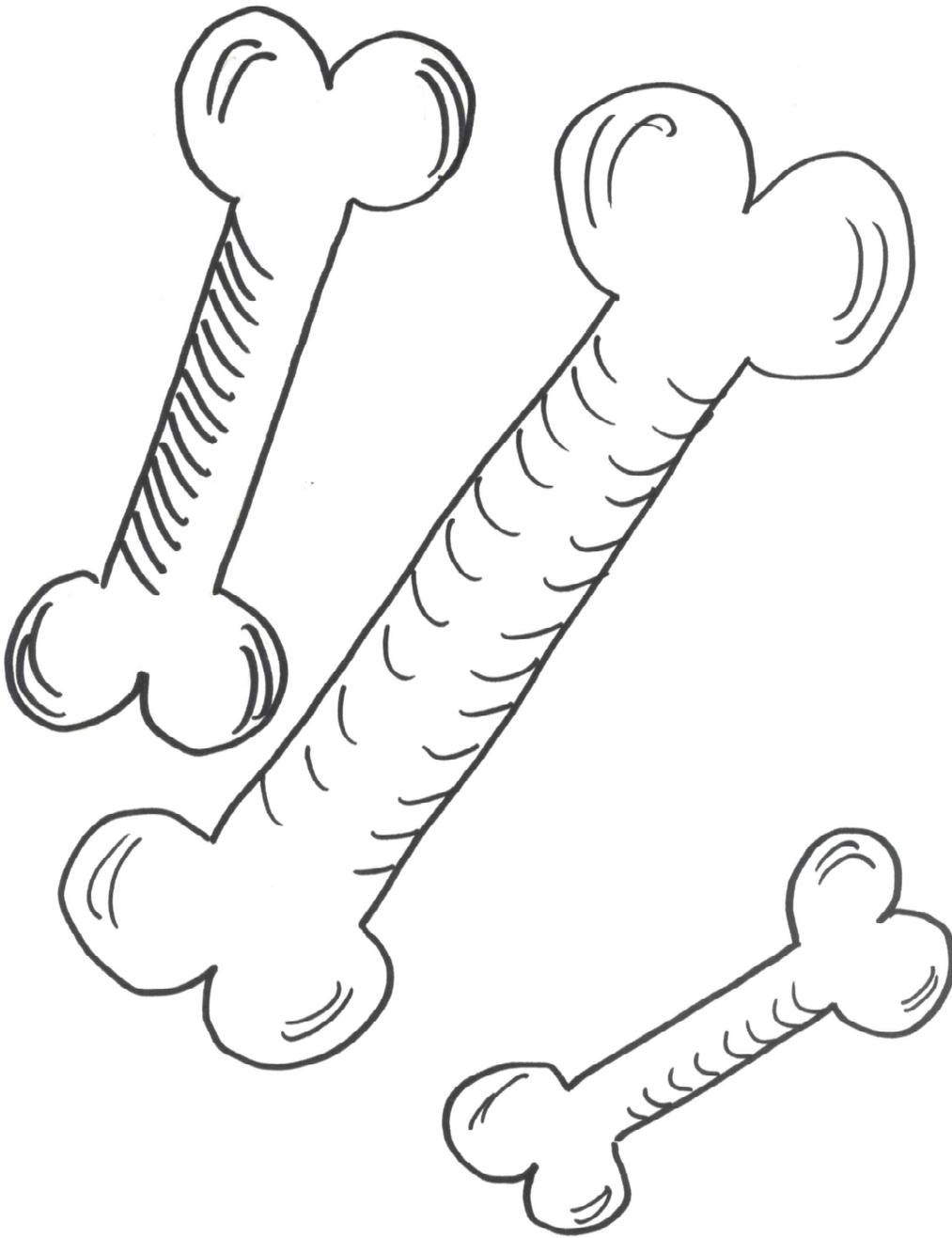
MATERIALS

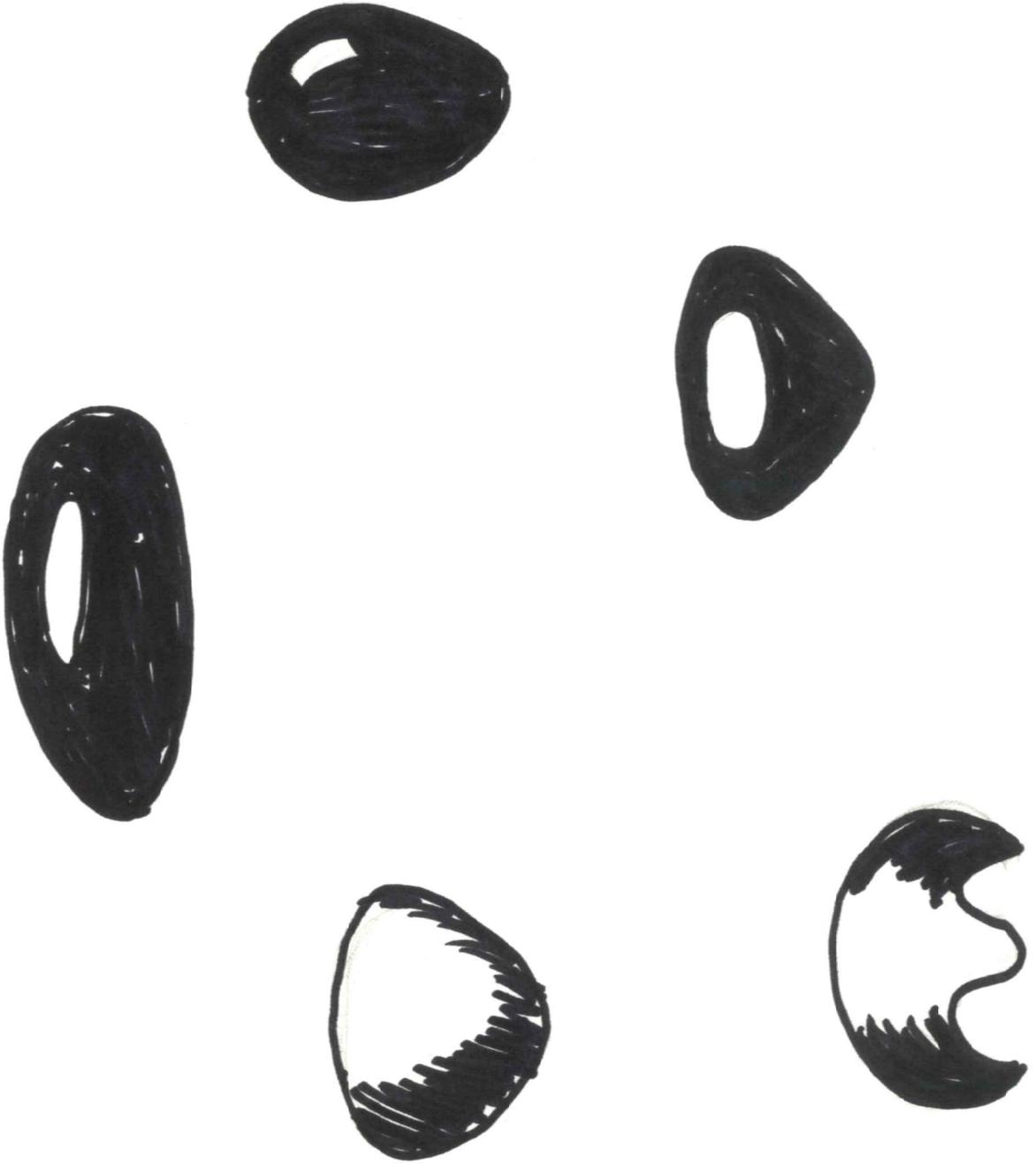
- Mutt-i-gree® Puppet
- Puppet Templates (see attached)
- Crayons, paint, markers
- Construction paper
- Tissue paper, cotton balls, felt
- Glue
- A hole-punch and staples or yarn

