

# The Mutt-i-grees<sup>®</sup> Curriculum

*Calm, Confident and Caring Kids*  
**GRADES 9 – 12**



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, with gracious  
support from The Cesar Millan Foundation



[www.education.muttigrees.org](http://www.education.muttigrees.org)

# ACHIEVING AWARENESS

GRADES 9 – 12





## LESSON OVERVIEW

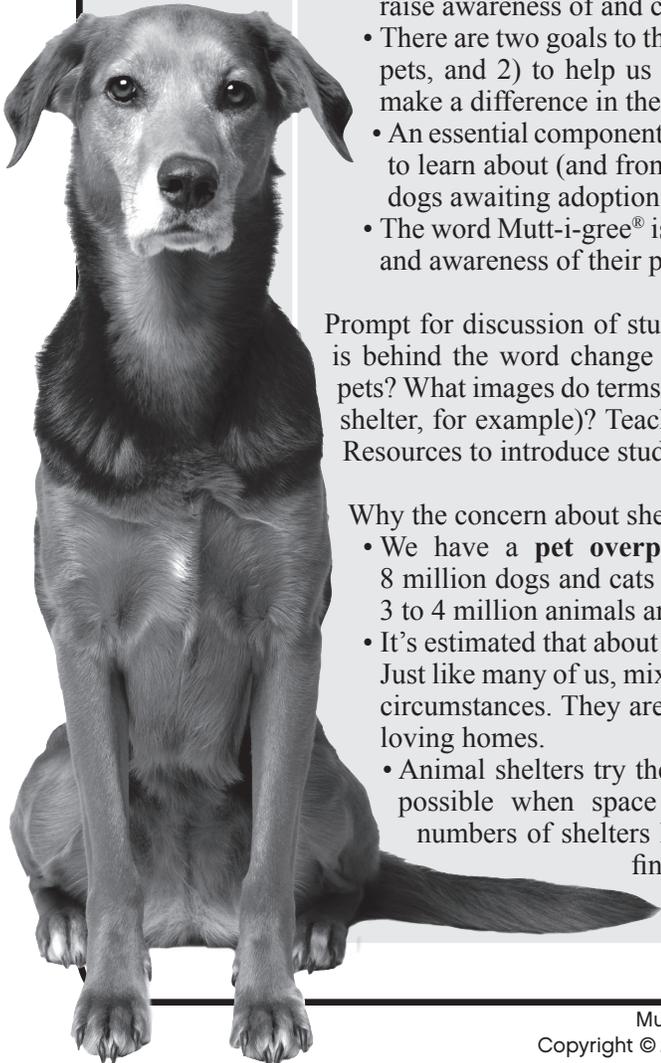
Please complete the first lesson, then select from the lessons below: \*

LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
1.1 Who Let the Dogs In?	Students will be introduced to the goals and rationale of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and take action to promote social change.
1.2 Tell Your Story	Students will identify their own unique characteristics, skills, interests, talents, strengths, and limitations and recognize how their unique traits complement those of others.
1.3 Amazing Dogs	Students will learn about the field of human-animal interaction and identify lessons about resiliency and character they can learn from dogs, enabling them to persevere and overcome obstacles.
LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
1.4 Turn Off Your Worry	Students will acquire an understanding of individual differences in responses to emotions; reflect on their personal reactions; and develop emotional management strategies for coping with stressful life events and changes.
1.5 Black or White	Students will review extreme thinking (how some people see themselves as all or nothing) and how this affects their feelings, actions, and decisions. They will learn what they can do to adjust their thinking, gain a realistic self-appraisal, and appreciate the value of learning from failures.
1.6 Heads Up	Students will learn about positive and negative thinking, how one's mindset can influence outcomes, and how to consciously focus and encourage themselves.

\* The first lesson must be implemented; it introduces the Curriculum and provides context for all other lessons. After implementing the first lesson, select from the other lessons, using as many as time allows.



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"> <li>• <i>Profile a Pooch</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> <li>• Ribbon, beads, or other materials to make bracelets</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutt-i-gree®</li> <li>• Breed / Mixed-breed</li> <li>• Pedigree</li> <li>• Pet overpopulation</li> <li>• Puppy mills</li> <li>• Backyard breeders</li> <li>• Euthanasia</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is part of a national initiative designed to raise awareness of and compassion for homeless pets.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• An essential component to the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is that we are going to learn about (and from) dogs. We will focus on <b>Mutt-i-grees®</b>, which are dogs awaiting adoption at an animal shelter.</li> <li>• The word Mutt-i-gree® is used to highlight the desirability of shelter animals and awareness of their plight and needs.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• We have a <b>pet overpopulation</b> 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!</li> <li>• It’s estimated that about 75 percent of the dogs in shelters are <b>mixed-breed</b>. Just like many of us, mixed-breed dogs come from various backgrounds and circumstances. They are just as special as <b>pedigree</b> dogs and deserve safe, loving homes.</li> <li>• 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 <b>euthanasia</b>.</li> </ul>



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>	





North Shore Animal League America: <http://www.animalleague.org>  
 Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum: <http://education.muttigrees.org/>  
*Canines in the Classroom: Raising Humane Children through Interactions with Animals* by Michelle A. Rivera  
*Dogs Decoded*, PBS [DVD]  
*National Geographic: Science of Dogs* [DVD]  
 Purebred vs. Mixed-Breed Dogs: <http://www.animalleague.org/expert-advice/adoption/articles/preparation/dogs/purebred-vs-mixed-breed-1.html>  
 See Snapshots section of this binder for more information on pet overpopulation and puppy mills

Each Dog Has a Story

Adopt a Dog: <http://www.animalleague.org/adopt-a-pet/dogs/adopt/>

Take a Stand

*Puppy Mill Dogs SPEAK!: Happy Stories and Helpful Advice* by Christine Palm Shaughness and Chris M. Slaweki  
*Saving Gracie: How One Dog Escaped the Shadowy World of American Puppy Mills* by Carol Bradley  
 Puppy Mill & Purebred Dog Rescue: <http://www.animalleague.org/rescue/pet-rescue-programs/puppy-mill-rescue/>  
 Beware of Backyard Breeders: <http://www.animalleague.org/rescue/pet-rescue-programs/puppy-mill-rescue/beware-backyard-breeding.html>

Wear Your Heart on Your Wrist

Pet Rescue: <http://www.animalleague.org/rescue/>



# PROFILE A POOCH



Name:

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Approximate Age:

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Physical Description:

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.....

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

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Education/training:

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

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Energy level:

.....

Favorite song or movie might be:

.....

Looking for (what type of owner?):

.....

What else would you like to include?

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.....

LESSON	1.2 Tell Your Story
Objective	Students will identify their own unique characteristics, skills, interests, talents, strengths, and limitations and recognize how their unique traits complement those of others.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It's Okay to be Different</i> worksheet</li> <li>• <i>Long Story Short</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Tolerance</li> <li>• Diversity/Diverse</li> <li>• Interdependence</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Limitation</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>The process of identifying individual abilities and traits (what we can do well, what we can learn to do better, and what we cannot change) will help students overcome self-doubt and gain a stronger sense of self-confidence and personal direction. A realistic <b>self-assessment</b> will help students determine life choices and can serve as the foundation for positive social and emotional skills and interpersonal relationships. In some cases, it may be easier for students to focus on their strengths. When students share this information in class, they will understand the similarities and differences among them and gain appreciation for <b>diversity</b>, as well as recognize how individuals may be different yet still complement each other. Such awareness has been shown to increase students' sensitivity to disparity and capacity for empathy for others from different backgrounds or with different ability levels. Showing students that differences exist not only among people, but also among animals, will enhance their understanding of individuality and individual differences. The discussion may be extended to reflecting on how one's characteristics and abilities may be applied to educational and career goals.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs have many similarities, but even those from the same litter who look very much alike have different personalities, characteristics, and abilities. Think about it – are you exactly like your siblings?</li> <li>• When we interact with dogs we generally don't regard their differences as detracting. We realize the differences and unique characteristics contribute to making each one of the dogs special.</li> <li>• It's the same with people – each one is unique, yet at the same time we are all a part of a larger social circle. For us, being aware of our own special traits (what we are good at and interested in) provides a direction and sense of purpose. However, it's not always easy to know ourselves.</li> <li>• Once we recognize and accept our own uniqueness, we can build on our strengths and also appreciate the ways in which others are special and how their traits, skills, and interests complement ours.</li> <li>• America is known as a melting pot because it is made up of a <b>diverse</b> population. This forms the basis for <b>tolerance</b> and acceptance of ourselves, as well as of those who might be different from us.</li> </ul>

Discussion  
(cont'd)

- In nature, biodiversity actually helps to create a healthy ecosystem and **interdependence**; different species depend on each other to survive. For example, our dogs depend on us for food, water, shelter, and affection, and we depend on them for companionship and assistance.
- Encourage class discussion: How do your strengths complement others? How do you rely on others to support your weaknesses?

**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>

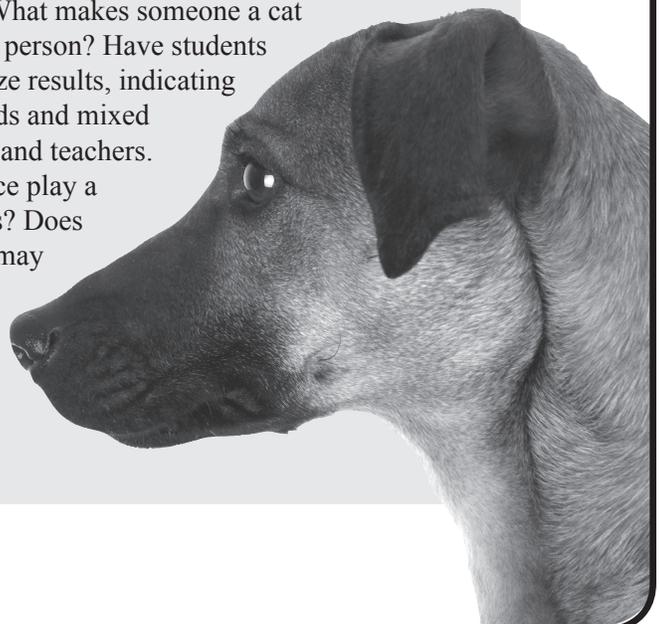
Write and  
Reflect



It's okay to be different. One of the most important lessons we can learn from dogs is **acceptance**; dogs accept us regardless of how we look, what we have accomplished, and what skills we possess. Dogs also accept themselves. Dogs don't seem to dwell on what they cannot do or how they look or whether they are fat or skinny or too short. Also, 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" or "I won't play with him because his tail is cropped." Instead, a dog might say, "I want to play with her because she likes to play tug of war." Introduce students to dogs with disabilities or physical challenges. If possible, show a video featuring a dog with a physical disability. Have students use the *It's Okay to be Different* worksheet and encourage them to pay attention to the various strengths and weaknesses of each dog. Discuss with the class. After this activity, ask students to use the *Long Story Short* worksheet to write a paragraph highlighting two of their own strengths and two **limitations** – one they can change (e.g., I have a temper) and one they cannot (e.g., I am not as tall as I'd like to be). Some teachers may prefer to adapt the worksheet and instruct students to focus only on identifying three of their strengths and how these complement different strengths that a friend or relative may have.

Apply

Meow vs. bow-wow. While cats and dogs are both wonderful pet companions, they have different characteristics and traits. For example, most cats are more independent than dogs and may prefer solitude over socialization. Some people may prefer cats to dogs or vice versa. What makes someone a cat person and what makes someone a dog person? Have students survey students and teachers and analyze results, indicating diversity of dog and cat breeds and mixed breeds owned by students and teachers. Does one's prior experience play a role in the selection of dogs? Does personality? This activity may also include look-alike contests or displaying photos of teachers' and/or students' pets and asking students to guess their owners.



Investigate	<p><u>Follow your tracks.</u> Dogs may have been the first animal to be domesticated, and they are the most popular working, hunting, and companion animal in human history. Through selective breeding, humans have created hundreds of various dog breeds. Many dog breeds come from different areas of the world. For example, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, native to South Africa, are hunting dogs (hounds) originally bred to capture large prey and protect humans from lion attacks. The Chow Chow is an ancient breed of northern Chinese origin. Chow Chows were originally bred to be working dogs used for hunting, herding, pulling, and protection. The Saluki, although not well known in this country, was revered by the pharaohs, who selected them to be their companions in the pyramids. Salukis are also held in high esteem in Pakistan where the Salukis' speed in mountainous terrain is revered. Have students identify their own ancestral history and then "follow their tracks" to research the various dog breeds that originated from where their ancestors came. Create a class map highlighting the various areas from which students' ancestors originated.</p>
Closure	<p>Today we discussed our unique traits, talents, and interests and what makes us who we are. We also talked about accepting ourselves and others and the importance of diversity, both to humans and in nature.</p>



	<p><u>It's Okay to be Different</u>  <i>A Rare Breed of Love</i> by Jana Kohl  <i>Oogy: The Dog Only a Family Could Love</i> by Larry Levin  <i>Frankie, the Walk-n-Roll Dog</i> by Barbara Gail Techel and Victoria Kay Lieftring  Frankie, the Walk-n-Roll Dog: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcC_xRTeE0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJcC_xRTeE0</a>  Blind Love: Lily and Maddison: <a href="http://www.cesarsway.com/newsandevents/dognews/Blind-Love-Lily-and-Maddison">http://www.cesarsway.com/newsandevents/dognews/Blind-Love-Lily-and-Maddison</a>  Faith, the 2-Legged Dog: <a href="http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Faith-the-Walking-Dog-Video">http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Faith-the-Walking-Dog-Video</a></p> <p><u>Meow vs. Bow-Wow</u>  The Truth About Cat People and Dog People: <a href="http://pets.webmd.com/cats/ss/slideshow-truth-about-cat-people-and-dog-people">http://pets.webmd.com/cats/ss/slideshow-truth-about-cat-people-and-dog-people</a>  Dog Owners Do Look Like Their Pets, Say Psychologists: <a href="http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/5094835/Dog-owners-do-look-like-their-pets-say-psychologists.html">http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/5094835/Dog-owners-do-look-like-their-pets-say-psychologists.html</a></p> <p><u>Follow Your Tracks</u>  <i>The Underdog: A Celebration of Mutts</i> by Julia Szabo  <i>The Mutt Book: Decoding Your Dog's Heritage</i> by David Alderton  How to Build a Dog: <a href="http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/02/build-a-dog/clark-photography">http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/02/build-a-dog/clark-photography</a></p>
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# IT'S OKAY TO BE DIFFERENT

Describe the dog from the video WITHOUT focusing on its physical description. For example, did the dog seem happy? Playful? Positive? Optimistic? Confident?

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List some of the dog's strengths:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List some of the dog's limitations:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



After watching the video, what thoughts came to your mind? Did the video change your thinking in any way?

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If you were asked to summarize the video you just saw what would you say?

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# LONG STORY SHORT

In one paragraph, identify two character traits, skills, or abilities you feel are your strong points and two limitations: one that you can improve on (indicate what you can do to improve) and one that you cannot change. For the latter limitation, indicate what you can do instead or how you cope. For example, if you love baseball but you are not athletic, could you raise money for the team? Aspire to become a coach? Decide to emphasize your other traits/abilities?

Strengths

1)

2)

Limitations

1)

2)

How can you adjust?



LESSON	1.3 Amazing Dogs
Objective	Students will learn about the field of human-animal interaction and identify lessons about resiliency and character they can learn from dogs, enabling them to persevere and overcome obstacles.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resiliency</li> <li>• Character traits</li> <li>• Human-animal interaction</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> <li>• Adversity</li> </ul>
Overview	<p><b>Human-animal interaction</b> is an emerging field of study that examines the benefits of animals in our lives – in particular, the healing power of pets and the association between dog ownership and physical and mental health. The research is beginning to yield insights that are being applied to medical and behavioral interventions. One example is the powerful relationship between dogs and children with autism and developmental disabilities; we do not yet understand the relationship, but there are reports that whereas children with autism do not make eye contact or otherwise relate to people, they will look at, touch, and even befriend dogs. Highlighting examples like these provides opportunities for learning and reflection about human behavior and may be used to interest and motivate students.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many books and videos portray some truly amazing dogs, including ones who know hundreds of words or can bark to music. In these cases, talent is necessary, but in and of itself it is not sufficient; also required – on the part of the owner as well as the dog – is practice, persistence, and patience.</li> <li>• However, even ordinary dogs – those who are part of our everyday day lives – amaze us in the many lessons we can learn from them. Also, recent scientific studies have proven that dog ownership can have positive effects on physical and mental health.</li> <li>• The field of human-animal interaction is an emerging area of study that examines the benefits of animals in our lives – in particular, the healing power of pets. How have your experiences with your pets affected your life? Do you know anyone whose pets have helped them in any way?</li> <li>• Encourage students to share their ideas of what we can learn from dogs. A simple Internet search for “dog” can provide content for discussion. Some suggestions to start: <b>Resiliency, loyalty, hope, leadership, friendship, unconditional love, devotion, confidence, acceptance, patience, and overcoming self-doubt.</b> Prompt for discussion about why these <b>character traits/lessons</b> are important and how they can help us become better human beings.</li> </ul>



**LEARNING BY DOING:**

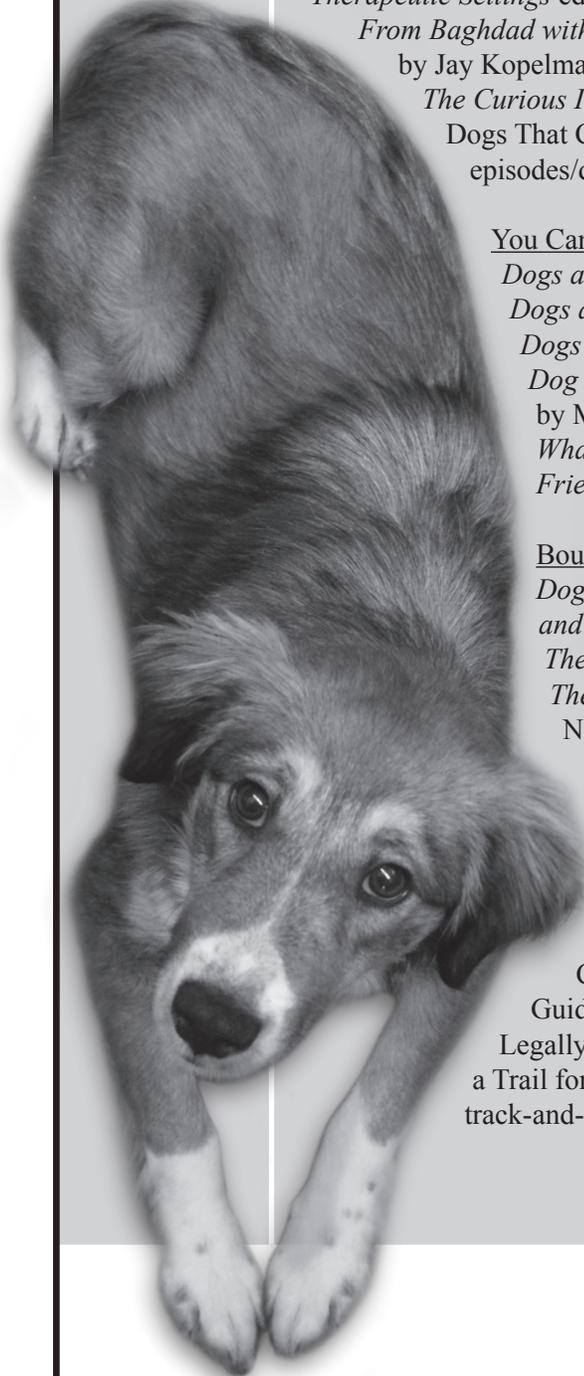
Choose one or more of the activities below. Additional activities can be found online: <http://education.muttigrees.org/mutt-i-grees-curriculum-strategies-activities>



<p>Write and Reflect</p>	<p><u>You can count on me.</u> How do dogs show us that they care? They listen and provide us with companionship, unconditional love, and loyalty. Think about loyalty and what it means to you. Do you consider yourself to be a loyal person? What aspect of loyalty is important to you? Encourage students to research examples of dogs' loyalty and have them reflect on the ways in which they, as individuals, show loyalty and why it's important. If students can think of other valuable ways in which dogs can teach lessons about life and character, they may select other character traits to write about instead.</p>
<p>Apply</p>	<p><u>Bouncing back.</u> One important lesson we can learn from dogs is resiliency. The term resiliency refers to the ability to quickly recover from a challenging situation. People often fret over difficulties in their lives; however, dogs are unlikely to dwell on their misfortunes. They have the capacity to bounce back from setbacks and can be remarkably resilient. Even dogs that have been abused or neglected can bounce back and become healthy members of a family once they are given loving care. Teacher can show videos from Readings and Resources and follow up with discussion. Encourage students to think about difficult situations they have found themselves in and how they rebounded. Are there any lessons they can learn from dogs that might apply to their lives? If time permits, have students journal their thoughts or share with the class. If there are dogs in need at your local shelter, encourage students to brainstorm ways to raise money to help fund medical procedures for these animals.</p>
<p>Investigate</p>	<p><u>With the help of a dog.</u> In some cases, dogs have helped humans with disabilities achieve their dreams. Sami Stoner, a 16-year-old who became blind in 8th grade, always loved to run and continues to be on the school's cross-country team despite her disability – all with the help of her guide dog, Chloe. Teachers can share Sami's story and video from Readings and Resources with the class. If time permits, assign small groups of students to research others who, with the help of a dog, have overcome <b>adversity</b>. Some examples may be available in your school or community.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<p>The discussion today focused on the many lessons we can learn from dogs. Recognizing that we can learn from dogs can help us to better understand ourselves, as well as recognize the deep bond humans have cultivated with dogs throughout history.</p>




 RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES



*Amazing Dogs: A Cabinet of Canine Curiosities* by Jan Bonderson  
*Animals in Our Lives: Human-Animal Interaction in Family, Community, and Therapeutic Settings* edited by Peggy McCardle and others  
*From Baghdad with Love: A Marine, the War, and a Dog Named Lava* by Jay Kopelman and Melinda Roth  
*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon  
 Dogs That Changed the World: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/dogs-that-changed-the-world/introduction/1273/>

You Can Count on Me

*Dogs and Devotion: A Celebration of the Bond Between Dogs and People* by the Monks of New Skete  
*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  
*What Dogs Teach Us: Life's Lessons Learned from Our Best Friends* by Glenn Dromgoole

Bouncing Back

*Dogtown: Tales of Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Redemption* by Stefan Bechtel  
*The Lost Dogs: Michael Vick's Dogs and Their Tale of Rescue and Redemption* by Jim Gorant  
 North Shore Animal League America's Help Me Heal Program: <http://www.animalleague.org/support/support-rescue-medical-programs/help-me-heal/>

With the Help of a Dog

Guide Dog, Runner Make Winning Cross-Country Combo: <http://www.wkyc.com/news/article/212502/45/Guide-dog-runner-make-winning-cross-country-combo>  
 Legally Blind Runner and Guide Dog are Blazing a Trail for the Visually Impaired: [http://espn.go.com/high-school/track-and-xc/story/\\_/id/7626121/sami-stoner](http://espn.go.com/high-school/track-and-xc/story/_/id/7626121/sami-stoner)