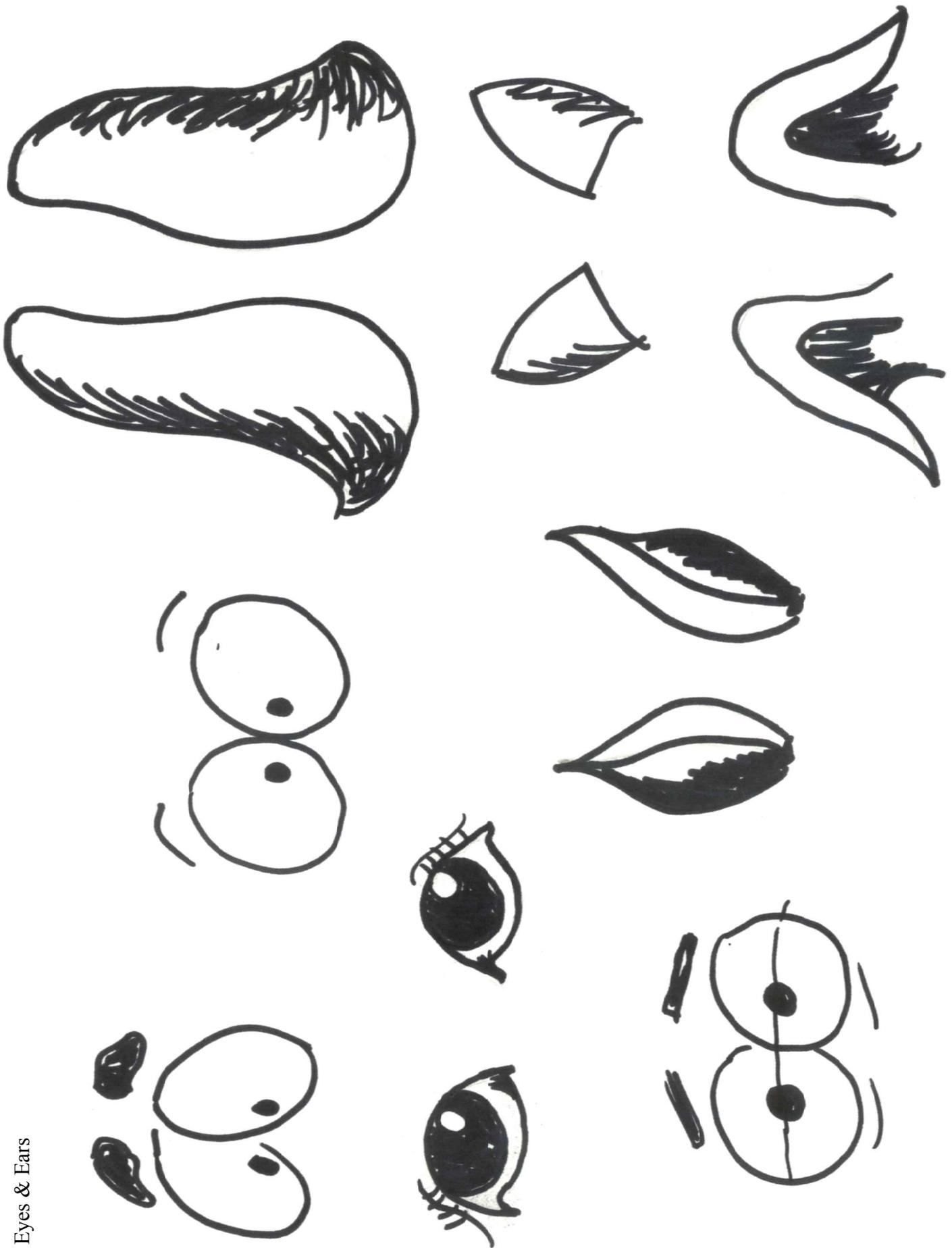
PROCEDURE

1. Explain that each will create their very own Mutt-i-gree dog puppet. Help children by using the sample templates on the Mutt-i-grees® site and various art supplies.
2. Once completed, ask children to share their Mutt-i-grees® with other students in the class and describe their different parts and traits.
3. Children then create Me and My Mutt-i-gree books using construction paper and attaching them with staples or string. Children can use beginning pages to draw or paste pictures of themselves and their Mutt-i-gree. These books will be used again in subsequent lessons, so children can include additional blank sheets of paper or add additional sheets as lessons progress. (NOTE: 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 the text.)

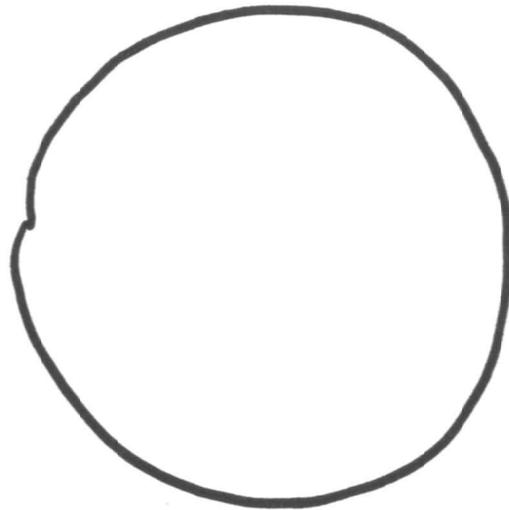
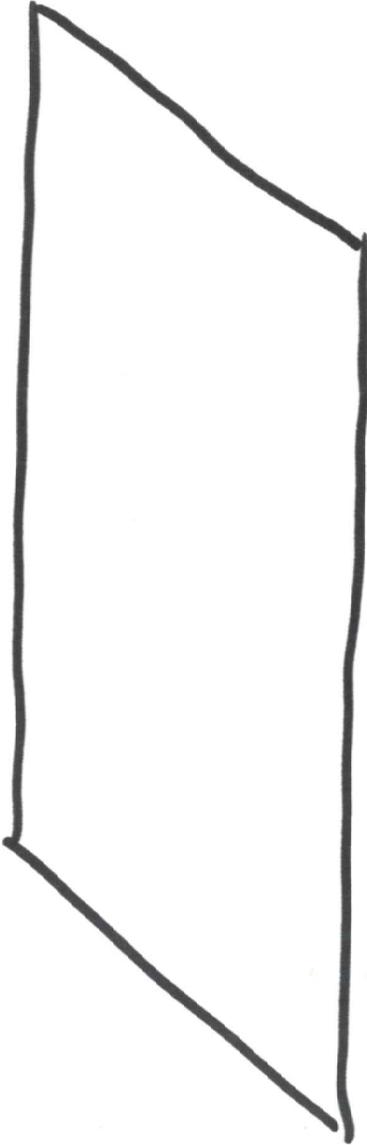
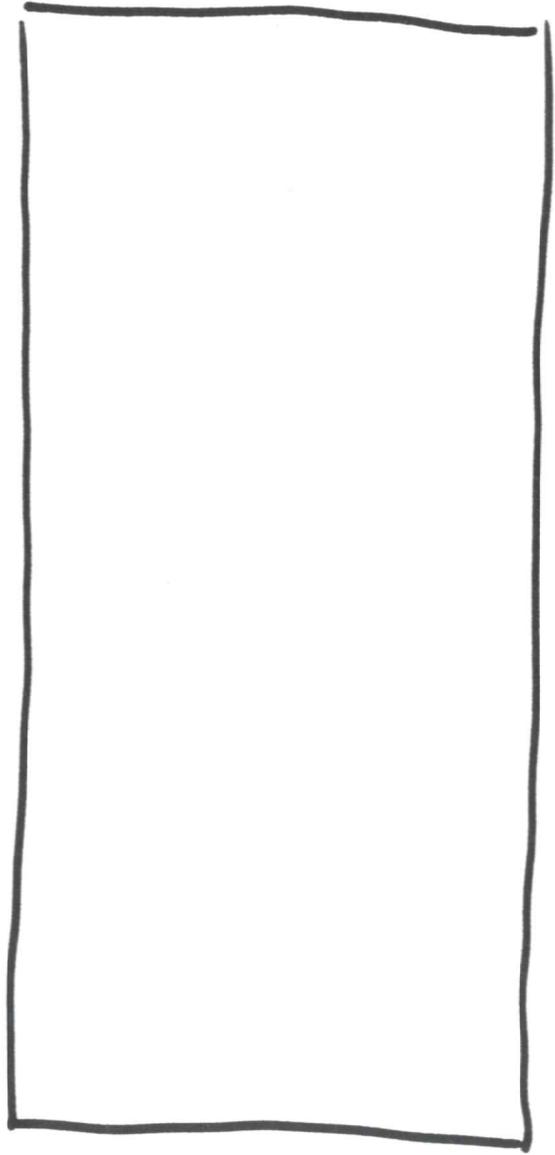
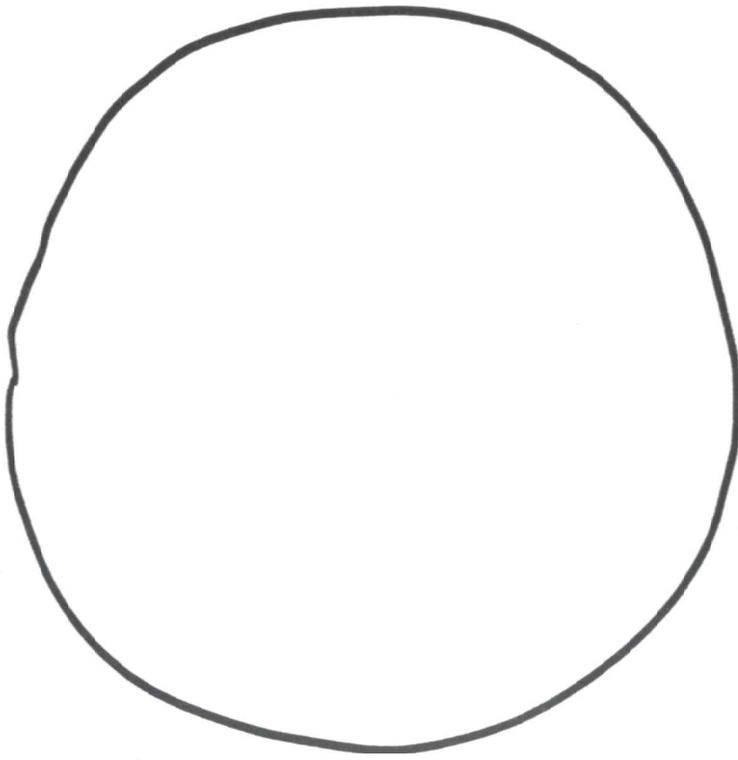
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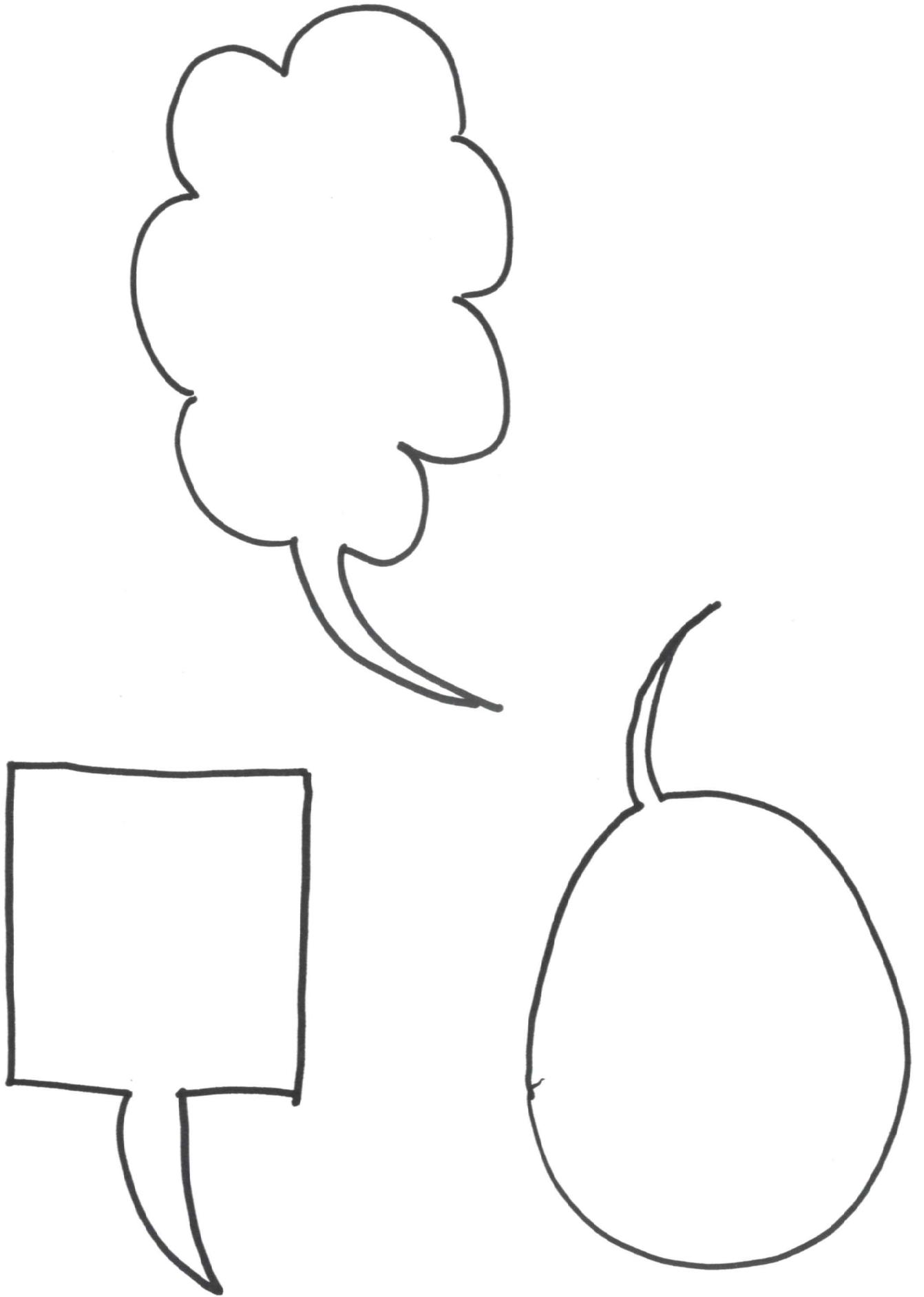