LESSON	1.4 Turn Off Your Worry
Objective	Students will acquire an understanding of individual differences in responses to emotions, reflect on their personal reactions, and develop emotional management strategies for coping with stressful life events and changes.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> <li>• Materials to make worry dolls, worry jars, or worry beads</li> <li>• <i>How Do You Cope?</i> worksheet</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Mindfulness / Mindful awareness</li> <li>• Living in the moment</li> <li>• Emotional management</li> <li>• Coping mechanism</li> <li>• Relaxation technique</li> <li>• Ramification</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Anxious...worried... stressed.... These feelings affect all of us. For teens in particular, changes brought on by their experiences in high school and adolescence in general may be overwhelming to the point where they are unable to succeed in and enjoy school. Although anxiety and stress are common, students differ in their ability to manage these and other emotions. Some may simply worry about things they feel anxious about and may erroneously believe that constant worry will alleviate anxiety or address the problem. Gaining experience in identifying not only the causes of feelings, but also personal ways for managing them will help students understand and effectively cope with changes and difficult life events.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage class discussion on anxiety, worrying, and stress. What triggers these emotions? How does one cope? The different answers students provide will illustrate individual differences in <b>coping mechanisms</b> and what triggers negative emotions. Sometimes, we have no idea why we are anxious – this is common among adolescents, as well as adults.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their relatives’ reactions to difficulties in their lives. Do they have good <b>emotional management</b> techniques? Do they become agitated and angry with others? Do they worry so much it shows in their facial expressions? How similar/different are they in their responses to difficult emotions?</li> <li>• We all have our own styles of managing emotions. As infants, we may have used a pacifier as a way to decrease <b>anxiety</b> but have since developed other strategies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are dogs immune from anxiety and stress? Some people think that dogs have it made because they have nothing to worry about; they don’t go to school, take tests, or find out their friend didn’t invite them to a party. However, dogs pick up on our energy, so if we are anxious this will affect them, as well.</li> <li>• Dogs also react to certain situations with stress. For some dogs, being left alone results in separation anxiety, so we know they are not immune. However, a dog’s stress may manifest differently than with humans. Some dogs may chew and destroy furniture, while others may bark – these are ways of showing us they are anxious and not in control of the situation.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- There are two ways to manage anxiety. One is prevention. For example, adopting a lifestyle that includes regular meditation or adopting **mindful awareness** (a “**living for the moment**” attitude) – meaning that we try not to let things get to us. The other is intervention: adopting a **relaxation technique** or coping mechanism to counter the negative impact of anxiety (this may be different for each individual).
- Encourage students to discuss what coping mechanisms work for them (going for a walk, reading, listening to music...). What are the **ramifications** of not managing anxiety and stress and the implications for physical and mental well-being?

**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>

Write and Reflect

A dog in mourning. One of the most stressful life experiences is the loss of a loved one. Losing a pack member can be traumatic for humans, but did you know that dogs mourn, too? When a dog loses a member of the family, whether it’s another dog or a human companion, physical signs of depression may become evident. Discuss bereavement and the ways in which dogs (and people) mourn the loss of a loved one. We mourn other losses as well, such as when a friend moves out of state. What are some of the feelings associated with this type of loss? If any students are currently dealing with a recent loss, encourage the class to brainstorm ideas to help support their classmates or write a poem or narrative expressing ways to help support friends experiencing a loss or helping a dog cope with loss. Use the *How Do You Cope?* worksheet to get started.



Investigate

Stressed out! Ask students to investigate the sources of stress for people in general and each of them in particular and think about how stress affects dogs. What stresses you out? Trying to find a part-time job? Getting into college? Getting good grades? Most of us experience at least a little stress in our daily lives; however, it can affect our health if we allow it to dominate our thinking. Think about the way(s) the symptoms of stress affect you: Does your heart rate increase? Do your palms sweat? Do you become anxious or irritable? Dogs experience stress, too. Think about a dog who has spent time in a shelter or who has been in and out of different homes...how might s/he deal with stress? What are the signs that your dog is experiencing stress? Some dogs lose their fur, while others may act out in destructive ways. Have students reflect on their stress symptoms and think about ways to address these symptoms before they become health issues. Does gender play a role in the way humans (and dogs) handle stressful situations? Have students research the symptoms of stress or anxiety in dogs. How do these relate to the ways in which humans experience stress? It’s become more common for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to use dogs as part of their therapy. How can spending time with dogs reduce stress?

Create



Worry dogs. Does worrying help? Is it a good coping mechanism? Generally, worrying doesn't help solve a problem, but some cultures have adopted a practice that sets up a time and place where one can worry or think about the problem causing the anxiety. Worry dolls, or trouble dolls, are small, colorful dolls used to absorb a person's worries, allowing the person to release the troubles in their life. According to Guatemalan folklore, when a child cannot sleep, he tells his worries to the doll and places it under his pillow. Worry beads, or prayer ropes, are strings of beads used to relieve stress in other cultures. Discuss the psychological benefits of releasing worries or setting boundaries by defining a place and time for worrying. Have students create worry dogs (small dolls in the shape of dogs), a personal worry jar in which students can write down and release their worries, or key chains or bracelets to act as worry beads. Another option: Have students reflect on how and when they worry and ask them to write about or draw an image of their personal worry and share with the class. What does your worry look like? Is it big and scary? Does it live outside you or is it festering inside? Is it comforting in some way?

Closure

Anxiety is a common feeling. Some describe it as stress, others as apprehension or uneasiness. Often, we know why we are anxious – a test that is coming up, for example. Preparing for the test may ease the apprehension and give us a sense of control. Sometimes we cannot pinpoint the cause of anxiety, nor do anything about it, but at times, we can still address its impact by relying on a coping mechanism.

*Pack of Two* by Caroline Knapp  
Dog Dialog: Living in the Moment

A Dog in Mourning

*Going Home: Finding Peace When Pets Die* by Jon Katz

A Dog In Mourning: Helping Our Pets Cope with Loss:

[http://www.cesarsway.com/training/socialization/](http://www.cesarsway.com/training/socialization/A-Dog-In-Mourning-Helping-Our-Pets-Cope)

A-Dog-In-Mourning-Helping-Our-Pets-Cope

Resolving Dog Behavior Problems After the Loss of a Pack Member:

<http://www.cesarsway.com/dogbehavior/fearandanxiety/resolving-behavior-issues>

Stressed Out!

Stress Brings Out the Difference in Male, Female Brains:

<http://www.livescience.com/10140-stress-brings-difference-male-female-brains.html>

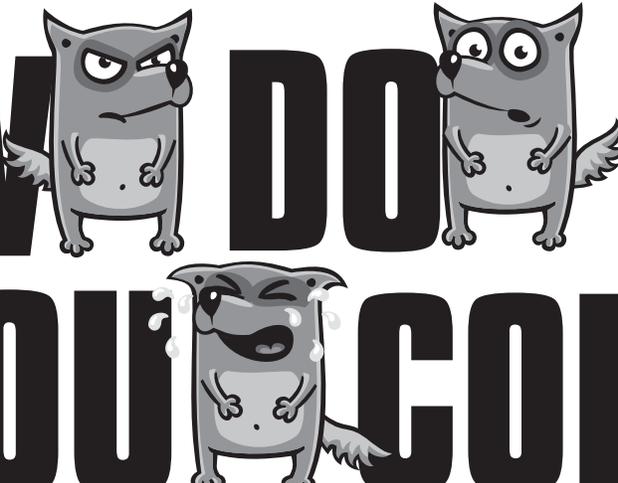
Stress Causes Brain to Shrink:

<http://news.yale.edu/2012/01/09/even-healthy-stress-causes-brain-shrink-yale-study-shows>

Stress-Relieving Therapy Dogs: <http://www.cesarsway.com/training/socialization/Stress-Relieving-Therapy-Dogs>



# HOW DO YOU COPE?

The title 'HOW DO YOU COPE?' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Three cartoon dogs are integrated into the text. One dog is positioned behind the 'W' in 'HOW', looking angry with furrowed brows and a downturned mouth. Another dog is behind the 'O' in 'DO', looking surprised with wide eyes and an open mouth. A third dog is behind the 'O' in 'COPE?', looking sad and crying with tears on its face.

List three strategies you use – or could use – to calm down when you're stressed, upset, anxious, overwhelmed, or angry:

1.

2.

3.

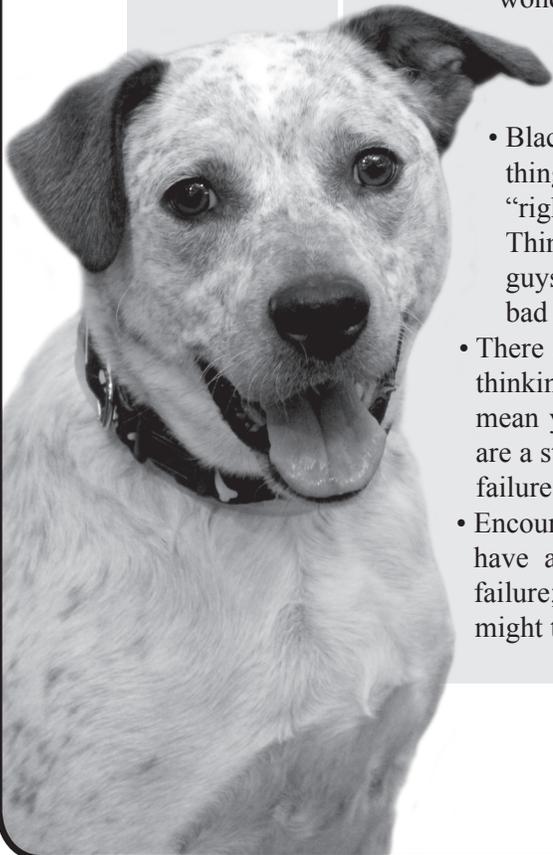
List three phrases or mantras you can say to yourself to calm down when you're stressed, upset, anxious, overwhelmed, or angry:

1.

2.

3.

LESSON	1.5 Black or White
Objective	Students will review extreme thinking (how some people see themselves as all or nothing) and how this affects their feelings, actions, and decisions. They will learn what they can do to adjust their thinking, gain a realistic self-appraisal, and appreciate the value of learning from failures.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Middle Ground</i> worksheet</li> <li>• <i>Challenge Your Thinking</i> worksheet</li> <li>• <i>Shades of Gray</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarizing</li> <li>• Compartmentalize</li> <li>• Middle ground</li> <li>• All-or-nothing thinking</li> <li>• Extremes</li> <li>• Balance</li> </ul>
Overview	<p><b>All-or-nothing thinking</b> is a habit of thinking about oneself and one’s experiences in the extreme. It is irrational because things are generally not completely one way or another. When students adopt this way of thinking in <b>extremes</b>, they are continually judging themselves. This inhibits experimentation and creative thinking and exacerbates a fear of failure. Most of our experiences contain elements of both good and bad. Recognizing that nothing is all good or all bad helps students gain a realistic assessment and self-awareness.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of our experiences in life are not completely devastating or absolutely wonderful, but contain elements of both good and bad. However, sometimes we might catch ourselves thinking of things in extremes (<b>polarizing</b> our thoughts). Over-simplifying life in this way ignores the complexity of human emotions.</li> <li>• Black-or-white thinking (all-or-nothing thinking) <b>compartmentalizes</b> things, people, and thoughts into categories of “good” and “bad” or “right” and “wrong,” with nothing in between (no <b>middle ground</b>). Think about games you might have played as a kid – there were “good guys” and “bad guys,” right? Is this realistic? Even those labeled as bad must also have good qualities.</li> <li>• There are many situations that can prompt this irrational all-or-nothing thinking: If you run for class president, but come in second, does that mean you have no leadership skills and will never be a leader? If you are a straight-A student, but get a C on a test, does this make you a total failure in all things?</li> <li>• Encourage discussion of examples where students or people they know have adopted all-or-nothing thinking habits. Some examples: I’m a failure; she’s perfect; I never get what I want; that’s impossible, etc. Why might this type of thinking be harmful?</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- This kind of thinking can become habitual, unless we take steps to change it. When we become aware of the way we think, we can reframe our thoughts to train ourselves to maintain a balanced mindset.
- Our goal is to achieve a **balance** within our thoughts. It's normal to have negative thoughts every once in awhile, but all-or-nothing thinking habits can damage our self-esteem.

**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>

Write and  
Reflect

A nation of extremes. In some cities in the U.S., poverty and wealth can be found side by side, both in small cities and in larger urban centers. Our being a nation of extremes is also exemplified in our treatment of dogs: on one hand, there are examples of dog pampering – how much money is spent on dogs each year? What does doggie day care or the cost of dog coats and dog shoes tell us about how people treat their pets? On the other hand, there are many instances of abuse reflected in many ways, especially the number of homeless dogs in shelters and the number of dogs euthanized each year. Use the topic to write an essay or have a class debate.



Apply

Middle ground. Instead of always thinking in extremes, it's important to identify the different levels/variations of feelings or thoughts. Coming to a middle ground, or point of view midway between extremes, can help. Using the *Middle Ground* worksheet, have students come up with the middle ground between opposite words. Encourage students to come up with their own pairs of opposites. Use the *Challenge Your Thinking* worksheet to take this activity further.



Create

Shades of gray. Have students brainstorm a list of emotions and create a color wheel indicating the various shades of gray. Use the *Shades of Gray* worksheet to identify each shade with the intensity of a feeling.



Closure

Nothing is either all good or all bad; recognizing the variety of feelings in between provides a more realistic outlook on life and provides opportunities for exploring and learning.



A Nation of Extremes

World's Most Spoiled Pets:

<http://www.sheknows.com/pets-and-animals/articles/809874/world-s-most-spoiled-pets>

Pet Pampering Goes to the Extreme:

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/pet-pampering-extremes-15884753>

See Snapshots section of binder for more information on animal cruelty.

Middle Ground

15 Common Cognitive Distortions:

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/2009/15-common-cognitive-distortions/>





# MIDDLE GROUND

For each pair of opposites below, write a word that accurately describes the middle ground between them.

Example:  
Hot/Cold:

Warm

OPPOSITES	MIDDLE GROUND
Black/White	
Calm/Anxious	
Large/Small	
Up/Down	
Left/Right	
Fast/Slow	
Young/Old	
Loud/Quiet	
Good/Bad	
Soft/Hard	
Pass/Fail	
Clean/Dirty	
Easy/Difficult	
Always/Never	
Hate/Love	
War/Peace	
Happy/Sad	





Complete the following sentences:

I'm always going to \_\_\_\_\_

I'll never like \_\_\_\_\_

I could never \_\_\_\_\_

I hate \_\_\_\_\_

I love \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is impossible.

Can you challenge your thinking? Take a minute to think about these statements. Are these statements always going to be absolutely true? Explain why or why not.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

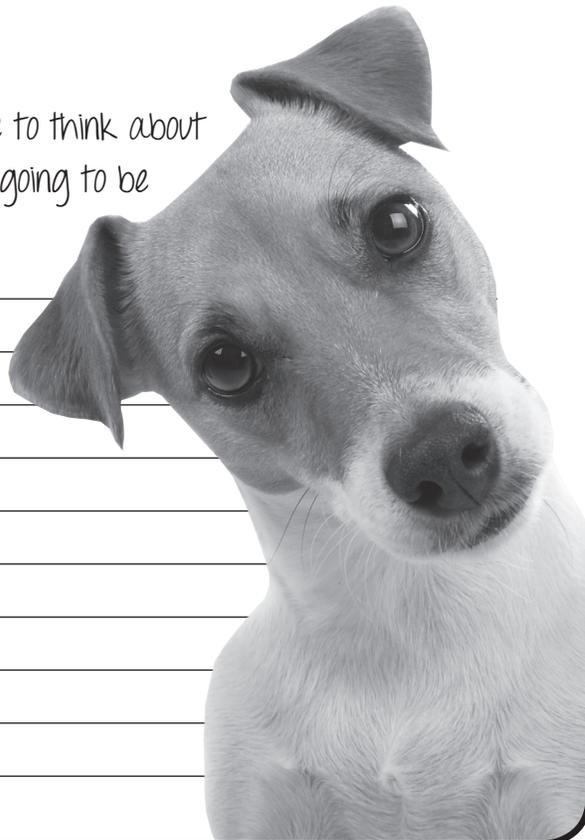
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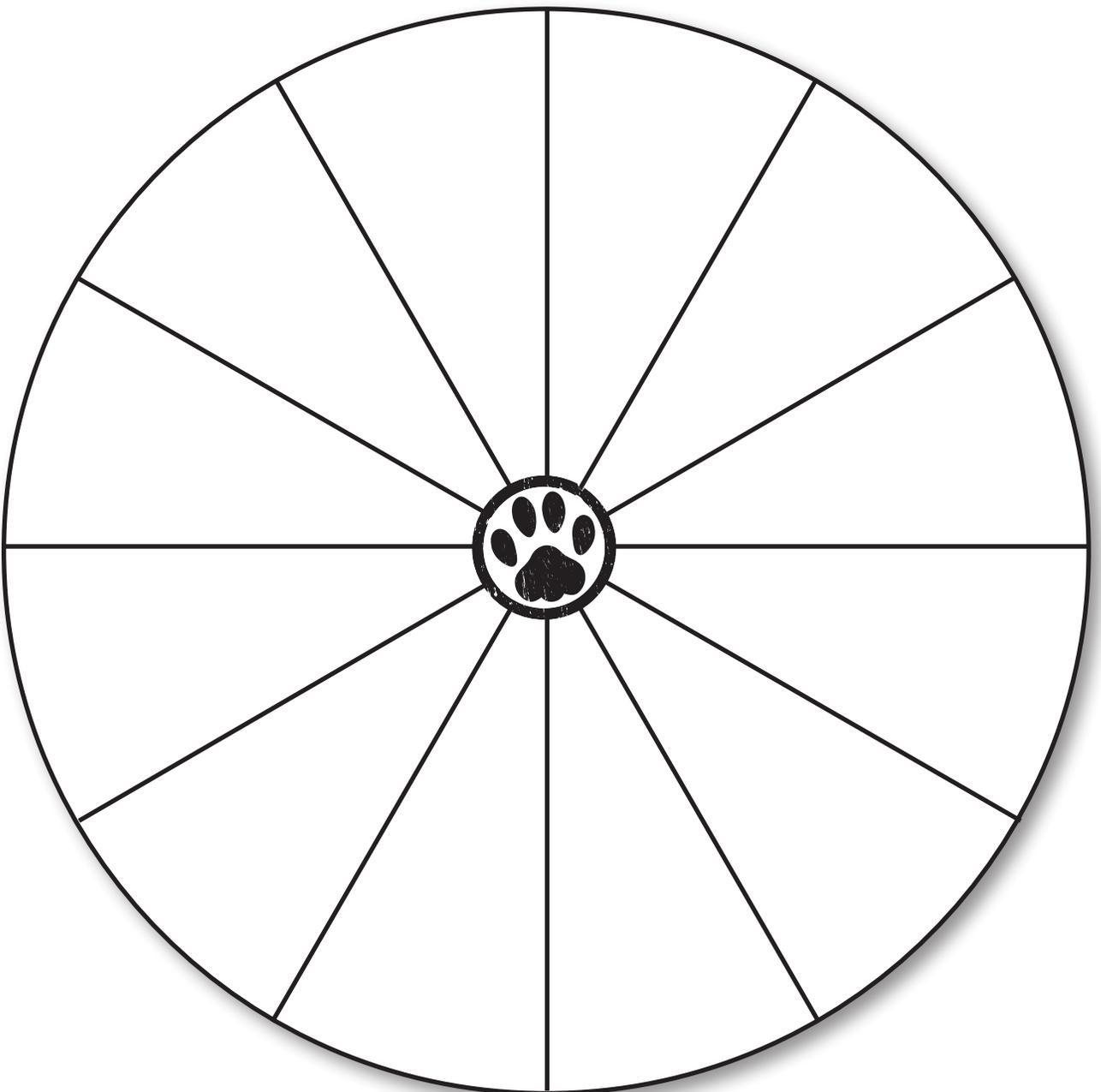
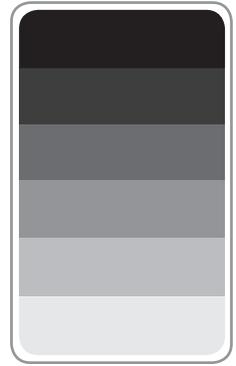
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\_\_\_\_\_



# SHADES OF GRAY



LESSON	1.6 Heads Up
Objective	Students will learn about positive and negative thinking, how one’s mindset can influence outcomes, and how to use self-talk to consciously focus and encourage themselves.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Manifest Success</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Magazine advertisements or videos of television commercials to use as examples</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindset</li> <li>• Self-doubt</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Law of attraction</li> <li>• Subliminal message</li> <li>• Marketing strategy</li> </ul>
Overview	Learning positive self-talk will help students to focus and manage emotions and will also facilitate introspection. The capacity for introspection will strengthen students’ self-awareness and self-acceptance and enhance their self-esteem and ability to handle stressors and interpersonal problems. Positive self-talk will also help students deal with self-doubt and peer pressure.

Discussion

- Sometimes we can be our own harshest critics. You probably don’t realize it, but many of our thoughts are negative ones. Thinking negative thoughts can lead to **self-doubt**, which can lead to low self-esteem.
- Think about the ways you judge yourself...would you be as harsh with your friend? Remember, you are the only one who controls your thoughts, so cut yourself some slack! Having a positive **mindset** can encourage success.
- Changing the way we think can have a profound impact on our lives. Some argue that changing your thoughts can actually change your life. Realizing that you are responsible for your own happiness and that no one can make you feel a certain way is **empowering**, isn’t it?
- This technique can also be used in our interactions with dogs. Visualizing yourself as a calm, confident pack leader will actually help you to become one. Your positive energy – the confidence you show in the presence of a dog – will have a positive impact on the dog, who will come to regard you as an effective leader.



- Dogs pay attention to the pack leader, so the first step in training a dog is to be calm-assertive: showing leadership by being confident. Many dog trainers use **positive reinforcement** when they work with dogs; they praise and encourage the dogs’ achievements rather than punishing them for negative behavior or yelling at them.
- Encourage class discussion: How might you use positive words or positive reinforcement with yourself to reframe your thoughts?

**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>

Write and Reflect

What are they really selling? Where do your negative thoughts come from? Sometimes the perceptions we have about how we’re supposed to look or act come from the media. We are bombarded by messages from the media all the time. In fact, there are marketing and advertising experts whose job is to coerce us into thinking we absolutely have to have whatever they are selling (this dog food is the healthiest, this makeup will make you look flawless, these jeans will make you look thinner). If possible, have a guest speaker talk to students about marketing strategies – perhaps the local shelter has a public relations representative who can visit the class. Another option: Have students select two or three of the commercials they see on TV or advertisements in magazines and reflect on the following questions:

- What is the ad trying to sell you?
- Can they deliver on this promise?
- What techniques or **marketing strategies** are used to coerce you to buy the product?
- Are the people/animals/scenario depicted in the ad realistic?
- How does the ad make you feel?
- Can you identify any **subliminal messages** used in the ad?