Shapes



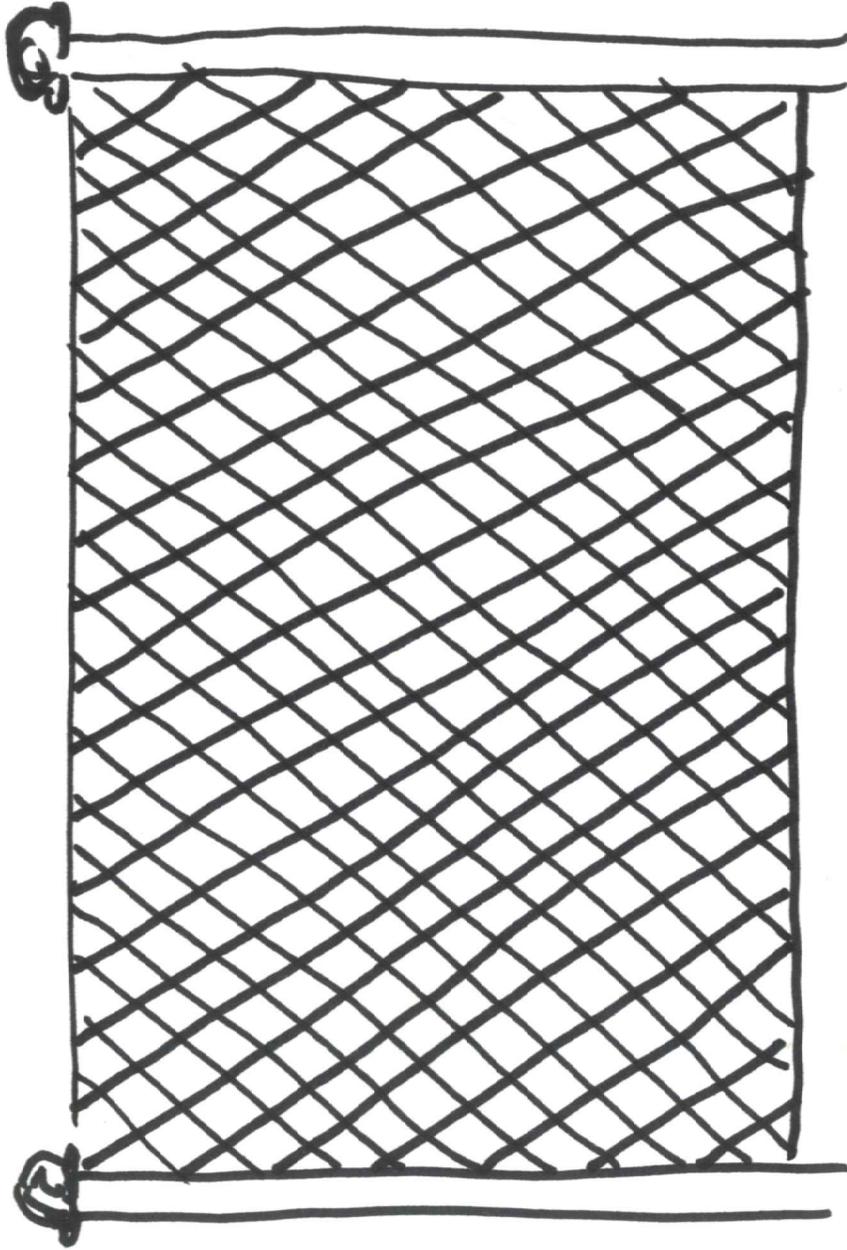
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Bubbles