A follow-up lesson may focus on the fact that there are effective strategies for promoting oneself; for example, by writing a college entrance essay or during an interview. Students may consider creating an ad that positions themselves in a positive light.

Apply



Manifest success. A positive mindset can help to manifest success. Many people believe in the **law of attraction**; you bring into your life exactly what you think about, whether it’s positive or negative. If this is the case, why would you ever think a negative thought? What is it that you want to bring into your life? Have students identify personal goals and use the *Manifest Success* worksheet to focus on bringing success into their lives.

Create

Silence your inner critic. All of us have that voice inside that might criticize us for making “poor” choices. Address the voice inside your head telling you that you’re not good enough. Have students create a comic strip depicting a dialog between their outer self and inner self. Encourage them to compare a dog’s inner dialogue to a human’s – is there anything we can learn from the way dogs might think about themselves? For example, do they judge themselves harshly? Do they allow others to influence the way they think?

Closure

What we say to ourselves can be motivating or discouraging. Thinking positive thoughts can help us feel better and stay focused and confident. Positive self-talk is also a good way to combat self-doubt.



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

*Cesar's Rules: Your Way to Train a Well-Behaved Dog*

by Cesar Millan and Melissa Jo Peltier

*The Power of Positive Dog Training* by Pat Miller

*Ten Natural Steps To Training The Family Dog:*

*Building A Positive Relationship* by Matthew Duffy

*The Positive Dog: A Story About the Power of Positivity* by Jon Gordon

*Follow My Lead: What Training My Dogs Taught Me About Life, Love and Happiness* by Carol Quinn

Silence Your Inner Critic

*Mutts: Shelter Stories: Love. Guaranteed.* by Patrick McDonnell,  
Neil S. Plakcy and Sharon Sakson

*What A Difference A Dog Makes: Big Lessons on Life, Love and Healing From A Small Pooch* by Dana Jennings

Famous Cartoon Dogs: <http://www.caninest.com/famous-cartoon-dogs/>



# MANIFEST SUCCESS

S.M.A.R.T. is a mnemonic device for goal setting, often used in project management or personal development:

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**ttainable
- R**elevant
- T**imely

Identify an achievable goal or something you want in your life (a boyfriend/girlfriend, a job, a car, passing a class, etc.). If you are having trouble getting started, it might be helpful to list your priorities – what do you want to work toward or achieve? Where would you like to be or what would you like to have achieved in five years (or more)?

Goal/Dream/Aspiration:

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Now, take a few minutes to imagine yourself receiving exactly what you want. Close your eyes and really focus on how it would feel to have what you desire. Visualize and imagine how you'd feel after acing a difficult test or scoring the winning touchdown at a football game – can you picture yourself succeeding? How did taking the time to imagine yourself achieving a goal, dream, or aspiration make you feel?

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A goal is achieved over time, with smaller objectives, or steps, along the way. What three action steps can you take right now to work toward achieving your goal or life dream?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



# FINDING FEELINGS

GRADES 9 – 12



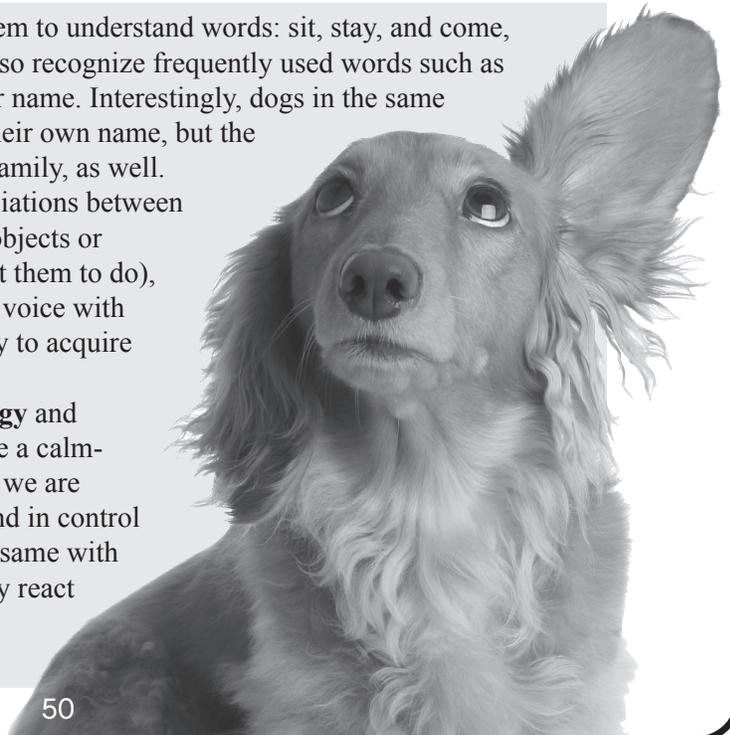


## LESSON OVERVIEW

Implement as many lessons as time allows, selecting them in the sequence they appear below.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
2.1 What We Say and How We Say It	Students will learn about the value of words in understanding and expressing emotions and how a feelings vocabulary can help advance self-expression, as well as enhance self-awareness and social interactions.
2.2 Beyond Words	Students will learn how their own body language, facial expressions, postures, and gestures affect communications and interactions with others.
2.3 Heart-Mind-Body Connection	Students will learn how the body and mind are interconnected and review tools and strategies they can use to maintain optimal physical and emotional health.
LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
2.4 It's the Thought That Counts	Students will become aware of how emotions affect their thoughts, how thoughts affect their emotions, and, in turn, how their feelings affect their actions. Also, they will acquire practice in manipulating emotional states in an effort to bring about positive change.
2.5 Emotional Energy	Students will become aware that anger is emotional energy and a natural emotion that can be destructive, but also redirected and used as a motivational force.
2.6 My Mistake!	Students will review the power of words, not only to express and manage emotions, but also to control interpersonal conflicts; acknowledging a mistake and apologizing can diffuse resentments. In addition to learning about mistakes that affect others, students will learn about personal failures as opportunities to learn from the experience.



LESSON	2.1 What We Say and How We Say It
Objective	Students will learn about the value of words in understanding and expressing emotions and how a feelings vocabulary can help advance self-expression, as well as enhance self-awareness and social interactions.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Feeling Words</i> chart</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> <li>• Dictionary</li> <li>• Thesaurus</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate</li> <li>• Feelings vocabulary</li> <li>• Cognitive dissonance</li> <li>• Assert</li> <li>• Navigate</li> <li>• Tone</li> <li>• Energy</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>A fundamental aspect of self-awareness is the ability to accurately label and understand the causes of one's emotions. This skill is important throughout life, but especially during adolescence when students are in settings that require constant interactions with others and, as a result, experience a continuous interplay of emotions. Whereas some students have the confidence and skills to recognize how they might feel in different situations, others become overwhelmed when they are unable to accurately understand, <b>articulate</b>, and manage feelings, thus detracting from their ability to benefit from and succeed in school and leading to frustrations and difficulties in interpersonal relations. An extensive <b>feelings vocabulary</b> can help students understand and express their feelings and therefore calm themselves and control strong emotions. This will help students to be more confident in <b>navigating</b> social situations and communicating and <b>asserting</b> their needs.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We talk to dogs and train them to understand words: sit, stay, and come, for example. A dog might also recognize frequently used words such as walk, treat, cookie, and their name. Interestingly, dogs in the same family recognize not only their own name, but the names of other dogs in the family, as well.</li> <li>• In addition to forming associations between frequently used words and objects or expectations (what you want them to do), dogs relate the <b>tone</b> of your voice with a particular object or activity to acquire word recognition.</li> <li>• Dogs also relate to our <b>energy</b> and react positively when we use a calm-assertive tone, showing that we are even-tempered, balanced, and in control of our emotions. This is the same with people we interact with; they react not only to what we say, but how we say it.</li> </ul> 

Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Dogs don't need words to communicate with each other or with us, but we rely on the use of language to express ourselves. For humans, words are important not only as a form of communication, but also to help us think, as well as identify and understand our emotions. However, we often have difficulty pinpointing the right word to express exactly how we feel. This is why building a feelings vocabulary is essential – it helps increase our own self-awareness (the ability to identify our needs and emotions) and allows us to communicate our feelings to others.
- Studies in neuroscience have shown that the ability to label emotions helps people understand and express how they feel, as well as quiet the mind and increase impulse control. Once we understand how we feel, we can decide how to interact with those around us. Even if we feel sad, angry, or frustrated, understanding these feelings helps in making a conscious decision to act and react positively despite these feelings and can make a big difference in social interactions.



**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>

Write and  
Reflect

Internal conflict. **Cognitive dissonance** is a discomfort caused by holding conflicting ideas, beliefs, values, or emotions simultaneously. It might feel uncomfortable having conflicting feelings within your own mind, but it often happens, hence the term love-hate relationship, which refers to the coexistence of opposing feelings toward a person, an object, or even an idea. For example, you're starting a new job and you're excited to make new friends, but you're anxious about learning a new skill or concerned about also having time for school work. Think of a time when you've felt conflicting feelings about a decision you've made or a change you've experienced. Were you able to identify and label the different emotions you were feeling? Were you frustrated? Confused? Overwhelmed and unable to focus? What helped you understand the process? For example, did you express your feelings either by talking to another person or by writing in a journal? Encourage students to discuss and share with the class as well as write a narrative about their experiences with opposing feelings and their ability to identify these feelings.

Apply

In your own words. Using the *Feeling Words* chart, have students identify all the emotions they've felt so far today. Indicate instances where conflicting emotions were present. Encourage students to add words to the chart, using a dictionary or thesaurus for assistance. Use [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) to create a word cloud highlighting the most common feelings among students. Which emotions came up most frequently for the class?

Investigate

How smart is that dog? Some say that dogs are as smart as a two-year-old child, basing this claim on the number of vocabulary words dogs and children know. Have students investigate how scientists are measuring intelligence in infants and young children and ascertain whether word recognition is a fair assessment of dog's intelligence. Besides word recognition, what other ways do dogs exhibit their intelligence? See *Readings and Resources* for relevant articles.



Closure

Today we discussed the value of words to express our feelings and assert our needs. An extensive feelings vocabulary can help us to gain self-awareness and understanding of our emotions, as well as modulate intense feelings and improve our interactions with others.

**QUICK  
PICK**



*For the Love of a Dog: Understanding Emotion in You and Your Best Friend*  
by Patricia B. McConnell

*The Intelligence of Dogs: A Guide to the Thoughts, Emotions, and Inner Lives of Our Canine Companions* by Stanley Coren

*Your Dog Is Your Mirror: The Emotional Capacity of Our Dogs and Ourselves*  
by Kevin Behan

*Dogs Never Lie About Love : Reflections on the Emotional World of Dogs*  
by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson

The Science of Canine Emotions:

<http://www.cesarsway.com/tips/thebasics/Science-of-Canine-Emotions>

Dog Dialog: Staying Calm-Assertive

#### In Your Own Words

Wordle: [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)

More Feeling Words: <http://eqi.org/fw.htm>

#### How Smart is That Dog?

Are Dogs More Like Babies Than We Think?