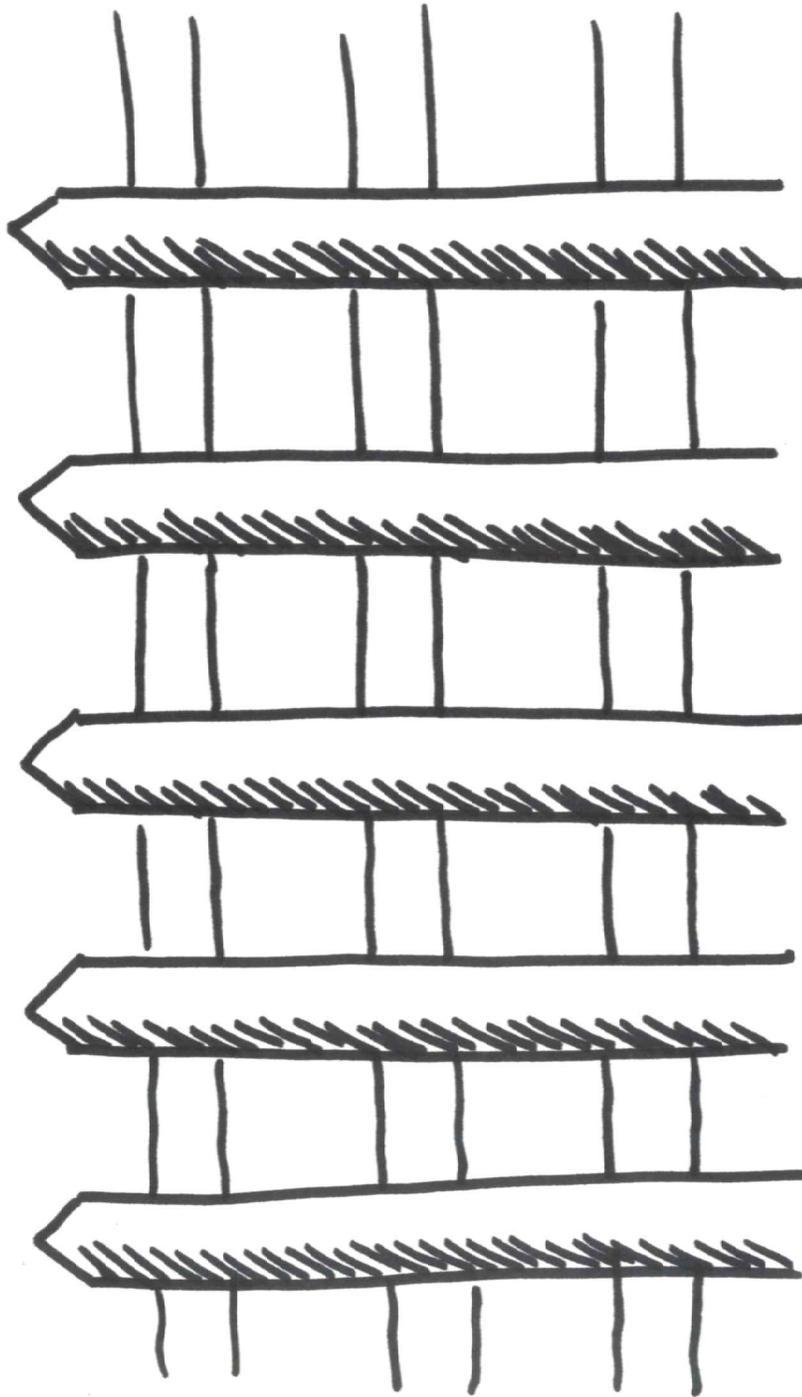
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Fence



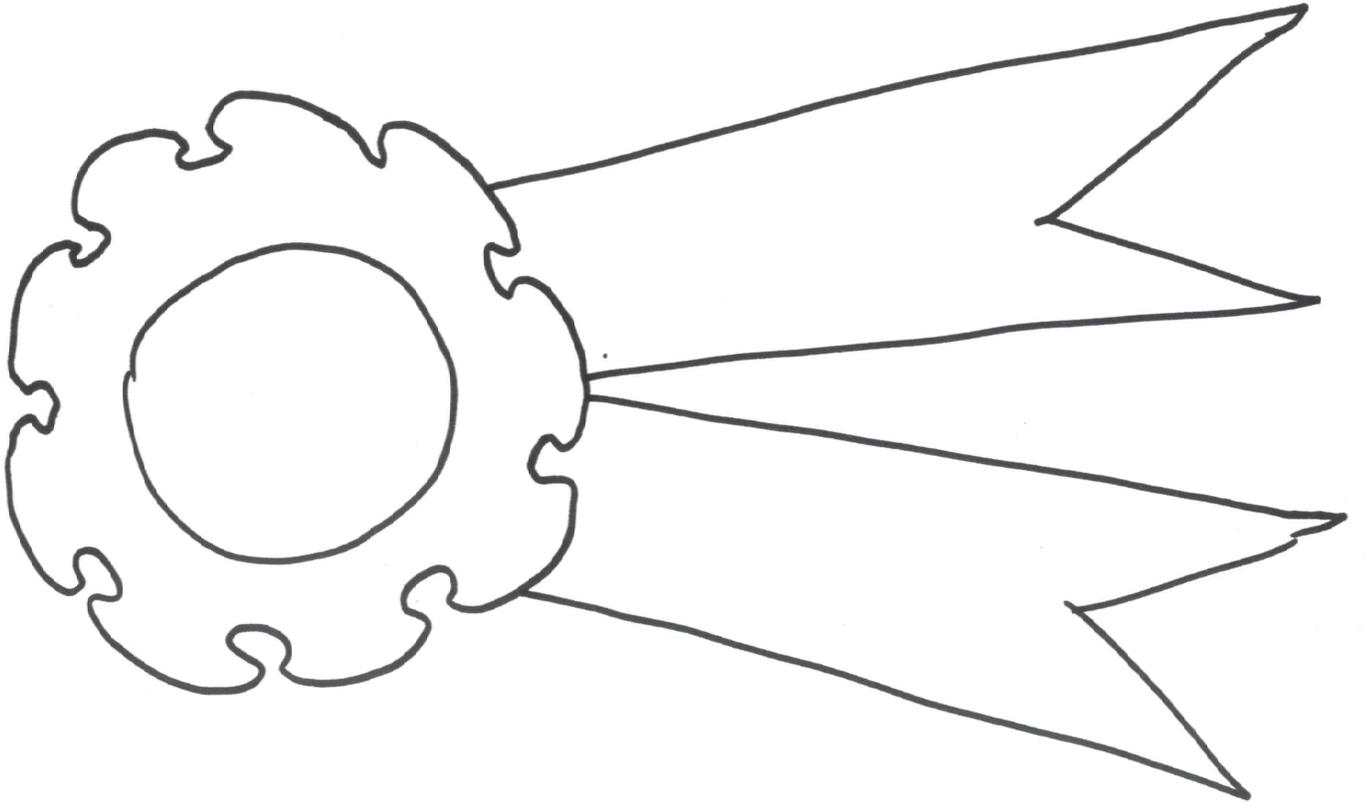
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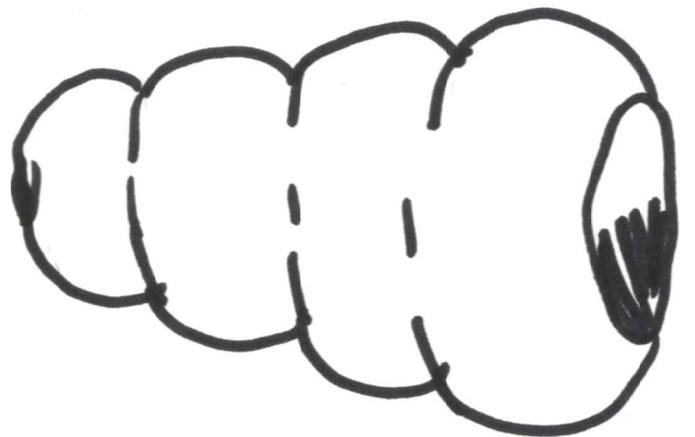
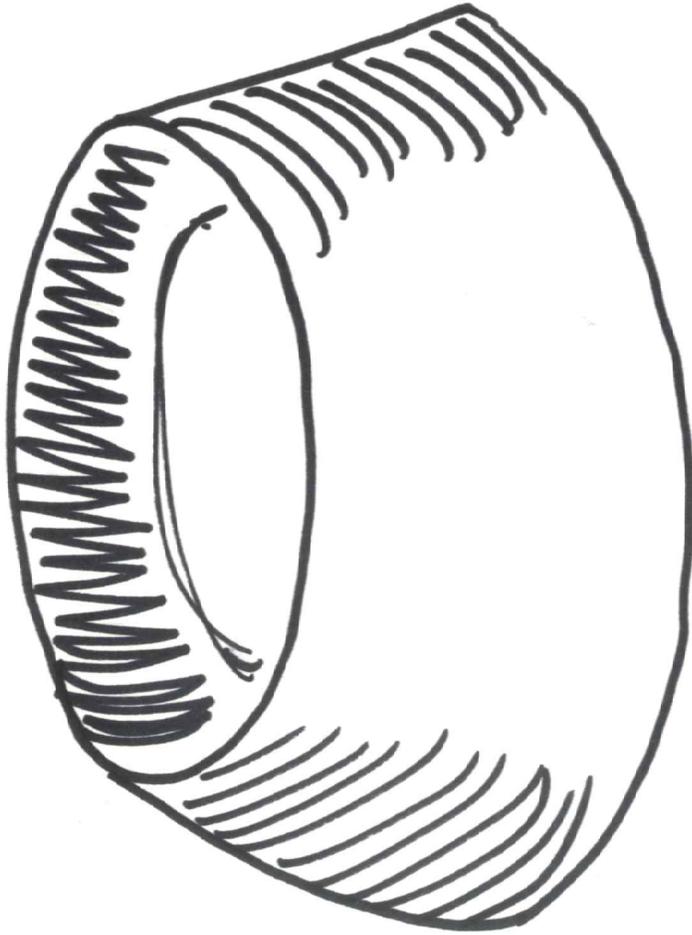


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Ribbon



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LESSON	1.1 Learning from Mutt-i-gree®
Objective	Children will receive an overview of the rationale behind the Curriculum and discuss their own unique traits, as well as the unique traits of Mutt-i-gree® dogs.
Rationale	Gaining appreciation of the distinctive qualities of Mutt-i-gree® dogs will help facilitate children’s sense of self and build self-confidence.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Mutt-i-gree® puppet/plush • Construction paper or felt • Crayons, markers, colored pencils • Yarn or fabric for fur • Colored cotton balls or pompoms • Glue
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Mixture/Combination • Unique • Breed • Permanent • Initiative/program • Aware/awareness
Introduction	<p>Over the next few weeks/months, we are going to learn to become more aware – about ourselves and the world around us. We will be learning about ourselves—what makes us special, what we do well, 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 to make good decisions. But we are not going to be learning just about people; we are also going to be learning about dogs. Just like people, dogs come in many different shapes, sizes, and colors. We will learn about a special type of dog called a Mutt-i-gree®. Mutt-i-grees® are dogs awaiting adoption at an animal shelter. Shelters have Mutt-i-grees®, which are a mixture of at least two different dog breeds, as well as purebreds – all deserving of a loving home.</p> <p>If children have had prior experience with the Curriculum, the teacher can ask children what they remember learning about Mutt-i-grees.®</p> <p>In addition to learning about dogs, and specifically, Mutt-i-grees® we will also discuss what we can learn from dogs; this is what makes the Mutt-i-grees® initiative so unique. Have any of you seen the bumper sticker that says “Wag More, Bark Less?” Even if you don’t own a dog, you can still learn important lessons from them. The teacher can encourage an open discussion – what do the students think we can learn from dogs, and from Mutt-i-grees® (respect, loyalty, the importance of exercise/play, the importance of family/community/pack, how to comfort others, patience, gratitude, are some examples). Our goal in the series of lessons on Mutt-i-grees® is to become calm, confident, and caring individuals who will grow up knowing that we make a difference in the lives of people, animals, and the environment.</p>
Discussion	<p>There are approximately 77.5 million dogs owned as pets in the United States; that’s a lot of dogs! Thirty-nine percent (about one-third) of US households own at least one dog. How many of you have a dog for a pet? Can you tell me about your dog? (The teacher can use prompts such as: Do you have a purebred dog or a mixed-breed dog? How big is your dog? Is your dog male or female? What is your dog’s name? Do you know the history of your dog (where the dog came from, for example). The teacher can also share information about his/her own dog or the dog he or she would want).</p>

Discussion (cont'd)	Unfortunately many Mutt-i-gree® dogs live in animal shelters waiting to be adopted. Approximately 6-8 million dogs and cats enter animal shelters each year and about 75% of the dogs in shelters are Mutt-i-grees®. Animal shelters provide food, housing, and medical care for animals (including dogs and cats, and in some cases, rabbits and birds) that don't have homes. These animals need to be adopted into permanent homes where they can receive care and companionship. The teacher may discuss local animal shelters or take the students on a virtual tour of a local shelter website or animalleague.org
Learning by Doing	Teacher may decide to use a Mutt-i-gree® puppet or plush as a class Mutt-i-gree®, to be brought out at the beginning of each lesson, in addition to or in lieu of having each student create one. For class or student creations, suggestions include: large poster on which children can work together as a group or several smaller ones created by individual students. The teacher can use the creations to illustrate the diversity of characteristics (length and size of ears, color, etc.) and facilitate a discussion on unique traits of Mutt-i-grees®.
Closure	Today we learned about the goals of the Mutt-i-grees® initiative . We learned that Mutt-i-grees® are a unique combination of different kinds of dogs and that many Mutt-i-grees® live in animal shelters waiting to be adopted into permanent homes. We also discussed the different kinds of dogs we own (or would like to own) as pets.



Family and Community Involvement Activities	<p>Meet a Mutt-i-gree®. Arrange a visit by a Mutt-i-gree® and its owner. Have children prepare interview questions such as: What breeds make up 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? Students will get a chance to walk the dog and learn how the dog is taught commands (how to sit, down, etc.).</p> <p>Children who own Mutt-i-grees® as pets can also share the story of their own dogs (as well as photographs) or invite a family member to join in and share their experience. Some schools have therapy dogs, many of whom were adopted from a shelter. Use the worksheet on the following page to get them started.</p>
Advanced Activities	Is your classroom representative of the US? According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association 2009-2010 National Pet Owners Survey, 39 percent of households own at least one dog and 19 percent of dogs owned as pets were adopted from an animal shelter. People own approximately the same number of male and female dogs and 75 percent of owned dogs are spayed or neutered. Does your class mirror these statistics? Have children collect data and create a large graph or table displaying on the number of dogs owned, the different breeds, sizes, ages, and genders, where dogs were bought, and whether they are spayed or neutered. Assist students in calculating percentages and comparing whether the class statistics are similar to the reported statistics for the United States.



Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum Activity: Grades 4,5

Meet a Mutt-i-gree



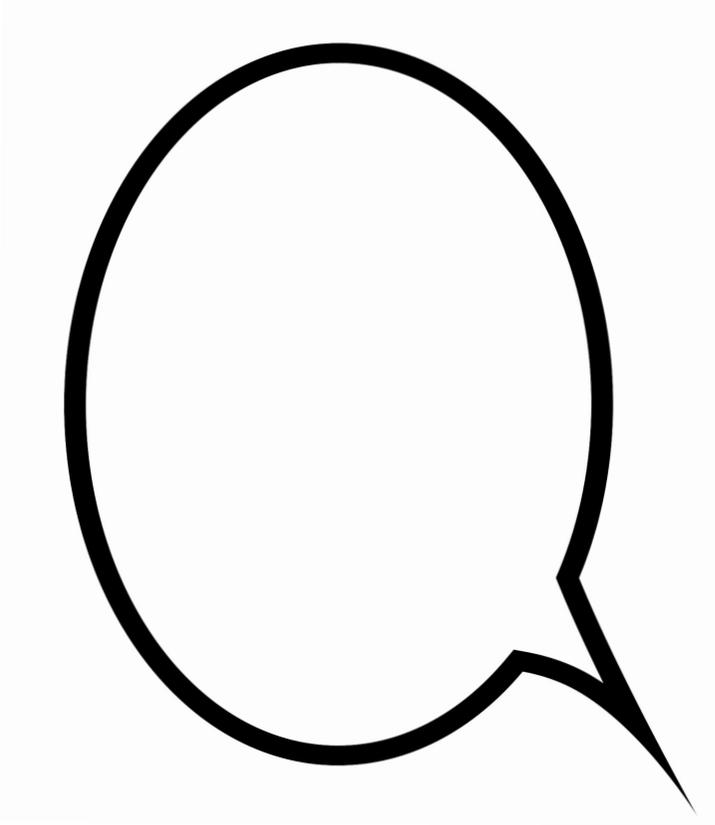
PROCEDURE

Sketch your Mutt-i-gree (on page attached). Fill in the Thought Balloon with something this dog is thinking at the animal shelter. Write one reason why someone should adopt your Mutt-i-gree.