<http://www.cesarsway.com/dogbehavior/basics/Are-Dogs-Like-Babies-More-Than-We-Think>

Chaser, the Dog with a HUGE Vocabulary:

<http://video.nytimes.com/video/2011/01/18/science/1248069571561/a-dog-nouns-and-verbs.html?scp=1&sq=dog&st=cse>

Dogs and Language, Part I:

<http://www.cesarsway.com/community/challenges/Dogs-and-Language>

Dogs and Language, Part II:

<http://www.cesarsway.com/community/challenges/Dogs-and-Language-Part-2>



## Lesson 2.1 Worksheet

# Feeling Words

Happy	Curious	Thrilled	Interested	Eager
Surprised	Startled	Dull	Blah	Fearful
Glad	Afraid	Distressed	Fascinated	Angry
Ashamed	Frustrated	Disgusted	Ecstatic	Walking on Air
In 7th Heaven	Joyful	Unhappy	Down	Blue
Excited	Joyous	Bored	Terrified	Disinterested
Anguished	Lonely	Sad	Humiliated	Indifferent
So-so	Amazed	Down in the Dumps	Comfortable	Satisfied
Astonished	Impressed	Fearless	Uncomfortable	Blown Away
Unsure	Brave	Confident	Trusting	Hopeful
Anxious	Nervous	Calm	Courageous	Heartbroken
Protected	Safe	Reassured	Tormented	Loving
At Peace	Bitter	Friendly	Disagreeable	Agreeable
Irritated	Seeing Red	Indignant	Boiling Mad	Enraged
Discouraged	Guilty	Shy	Self-conscious	Proud
On Top of the World	Self-assured	Alienated	Alone	Disgraced
Disgusted	Disrespected	Smug	Tolerant	Envious
Suspicious	Cut Off	Isolated	Upbeat	Edgy
Uneasy	Tense	Panicky	Worried	Jumpy
Tranquil	Serene	Agitated	Cool	Peaceful
Composed	Quiet	Relaxed	Secluded	Deserted
Blissful	Jubilant	Elated	Shocked	Stunned
Flabbergasted	Taken Aback	Astonished	Resentful	Hostile
Pleasant	Warm	Friendly	Gloomy	Miserable
Fed Up	Hesitant	Open	Doubtful	Undecided
Skeptical	Content	Pleased	Lucky	Grateful
Appreciative	Hopeless	Powerless	Heroic	Powerful
Daring	Superhuman	Cowardly	Fortunate	Insecure
Antisocial	Blown away	Beaten down	Cold-hearted	Clear-headed
Choked up	Defeated	Defensive	Cuddly	Crushed
Deep	Defenseless	Elevated	Encouraged	Fancy
Empowered	Flaky	Flummoxed	Frenzied	Foggy
Giggly	Groovy	Humble	Hoodwinked	Impulsive
Insane	Intrigued	Irked	Lovely	Loyal
Masochistic	Merry	Needy	Oppositional	Mopey
Out of it	Psychedelic	Removed	Reserved	Reticent
Smashed	Shattered	Sly	Smart	Spoiled
Spooked	Spirited	Suspicious	Splendid	Successful
Outraged	Overjoyed	Nurtured	Obstinate	Patronized

LESSON	2.2 Beyond Words
Objective	Students will learn how their own body language, facial expressions, postures, and gestures affect communications and interactions with others.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> <li>• Video camera (optional)</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body language</li> <li>• Gestures</li> <li>• Posture</li> <li>• Facial expressions</li> <li>• Non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Subconscious</li> <li>• Calm-assertive energy</li> <li>• Pack leader</li> </ul>
Overview	<p><b>Non-verbal communications (gestures, facial expressions, posture, body language)</b> constitute a significant part of our behavior. While students may use non-verbal cues to ascertain how others feel or what they may be thinking, they may misinterpret body language (for example, there are cultural variations that we are often unaware of). Additionally, students may ignore what they project to others through their own body language, often using gestures and facial expressions, <b>subconsciously</b>. Becoming aware of the power of non-verbal communications, as well as the possible errors in interpretation, will help students understand how they may be perceived and improve their understanding of and interactions with others, thus leading to empathy.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can learn a lot about non-verbal communication from dogs. Dogs use body language to communicate with each other and with us; they know how we feel just by observing us and sensing the corresponding energy we give off. Dogs can read – and are also affected by – our emotions.</li> <li>• Dogs can tell if we are fearful, excited, or confident by simply watching our body language and sensing our emotional energy, and they will respond accordingly. If a person projects a confident, <b>calm-assertive energy</b>, the dog will look up to him or her as a <b>pack leader</b>. Conversely, if a person gives off negative energy (anxiety, stress, lack of confidence), the dog will view him or her as unstable and will not respect him as a pack leader.</li> <li>• Certain ways that dogs communicate their emotions are well known, but also can be easy to misinterpret. A wagging tail generally means a dog is happy and friendly, but does it always? Tail wagging can also indicate the dog is confused or experiencing other emotions.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- In humans, a person's words may be saying one thing, but his or her body language may be sending a different message. Encourage student discussion on body language. Steer the discussion to include aspects of body language that are easy to interpret and those that are not.
- Dogs can help make the point about misinterpreting body language. With dogs, it's all about the ears, eyes, tails, and legs. When their ears are pointed straight up they indicate a variety of emotions: alertness, dominance, playfulness, excitement, or even aggression. But how can we tell which of these emotions they are trying to communicate? It takes practice to do so.
- If there are students from diverse cultural backgrounds in the class, ask them to explain difference in gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions and how these differences may affect their interactions with others and how other people perceive them. For example, direct eye contact in our culture is associated with honesty and integrity, but in other cultures it is considered impolite.
- For further discussion on canine body language, please see Dog Dialog lessons: Staying Calm Assertive: Energy As Communication; Nose First, Then Eyes, Then Ears; Dog Talk; What is the Dog Trying to Tell Us?; No Touch, No Talk, No Eye Contact.



**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>

Write and  
Reflect



Smiley face. The year 2012 marks the 30th anniversary of the first documented use of the smiley face emoticon. This and a series of other symbols were proposed by Scott Fahlman, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon University, to address the absence of emotional tone and body language in communications via email and texts. Communication includes two streams: one involving language and the other involving emotions, which are conveyed in our tone of voice, as well as our body language. Have electronic devices compromised our ability to communicate? Have they enhanced communications? Have students journal their thoughts or debate the issue.

Investigate

Unspoken words. People all over the world experience the same emotions, but they have different customs and ways of expressing themselves. For example, the thumbs up gesture is well accepted in America; however, it has negative connotations in other countries. Have students investigate cultural variations in body language and facial expressions and how misconceptions and lack of cultural knowledge can lead to misinterpretations.

Create

Dogumentary. Have students film dogs interacting with one another, either at a local shelter, at home, or at a local dog park. Ask students to interpret what the dogs are communicating to one another and provide the voice-over dialogue for a short movie. Encourage students to be silly and fun. Another option: Have students draw a wordless comic strip or short graphic novel with multiple dog characters, focusing on canine body language and their interactions with each other.

Closure

Observing dogs' and other people's body language offers clues about how they feel and what they may think. In our discussion today, we learned about the various ways dogs communicate with each other and with us. We also learned how our own body language can influence those around us and how we may misinterpret non-verbal communications.





*How to Speak Dog: Mastering the Art of Dog-Human Communication*  
by Stanley Coren

*On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals* by Turid Rugaas

*Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know* by Alexandra Horowitz

*The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs*

by Patricia B. McConnell

Dog Dialog: Staying Calm-Assertive, What is the Dog Trying to Tell Us?,  
Nose First, Then Eyes, Then Ears

#### Unspoken Words

*Around the World: My Travels with Oscar* by Joanne Lefson

What Dog's Tail-wagging Really Means:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/201112/what-dog-s-tail-wags-really-mean-some-new-scientific-data>

#### Dogumentary

*Beasts of Burden* by Evan Dorkin and Jill Thompson

*Canine Body Language: A Photographic Guide Interpreting the Native Language of the Domestic Dog* by Brenda Aloff

*Dog Body Language Phrasebook: 100 Ways to Read Their Signals*

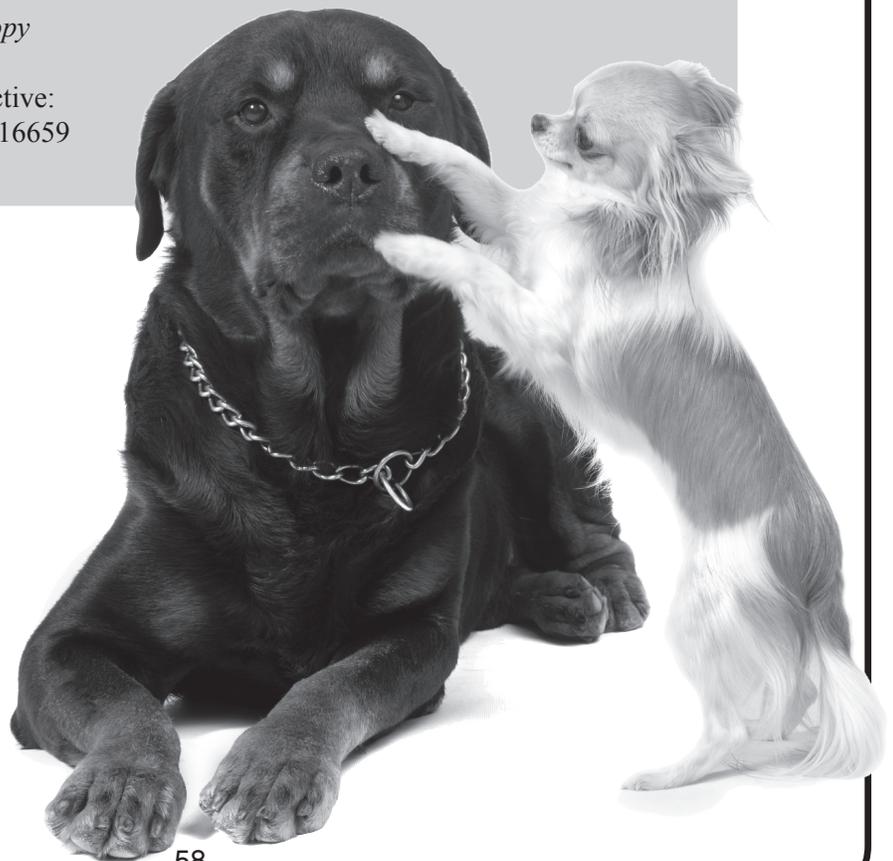
by Trevor Warner

*It's a Dog's Life, Snoopy*

by Charles M. Schulz

From a Dog's Perspective:

<http://vimeo.com/35616659>



LESSON	2.3 Heart-Mind-Body Connection
Objective	Students will learn how the body and mind are interconnected and review tools and strategies they can use to maintain optimal physical and emotional health.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Moody Foodie</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorphins</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Emotional health</li> <li>• Heart-mind-body connection</li> <li>• Mental stimulation</li> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Interconnected</li> <li>• Lifestyle</li> </ul>
Overview	The <b>heart-mind-body connection</b> is a concept that implies that the spirit, mind, and body are <b>interconnected</b> ; what (and how) we think and what we do can have a positive or negative impact on our physical and <b>mental health</b> . Identifying healthy choices and practicing a healthy <b>lifestyle</b> are strategies to address mental health issues and boost students' moods, confidence, and self-esteem, as well as their productivity in school.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's vital to keep our mind, body, and heart (spirit) <b>balanced</b>. When we are unbalanced in any of these three areas, our mental health and self-esteem suffer. We can maintain a balanced heart-mind-body connection by making healthy choices. Encourage student discussion of what living a balanced life means to them. How do they exercise their spirit? Ask students to think about how making choices that are in-tune with their kind, considerate nature (listening to their hearts) might also lead to a healthy life.</li> <li>• Living a balanced life includes maintaining a healthy diet, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Studies have shown that physical activity can regulate your mood, fight sadness and depression, help you sleep better, and boost your energy level. Physical activity stimulates chemicals in our brains (<b>endorphins</b>) that make us feel happier and more relaxed. Regular exercise can also boost confidence, as it may help you to feel better about your appearance.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Dogs need exercise, discipline, and affection (in that order). The amount of exercise dogs need varies depending on the size and energy level of the dog, but it's generally recommended that dogs get 30 (for smaller dogs) to 60 minutes of running and playing each day. Dogs that aren't challenged physically might get bored, get into mischief, bark excessively, show aggressive behavior, or chew anything in sight – the types of behaviors that often prompt owners to give up on the dog, which is why so many dogs often end up in animal shelters.
- An appropriate balance between intake in food calories and output, in terms of energy expended in physical activity, also applies to humans. In thinking about a balance of intake and output, not all calories (input) are created equal – discuss the notion of empty calories associated with junk food versus calories derived from healthier food choices.
- Your eating habits can also affect your mood. Choosing healthy foods over processed, fatty, or sugary foods can make a huge difference in the way you feel. Encourage class discussion on healthy eating habits. Does your school offer healthy choices for lunch, drinks, and snacks? Ask students to think about what options might be better (i.e. brain food).