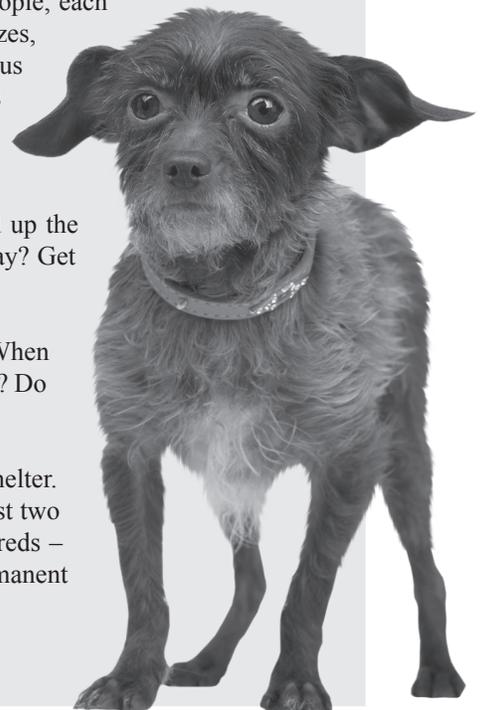
ORDER NOW AT MUTTIGREES.ORG

MEET MY MUTT-I-GREE!



ORDER NOW AT MUTTIGREES.ORG

LESSON	1.1 Paws To Learn
Objective	Students will receive an overview of the goals and rationale behind the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and discuss their own unique traits, as well as the unique traits of Mutt-i-gree® dogs.
Rationale	Understanding the overall goal of the Curriculum and gaining appreciation of the distinctive qualities of Mutt-i-gree® dogs – as well as what we can learn from them – will help students appreciate diversity and acquire self-confidence.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of dogs or link to www.animalleague.org or local shelter website • Poster board cut out in shape of a dog (optional) • Paper/index cards • Interactive White Board/LCD projector if available • Student computers if available
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Initiative/Program • Aware/Awareness • Unique • Breed/Mixed-breed • Root word
Introduction	<p>Over the next few weeks we will be working on lessons from the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, which is part of a national project. There are two goals to the Curriculum: 1) To increase awareness of Mutt-i-gree® dogs; and 2) To help each one of us become calm, confident, and caring individuals who will grow up knowing that we make a difference in the lives of people, animals, and the environment.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, we will be learning about ourselves – what makes us unique, what we do well, the many different feelings we have. We will be learning about other people, as well, and about other people’s feelings and how to collaborate and make good decisions.</p> <p>We are also going to be learning about dogs. Just like people, each dog is unique and come in many different shapes, sizes, colors, and personalities; some are playful and boisterous and others may be quiet. We are going to learn about dogs called Mutt-i-grees®.</p> <p>It’s a new term, and it sounds complicated, but if you look at the “root word” what do you see? If you looked up the word ‘mutt’ in a dictionary, what do you think it would say? Get students to write responses first then look up together.</p> <p>How did the dictionary definition compare to your own? When you hear those definitions, what do they make you think of? Do they sound positive or negative?</p> <p>Mutt-i-grees® are dogs awaiting adoption at an animal shelter. Shelters have Mutt-i-grees®, which are a mixture of at least two different dog breeds. They also have other dogs – purebreds – that have been abandoned and need to be adopted into permanent homes where they can receive care and companionship.</p>



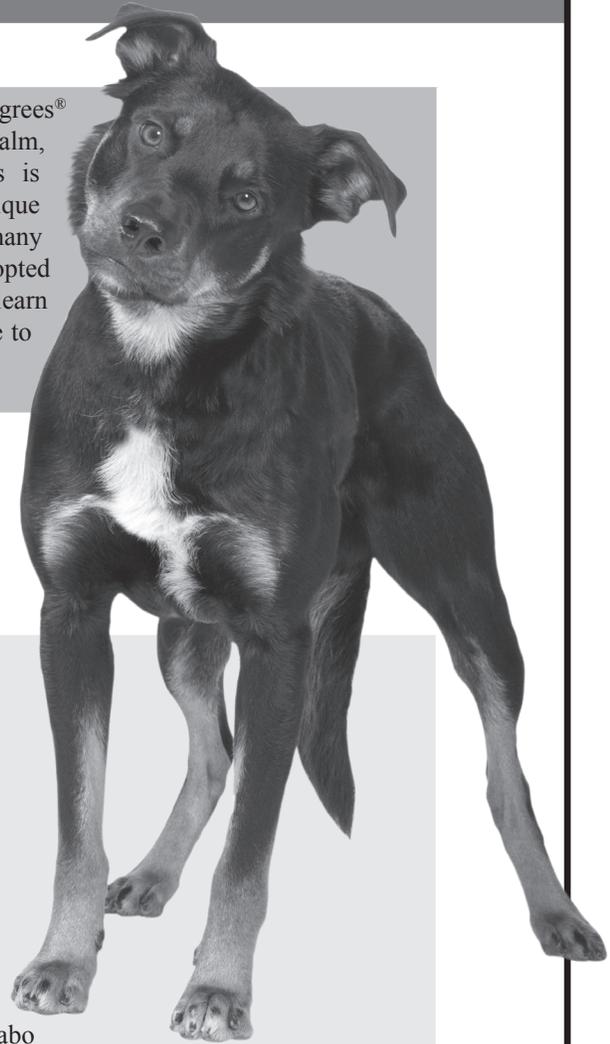
Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum. Copyright © 2011 The Petsavers Foundation

ORDER NOW AT MUTTIGREES.ORG

<p>Introduction (cont'd)</p>	<p>Approximately 6 to 8 million dogs and cats enter animal shelters each year and about 75 percent of the dogs in shelters are Mutt-i-grees®. Animal shelters seek to have the animals adopted and many shelters keep the animals until they are adopted. But that’s not always possible when space and financial resources are limited. The following websites include videos showing Mutt-i-grees®</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://videos.animalleague.org/ • www.muttigrees.org • http://www.youtube.com/user/animalleague <p>Or, visit the website of a local shelter to introduce students to shelter dogs. Another option is to bring a dog to class (if none available, there may be a therapy dog and its handler in your community).</p> <p>Adopting a shelter dog will save a life, but there are other ways to help – can you think of some ways (volunteering, asking shelter personnel what they need...)? If students have had prior experience with the Curriculum, the teacher can ask students what they remember learning about Mutt-i-grees® and ways they can help.</p>
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>In addition to learning about Mutt-i-grees®, we will also discuss what we can learn from them; this is what makes the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum unique. Even if you don’t have a dog, you can learn so much from them just by reading and talking with others about their experiences.</p> <p>Have any of you seen the bumper sticker that says “Wag More; Bark Less”? What do you think it means? What can it teach us? The teacher can encourage an open discussion: What do you think we can learn from dogs and from Mutt-i-grees® in particular? (Respect, loyalty, the importance of exercise/play, patience, gratitude, love, hope).</p>
<p>Learning by Doing</p>	<p>A letter to a Mutt-i-gree®. If you were to write a letter to a Mutt-i-gree® who is still at a shelter, what would you write? Using paper/index card that I am passing around, write a letter to a Mutt-i-gree® about your thoughts on the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, what you hope to learn, how you feel/think about Mutt-i-grees® or why you want to help. You may also say something about what you can learn from a Mutt-i-gree®, for example a trait that you think is valuable. You can illustrate the letter, as well. We are going to display your letters and you will get to take them home at the end of the series of Mutt-i-gree® lessons.</p> <p>If time permits, students may read the letters to the class. Display students’ letters on the wall or other display area. The teachers may consider a large poster board cutout in the shape of a dog as a display area.</p> <p>Letters sent to us at: http://www.education.muttigrees.org will be posted on the website. Enclose students’ names, teacher’s name and email, and the school name and address. Students will receive a gift.</p>

Closure

Today we learned about the goals of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and what it would mean to us to be calm, confident, and caring and how each one of us is unique. We also learned that Mutt-i-grees® are a unique combination of different kinds of dogs and that many Mutt-i-grees® live in animal shelters waiting to be adopted into permanent homes. We discussed what we can learn from dogs and Mutt-i-grees® and that we don't have to own a dog to learn from or help dogs in need.



**OTHER RESOURCES
& ACTIVITIES**

Readings and Resources

Useful websites:
 American Mutt-i-grees® Club:
<http://www.muttigrees.org/>
 Adopt A Pet: <http://www.adoptapet.com>
 North Shore Animal League America:
<http://www.animalleague.org>
 Animal Planet's Dogs 101:
<http://animal.discovery.com/tv/dogs-101/>

Books:
 A Member of Family, by Cesar Millan and Melissa Jo Peltier
 The Underdog: A Celebration of Mutts, by Julia Szabo
 Shelter Dogs: Amazing Stories of Adopted Strays by Peg Kehret/photos by Greg Farrar

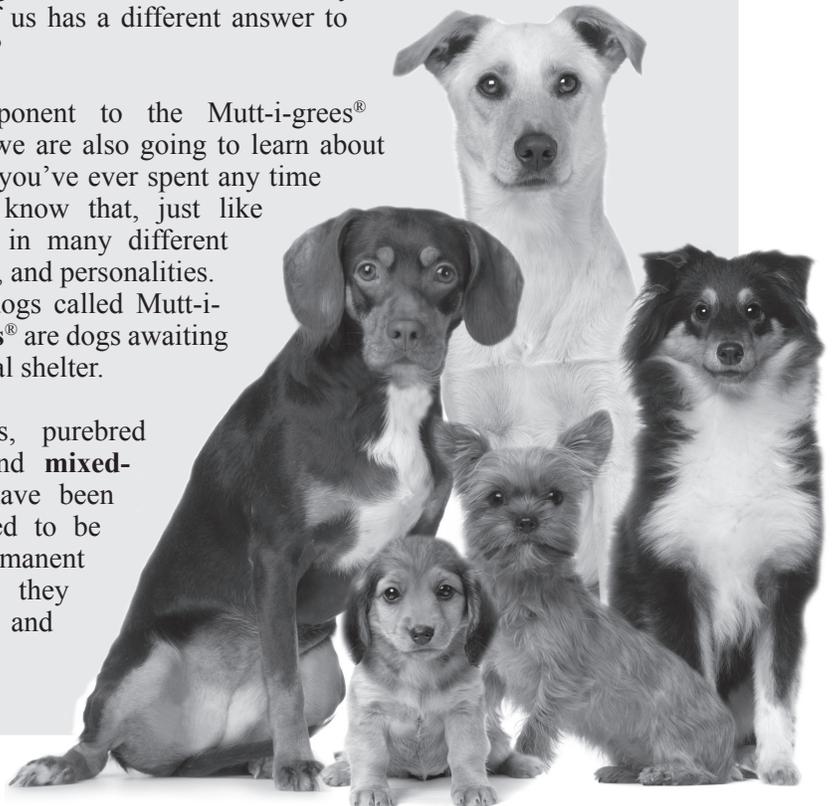
Family and Community Involvement Activities

Meet a Mutt-i-gree®. Arrange a visit by a Mutt-i-gree® and its owner. (Or, since therapy dogs are often adopted shelter dogs, arrange a visit by a therapy dog and its handler). Have students prepare interview questions such as: Why/when did you decide to adopt? 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? What have you learned from your dog? Students may get a chance to walk the dog and learn how the dog is taught commands (how to sit, down, etc.). Students who own Mutt-i-grees® as pets can also share the story of their own dogs (as well as photographs) or invite a family member to join in and share their experience. Other options: arrange for a class visit to a local animal shelter where students may take photos and meet shelter personnel.

Advanced Activities

Is your classroom representative of the US? According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association's 2009-2010 National Pet Owners Survey, 39 percent of households own at least one dog and 19 percent of dogs owned as pets were adopted from an animal shelter. People own approximately the same number of male and female dogs and 75 percent of owned dogs are spayed or neutered. Does your class mirror these statistics? Have students collect data and create a large graph or table displaying the number of dogs owned, the different breeds, sizes, ages, and genders, where dogs were bought, and whether they are spayed or neutered. Assist students in calculating percentages and comparing whether the class statistics are similar to the reported statistics for the United States.

LESSON	1.1 What's in a Name?
Objective	Students will become aware of the Mutt-i-grees® initiative, receive an overview of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, and discuss its goals and implications for them.
Rationale	Understanding the overall goal of the Curriculum and gaining appreciation of the distinctive qualities of Mutt-i-gree® dogs (as well as what we can learn from them) will help students appreciate diversity and the implications of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum for their own development.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of dogs or Internet access • <i>Fido's Fur-book</i> template • Arts and crafts materials (optional) • Student computers, if available
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Initiative • Breed / Mixed-breed • Connotation
Introduction	<p>Over the next few weeks we will be working on lessons from the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, which is part of a national initiative designed to raise awareness of and compassion for homeless pets. There are two goals to the Curriculum: 1) To increase awareness of homeless dogs; and 2) to help each one of us become a calm, confident, and caring individual who can make a difference in the lives of people, animals, and the environment. Of these three traits I mentioned – calm, confident, and caring – which one means a lot to you personally? Each of us has a different answer to this question – why?</p> <p>An essential component to the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is that we are also going to learn about (and from) dogs. If you've ever spent any time around dogs, you know that, just like people, they come in many different shapes, sizes, colors, and personalities. We will focus on dogs called Mutt-i-grees®. Mutt-i-grees® are dogs awaiting adoption at an animal shelter.</p> <p>Shelters have cats, purebred (pedigree) dogs, and mixed-breed dogs that have been abandoned and need to be adopted into permanent homes where they can receive care and companionship.</p>



Introduction
(cont'd)

The word Mutt-i-grees® is used to highlight the desirability of shelter animals if and when we are looking for a pet. *Prompt for discussion of student perceptions of shelters and shelter animals. Teacher can use suggested websites from Readings and Resources to introduce students to shelters and Mutt-i-grees®.*

The word Mutt-i-grees® comes from the root word “mutt”. What words do you associate with the word “mutt?” *Teacher can record student responses on board.*

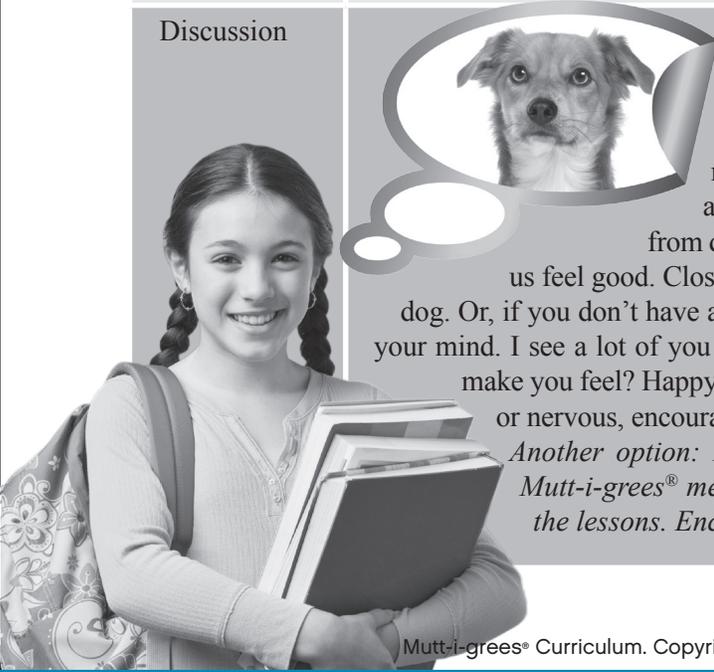
Do the words you used have a positive or negative **connotation**? Remind students that connotation is the association (from our emotions or imagination) that surrounds a word.

Why the concern about shelter pets, or Mutt-i-grees®?

About 8 million dogs and cats enter animal shelters each year. To put that in perspective, **that’s enough dogs and cats to fill all the seats at the Dallas Cowboys’ football stadium more than 63 times!** It’s estimated that about 75 percent of the dogs in shelters are mixed-breed. Animal shelters try their best to get the animals adopted, but it’s not always possible when space and financial resources are limited. What do you think could be a potential side-effect of this kind of burden on animal shelters? (Shelters may need to limit the number of animals they can care for or they might choose to euthanize the animals in their care.) The overall national goal should be for us to have no-kill shelters, but how would that be possible unless anytime someone wants a dog, they opt to adopt?

Adopting a shelter dog will save a life; not everyone is aware of this. Having a dog is not always possible, however. If you’re not able to have a pet in your home, what are some other ways to help? (Volunteering, promoting awareness of Mutt-i-grees®, asking shelter personnel what they need, being an advocate for the shelter with your friends and relatives.) *If students have had prior experience with the Curriculum, ask students what they remember learning about Mutt-i-grees® and ways they can help.*

Discussion



In addition to learning about Mutt-i-grees®, we will also discuss what we can learn from them; this is what makes the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum unique. Even if you don’t have a dog, you can learn so much from them. What are some character traits you associate with dogs or some things that we can learn from dogs? (Loyalty, unconditional love...) Dogs can make us feel good. Close your eyes for a minute and imagine being with your dog. Or, if you don’t have a dog, imagine being with any dog. Picture the dog in your mind. I see a lot of you are smiling. How did thinking about a dog, or dogs, make you feel? Happy? Relaxed? If a student says it makes them feel scared or nervous, encourage discussion of previous negative experiences.