**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>

Apply	<p><u>Moody foodie.</u> Eating mindlessly out of habit or boredom is a problem affecting adults, as well as adolescents. Introduce students to the concept of mindful eating and discuss various strategies for mindfulness, such as slowing down while eating, that may be helpful. Ask them to pay attention to what they eat for one day or using a 24-hour recall (an approach used in many studies). Then encourage students to make healthier choices for a week – did they notice a difference in their mood? Energy level? Use the Moody Foodie worksheet for inspiration. Suggested discussion topics: What are comfort foods and how do these foods make them feel (happy, nostalgic, safe, sleepy, comforted)? What are some foods that can boost your energy level or brain power? See <i>Readings and Resources</i> for relevant articles.</p>
Investigate 	<p><u>Surf's up!</u> Some dogs have interesting hobbies, and, not surprisingly, many of these involve physical activity – a favorite among dogs. For example, Buddy, a 14-year-old Jack Russell terrier, who has been surfing with his owner for the past 10 years, was the first inductee into the Surf Dog Hall Of Fame; a dachshund in Moscow named Boniface has learned how to scuba dive; and many bulldogs have been known to skateboard! Break the class into groups and have students research unique dog hobbies. Encourage discussion of students' favorite activities, as well.</p>
Create	<p><u>Brain teasers.</u> Ask students to create a series of mentally stimulating games for dogs or for their peers. The rationale: both humans and dogs need <b>mental stimulation</b> and exercise. Ample information exists on the importance of physical exercise; however, mental stimulation in the form of play and pursuing interests is also essential for both dogs' and people's <b>emotional and physical health</b>. Some tricks (for example, hide and seek) can help stimulate a dog mentally because they encourage the dog to work for their rewards. Sometimes, simply pretending to throw a ball one way and throwing it another way can present a mental challenge. Changing routines (such as finding a new route for walks) is another example. People need mental stimulation, too. Games, puzzles, hobbies, and sports are beneficial, not only for exercising our cognitive skills, but also for having a positive impact on our mood. Encourage class discussion: What kind of interests do students have? What games do they play (video games, games on their cell phones, board games, crossword puzzles, etc.)? Separate students into groups and ask each group to create a game for dogs or for humans and write a proposal for their idea. The proposal would include an overview of the idea, the rationale for its development, how it is unique, and its potential uses. Encourage students to think about the importance of interests in our lives – the notion of being well-rounded individuals rather than individuals who focus on all play or all work. Have each group present their proposal to the class.</p>
Closure	<p>Today, in our discussion of the heart-mind-body connection, we talked about how important exercise and a healthy diet are to our physical and mental well-being. We also discussed the importance of living a balanced life that includes a focus on play, hobbies, and interests, as well as work.</p>



*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  
*Guardians of Being: Spiritual Teachings from Our Dogs and Cats* by Eckhart Tolle / illus. by Patrick McDonnell  
 Dog Dialog: Know Yourself, Know Your Dog  
 5 Ways Pets Can Improve Your Health: <http://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/features/health-benefits-of-pets>  
 The Love of a Dog Helps Us Find Balance in Life:  
<http://www.cesarsway.com/newsandevents/cesarsblog/Dogs-Bring-Balance-to-an-Unbalanced-Society>  
 Why You Should Live Like Your Dog:  
<http://www.cesarsway.com/dogcare/doghealth/Why-You-Should-Live-Like-Your-Dog>

#### Moody Foodie

How Dog Nutrition Impacts Health and Mood:  
<http://www.vetinfo.com/dog-nutrition-health.html>  
 The Food and Mood Connection: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-and-mood/MY00716>

#### Surf's Up

Surfer Dog Helps the Disabled Hang 10:  
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/Sports/surfing-dog-ricochet-helps-disabled-people-surf/story?id=14358354>  
 Scuba Diving Dog: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6648049n>

#### Brain Teasers

*Brain Games for Dogs* by Claire Arrowsmith  
*101 Dog Tricks: Step by Step Activities to Engage, Challenge, and Bond with Your Dog* by Kyra Sundance and Chalcy  
 Brain Boosting Games: Keep Your Dog Mentally Sharp:  
<http://www.moderndogmagazine.com/articles/brain-boosting-games/1721>



# Lesson 2.3 Worksheet

## Moody Foodie

### Part I: 24-Hour Recall

The 24-hour recall is a research strategy used by nutrition experts to ascertain eating habits. The strategy is used in studies to help understand the role of diet in disease, for example, as well as in efforts designed to bring about positive lifestyle changes.

List all the foods and beverages you've consumed over the past 24 hours. (Tip: It's helpful to recall foods consumed in order, starting when you wake up):

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### Part II: 7-Day Challenge

The challenge: to make healthier choices for one week. This chart will help you track your food/beverage intake, cravings, exercise and sleep patterns, and overall mood.

EXAMPLE:

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	CRAVINGS	EXERCISE	SLEEP	MOOD
<b>DAY 1</b>	<i>Bagel with cream cheese, orange juice, fruit</i>	<i>Pizza, salad, soda</i>	<i>Chicken, beans, rice, fruit punch</i>	<i>Cookie, popcorn</i>	<i>I wanted something sweet before I went to bed</i>	<i>2 hrs at baseball practice</i>	<i>6 hours</i>	<i>Tired, stressed out, overwhelmed</i>

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	CRAVINGS	EXERCISE	SLEEP	MOOD
<b>DAY 1</b>								
<b>DAY 2</b>								
<b>DAY 3</b>								
<b>DAY 4</b>								
<b>DAY 5</b>								
<b>DAY 6</b>								
<b>DAY 7</b>								

LESSON	2.4 It's the Thought That Counts
Objective	Students will become aware of how emotions affect their thoughts, how thoughts affect their emotions, and, in turn, how their feelings affect their actions. Also, they will acquire practice in manipulating emotional states in an effort to bring about positive change.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What's in Your Head?</i> worksheet</li> <li>• <i>Toxic Thinking</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Colored pencils (optional)</li> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitual thinking patterns</li> <li>• Environmental factors</li> <li>• Interplay</li> <li>• Emotional reasoning</li> <li>• Prefrontal cortex</li> <li>• Cognitive errors</li> <li>• Expectations (of others)</li> <li>• Toxic thinking</li> </ul>
Overview	Emotions influence the way we think and behave and have an impact on what we accomplish and our motivation to succeed. In the same way, our thoughts about an event or situation affect how we feel about it. Enhancing student awareness of the influence of emotions and the <b>interplay</b> between emotions and thoughts will enable them to identify and manage emotions, recognize the relationship among emotions, thoughts, and actions, and reflect on whether their emotions are in line with the reality of the situation. Understanding the interplay between thoughts and emotions and the causes and consequences of particular feelings will also help students identify strategies for effectively using emotions to change the way they think and behave, which will help in their problem-solving abilities and, ultimately, their motivation to succeed in their interpersonal relationships.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The part of our brain that gives us the ability to think is called the <b>prefrontal cortex</b>; this is what distinguishes us from other animals. Dogs rely on and act on their instincts, but through training they are able to adapt their behavior to coexist with humans. For example, digging is an instinctual behavior in dogs, but they can come to understand from their experiences that this behavior is not tolerated by their owners (by being repeatedly reprimanded, for example).</li> <li>• Our thinking is not always based on instinct, but the thinking patterns we develop are prompted by our emotions (how we feel) and may be triggered by various factors: our previous experiences, factors in the environment, or our thoughts. There is a continuous interplay between emotions and thoughts, a cycle whereby thoughts affect feelings and feelings affect thoughts.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- One way to understand this is to remember that we are made up of multiple systems. Our emotional system processes sensory input and thoughts to produce feelings (anger, happiness, sadness). Our cognitive (thinking) system refers to our ability to reason and plan. These systems are interdependent; each has the power to alter the operations of the other.
- Encourage discussion of **environmental factors** that can trigger an emotion. Underscore the individual differences in students' responses, suggesting that each is unique in factors that trigger positive or negative feelings. For example, different types of music may elicit melancholy in some or may be soothing to others.
- Experiences and memories also shape our thoughts and can also evoke feelings. A dog whose only experience in cars was being taken to the vet for shots as a puppy may later associate car rides with unpleasant experiences and would react accordingly when he sees a car. Encourage discussion of students' past experiences or memories that evoke negative or positive feelings (the smell of chocolate chip cookies baking, for example). When something evokes a positive feeling, what effect does it have on you? When it evokes a negative feeling, what do you do?
- A happy memory or emotion may make us feel calm and relaxed, whereas a negative thought – when we were provoked by someone or experienced an upsetting situation – creates an imbalance and may bring about physical manifestations, such as increased heart rate or sweaty palms, as well as negative emotions, even if the upsetting situation happened in the past. Sometimes you may feel sad, anxious, or angry, but don't know why – it could be that something triggered the feeling.
- The **expectations** we have of others – that is, our thoughts about how they should behave or respond – can also evoke feelings. These expectations can lead to disappointment or anger if the other person doesn't act or react in the way we want them to. Recognizing that we can't control others' feelings or actions – even those we don't agree with – and accepting this reality can improve interpersonal relationships.
- Sometimes our emotions may cloud or blur our thoughts and judgment, causing us to make mistakes in how we interpret other people's behaviors and how we perceive certain situations. This is referred to as errors in thinking (or **cognitive errors**) and it can become habitual and affect our reactions and how we interact with others.
- **Emotional reasoning** is a cognitive error that occurs when a person believes that what s/he is feeling is true regardless of the evidence. Do you ever become consumed by your emotions and lose your ability to reason? What stories are you telling yourself that aren't based in reality? The experience might be good (you were so excited about something that you couldn't think of anything else) or bad (you felt so hurt/angry/upset that your entire day was ruined). Encourage class discussion.



**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>

Write and Reflect

No body is perfect. One factor that might influence our emotions is our feelings about our outer appearance. There is a lot of pressure on us to look a certain way or wear a certain brand of clothes. Ask students to think about how they feel about the way they look and why. Where do these feelings emanate from? What they see on television? How others react to them? Are there periodic changes in what society regards as attractive and unattractive? Encourage students to think about their outer appearance from a dog’s perspective. Do dogs think about how others think about how they look? Do they think about another dog’s looks? Show students photos of various dog breeds and mixes of breeds (see *Readings and Resources*). Have students write a short narrative or create a humorous video about how each of the dogs may feel about their body, the way they look, and how others regard them.



Apply



What’s in your head? Thinking positively all the time is unrealistic, but our goal should be to have more positive than negative feelings. Ask students to pay attention to their thoughts. Overall, do you have more negative or positive thoughts? Do you feel you have a balance between positive and negative thoughts? What percentage of your thoughts are negative or filled with self-doubt? How many are positive? Once you identify the negative thoughts, can you think of a positive affirmation to replace them? How did it feel to focus on positive thinking? Encourage students to share with the class or journal their thoughts. Use the *What’s in Your Head?* worksheet to get started.