Another option: Have students write a reflective poem about what Mutt-i-grees® mean to them and what they hope to learn throughout the lessons. Encourage them to share with the class.

Learning by
Doing

Fido's fur-book page. People love their pets and a recent survey estimates that up to 14 percent of dog owners maintain a Facebook page for their dogs. Of those, about 42 percent have between 1 and 25 friends and some have thousands of "likes"!

I'm going to ask you to imagine that you are a Mutt-i-gree® that is waiting to be adopted at a shelter. One way you might make people aware that you're up for adoption would be to create a page on a social networking site that people could visit to learn more about you. Today we are going to create a Fur-book page for a Mutt-i-gree®. As you create your page, remember to highlight important things:

- What is your name and age?
- What do you look like?
- What are your interests?
- What is your energy level? For example, would you need to be exercised a lot?
- Do you get along with other animals? Would you prefer to be an only dog?
- Do you get along with children?
- What is your favorite thing to do?

Students can create the page on a computer or by using arts and crafts materials. These pages may be displayed in class.

Closure

Today we learned about the goals of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and what it would mean to us to be calm, confident, and caring. We also learned that Mutt-i-grees® live in animal shelters and are waiting to be adopted into permanent homes. We discussed what we can learn from Mutt-i-grees® and that we don't have to own a dog to learn from or help dogs in need.



Fido's Fur-book



Name:

.....

Approximate Age:

.....

Description:

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.....

Location:

.....

Contact Information:

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Interests:

.....

.....

Activities:

.....

.....

Energy Level:

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What else would you like to include?

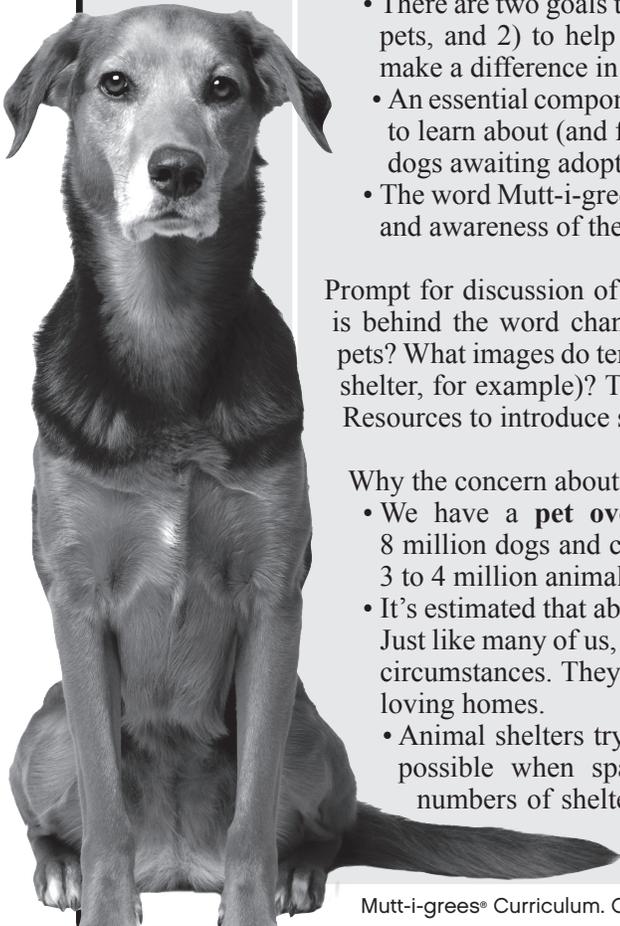
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LESSON	1.1 Who Let the Dogs In?
Objective	Students will be introduced to the goals and rationale of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and take action to promote social change.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Profile a Pooch</i> worksheet • Computer with Internet access • Ribbon, beads, or other materials to make bracelets
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutt-i-gree® • Breed / Mixed-breed • Pedigree • Pet overpopulation • Puppy mills • Backyard breeders • Euthanasia
Overview	Understanding the overall goals of the Curriculum and gaining appreciation of the distinctive qualities and desirability of Mutt-i-grees® will help students explore ways they can become involved in and stand up for social, environmental, and humane issues. Appreciating their ability to identify and act on their beliefs will enhance students’ sense of social responsibility and encourage discussion of future education and career choices.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is part of a national initiative designed to raise awareness of and compassion for homeless pets. • There are two goals to the Curriculum: 1) to increase awareness of homeless pets, and 2) to help us become confident and caring individuals who can make a difference in the lives of people, animals, and the environment. • An essential component to the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is that we are going to learn about (and from) dogs. We will focus on Mutt-i-grees®, which are dogs awaiting adoption at an animal shelter. • The word Mutt-i-gree® is used to highlight the desirability of shelter animals and awareness of their plight and needs. <p>Prompt for discussion of student perceptions of shelters and shelter pets. What is behind the word change from “mutt” to “Mutt-i-gree®” to describe shelter pets? What images do terms evoke (mutt vs. Mutt-i-gree®, dog pound vs. animal shelter, for example)? Teacher can use suggested websites from Readings and Resources to introduce students to shelters and Mutt-i-grees®.</p> <p>Why the concern about shelter pets or Mutt-i-grees®?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a pet overpopulation problem in the United States. About 8 million dogs and cats enter animal shelters each year, and approximately 3 to 4 million animals are euthanized each year. That’s almost half! • It’s estimated that about 75 percent of the dogs in shelters are mixed-breed. Just like many of us, mixed-breed dogs come from various backgrounds and circumstances. They are just as special as pedigree dogs and deserve safe, loving homes. • Animal shelters try their best to get animals adopted, but it’s not always possible when space and financial resources are limited. Increasing numbers of shelters have a no-kill policy and will keep pets until they find homes for them. However, many shelters lack resources and resort to euthanasia.



Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum. Copyright © 2013 The Petsavers Foundation

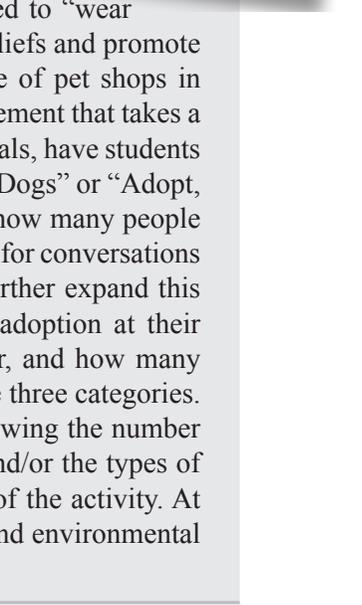
Discussion
(cont'd)

- Adopting a shelter dog will save a life; not everyone is aware of this. Dogs purchased from pet stores may be bred in **puppy mills**; there is often no way of being certain even if assurances to the contrary are given. Part of the mission of animal shelters is to rescue dogs from the horrendous conditions of puppy mill operations.
- Puppy mills are places – some call them factories – that produce puppies to sell in pet stores in our neighborhoods. Owners of puppy mills have no consideration for the treatment of animals. They do not give them the proper food, water, medical care, and love that they need to grow. The puppies are kept in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and they do not get to play or exercise. They may be kept in cages and never let outside. Often, dogs that come from puppy mills are scared and sick. Some have to learn to walk because they have never been out of a cage. Many puppies are born with hereditary developmental defects that can last a lifetime.
- **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.
- You may know people who have purchased dogs from pet stores or from breeders – your family might have even done so in the past. They may not have known the truth about where these dogs may have come from or the horrible situations they may have experienced. However, we can help spread the word about the wonderful attributes of shelter dogs by taking action on behalf of Mutt-i-grees® to convince people to adopt their next dog from an animal shelter.



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>

<p>Write and Reflect</p>	<p><u>Each dog has a story.</u> 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 <i>Profile a Pooch</i> worksheet to get started. The collection of profiles students create may be displayed in class or compiled in a class album and posted online.</p>	
<p>Investigate</p>	<p><u>Take a stand.</u> Ask students to research the horrific conditions of puppy mills, using specific examples from the news or media reports. Does this knowledge move students to action? Encourage students to participate in national campaigns to end puppy mills. How can they help?</p>	
<p>Create</p>	<p><u>Wear your heart on your wrist.</u> 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.</p>	
<p>Closure</p>	<p>Today’s lesson was about the goals and rationale of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and included a focus on Mutt-i-grees®, a new word highlighting the desirability of pets in animal shelters. We also discussed some of the horror stories that are the experiences of many shelter dogs rescued from puppy mills and how we may become involved in advocating for causes, such as pet adoption or the elimination of puppy mills. This knowledge may be applied to other social issues and injustices we may encounter.</p>	



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?

.....

.....