Investigate

Toxic thinking Sometimes our emotions may cloud or blur our thoughts and judgment, causing us to make mistakes in how we perceive certain situations. This can become habitual and affect our reactions and how we interact with others. Do you have any errors in thinking? Use the *Toxic Thinking* worksheet to research and identify any cognitive errors you may experience. What are some ways you can reframe your thoughts? Does identifying **habitual thinking patterns** that may be detrimental to you make you want to change your habits? What are the first steps you can take to do so?

Closure

Today we talked about the relationship and continuous interplay between thoughts and feelings: specifically how these differing emotions and corresponding thought patterns may lead us to interpret other people’s actions and behaviors or perceive certain situations in particular ways.



*Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog* by John Grogan  
*Through a Dog's Ear: Music to Calm Your Canine Companion, Volume 1*  
[Audio CD, by Joshua Leeds]  
Brain Scans Reveal Dogs' Thoughts: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=brain-scans-reveal-dogs-thoughts>  
Dog Dialog: All About Instincts

No Body is Perfect

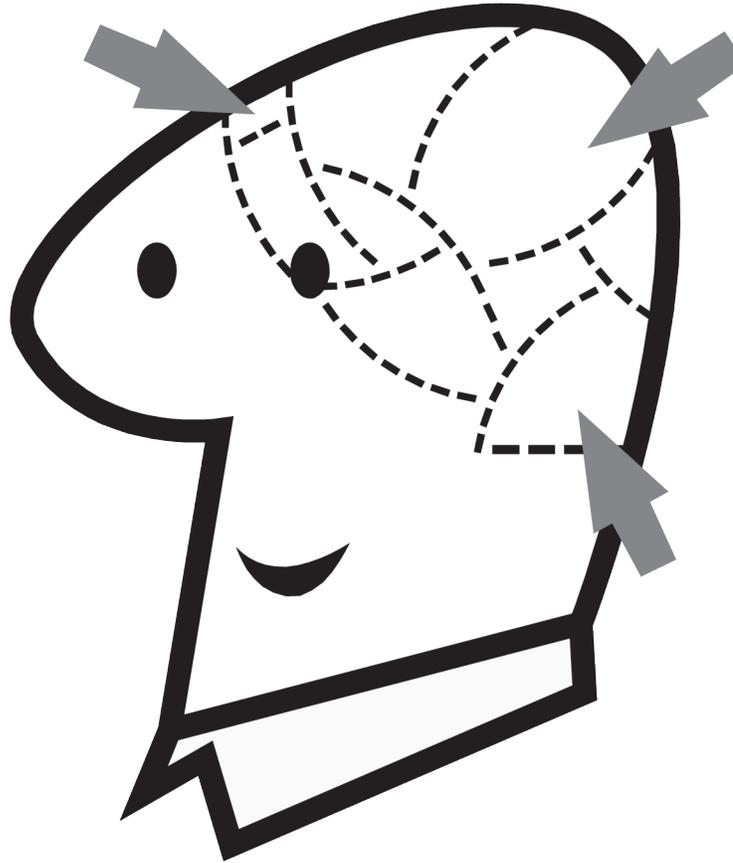
*Mutts* by Sharon Montrose

*If Only You Knew How Much I Smell You: True Portraits of Dogs*  
by Valerie Shaff and Roy Blount

*Dogtionary: Meaningful Portraits of Dogs* by Sharon Montrose



# What's In Your Head?



**The picture shows your brain divided into sections. In each section, draw or write what you are thinking about.**

- Optimism is the ability to be positive, even when you are facing difficulties. If you had to color optimism, you might choose happy colors, such as yellow.
- Pessimism is the opposite – it's always seeing the negative aspect of a situation, as in the glass is half empty as opposed to half full. Pessimism may be a dark color.

After writing your thoughts in the different sections, color these to indicate positive or negative thoughts.

Overall, do you have more negative or positive thoughts?

Do you feel you have a balance between positive and negative thoughts?

Write each of your negative thoughts on one side of the page and, on the other side, write a positive thought that can replace it.

# Toxic Thinking

Research the following toxic thinking patterns listed below. Can you identify any errors in thinking that have become your habits or the habits of your friends or family?

- ❖ Everything is all good or all bad; there is nothing in between.
- ❖ If one bad thing happens, it's the end of the world.
- ❖ You filter out all good qualities of something and focus only on the negative.
- ❖ You interpret everything in a negative way without any supporting evidence.
- ❖ You put expectations onto others: He should behave or respond this way...
- ❖ You take things personally and become very defensive at criticism.
- ❖ If something good happens, you always find a way to turn it into a negative or explain why it doesn't count.
- ❖ You blow minor things out of proportion or minimize positive things.

Does identifying habitual thinking patterns that may be detrimental to you inspire you to want to change your thinking habits?

What are the first steps you can take to change your habits?

1.

2.

3.

LESSON	2.5 Emotional Energy
Objective	Students will become aware that anger is emotional energy and a natural emotion that can be destructive, but also redirected and used as a motivational force.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional energy</li> <li>• Reframe</li> <li>• Self-mastery</li> <li>• Ephemeral</li> <li>• Cathartic</li> <li>• Fight or flight</li> <li>• Hypothalamus</li> <li>• Behavioral manifestation</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Acknowledging and containing anger and learning to express it in a productive manner will help students manage intense emotions and will reduce instances of violence in the classroom. Anger is pervasive in our society; it is a powerful force generally associated with conflict and destruction. Globally, anger is expressed in war between nations when one country feels threatened by the actions of another country over territorial rights or weapons production. At the individual level, the <b>behavioral manifestations</b> of anger can be scary; an angry individual is out of control. But anger is not bad – it’s how we react to anger and what we do when we are angry that makes a difference. In a way, anger can motivate us to seek change or justice. Students have likely had numerous lessons on anger and were told to contain their anger. When students learn to <b>reframe</b> their understanding of anger and change the way they think about it, they will come to appreciate anger as an <b>emotional energy</b> that can be channeled and focused as a positive, motivational force.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When dogs perceive a threat, a section of their brain called the <b>hypothalamus</b> signals the production of certain chemicals to prepare them for <b>fight or flight</b>. Some dogs may respond to threats by running away (flight), while others may respond by standing up for themselves (fight). For example, dogs may be possessive over their food, toys, or territory.</li> <li>• Humans are also protective of their possessions and territory. This is why we have wars; one country gets angry if its borders are breached or weapons are being built threatening its existence.</li> <li>• Anger is pervasive not only globally among nations, but here at the local level; each one of us becomes angry about one thing or another. Why? Encourage discussion prompting an understanding that desire or frustration at not getting our way is often at the root of anger.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Do you know what triggers an angry response in you? What happens when you get angry? Do you feel any physical signals (knot in your stomach, feeling like you might explode, shortness of breath, sweating, feeling hot, etc.)? How do you normally express your anger (yelling, crying, punching a pillow, violence, aggression)? Yelling, screaming, and otherwise being out of control are the **behavioral manifestations** of anger.
- Like other strong emotions that are the driving force behind our behaviors, anger itself is an emotional energy. We can't eradicate anger, but we can take steps to control it and have **mastery** over our emotions and emotional outbursts.
- Getting angry is natural; however, suppressing your anger isn't helpful. It's important to recognize and feel your feelings. Often we try to avoid, outrun, overpower, or analyze our feelings rather than letting them exist and simply observing them. Or we listen to other people when they tell us we shouldn't be upset. Accepting and allowing feelings to exist is important: Okay, you are angry or upset; however, these feelings aren't permanent, so allowing yourself to feel your feelings is a helpful way to deal with anger, sadness, frustration, or any other strong emotion. The point is, don't let it get out of control.
- Learning that uncomfortable feelings are part of life and are often **ephemeral** can help us to identify and deal with them. Venting your anger can be beneficial, as well. Have students research the various ways to vent (exercise, walking, talking with someone about the feeling, etc.) and the benefits of venting (**cathartic**, cleansing, purging, etc.). Have students identify friends or family members they feel safe sharing their feelings with. How does venting help?



**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>

Write and  
Reflect

**QUICK  
PICK**

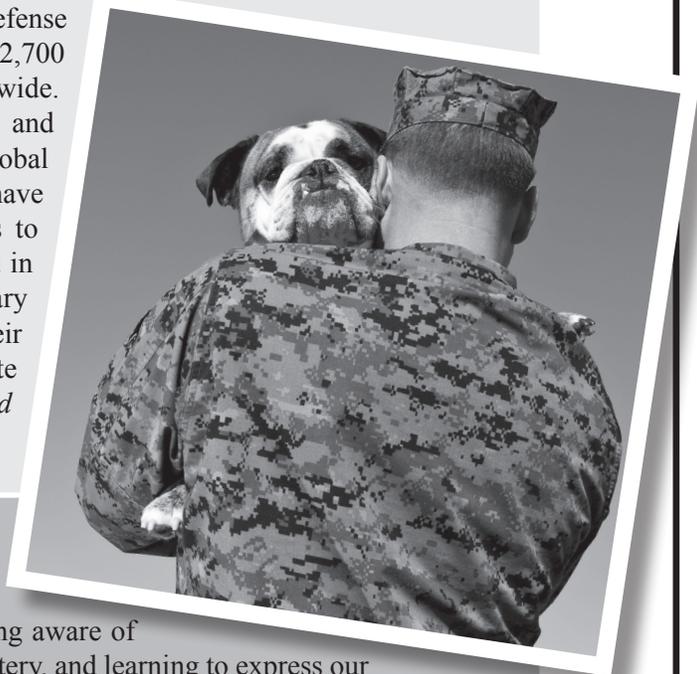
Fight or flight. When a dog is scared or perceives a threat, a section of their brain called the hypothalamus signals the production of certain chemicals to prepare the dog for fight or flight. Have students research the concept of “fight or flight” and think about how they respond to stressful situations. In which scenarios is it best to stand up for yourself and in which scenarios is it best to walk away? Ask students to journal their thoughts or prompt for class discussion or debate.

Apply

Dog days of awareness. Anger can precede violence. People who are angry might react by yelling, screaming, abusing, or physically attacking other people or animals; they become out of control. However, there may be instances when we are angry, but can do something constructive to address the problem. Ask students to create a day of awareness at their school for a particular cause and encourage the entire school to get involved. For example, wear purple this Thursday to promote awareness of teen dating violence or violence toward animals. Encourage students to research and post statistics around the school. Invite representatives from local organizations and/or shelters to present on the prevalence of violence in the community and provide suggestions for how to address the problem.

Investigate

Dogs of war. According to the Defense Department, there are approximately 2,700 military working dogs serving worldwide. Break students into small groups and assign each group to research a global conflict and explore how anger may have influenced the conflict. Ask students to investigate the role dogs have played in support of troops. Do you think military working dogs should be honored for their service? What can we do to advocate for military dogs? See *Readings and Resources* for relevant articles.



Closure

Today we talked about anger as an emotional energy and about the concept of self-mastery, which gives us power over our emotions. Becoming aware of our emotions is a step toward self-mastery, and learning to express our anger constructively can help our interactions with other people and animals.



*The Art of Racing in the Rain: A Novel* by Garth Stein

Fight or Flight

*Aggression in Dogs* by Brenda Aloff

Understanding Dog Aggression:

<http://www.cesarsway.com/tips/problembehaviors/understanding-aggression>

Dogs of War

*The Dogs of War* by Lisa Rogak

CNN: When a Dog Isn't a Dog:

<http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/01/06/when-a-dog-isnt-a-dog/>

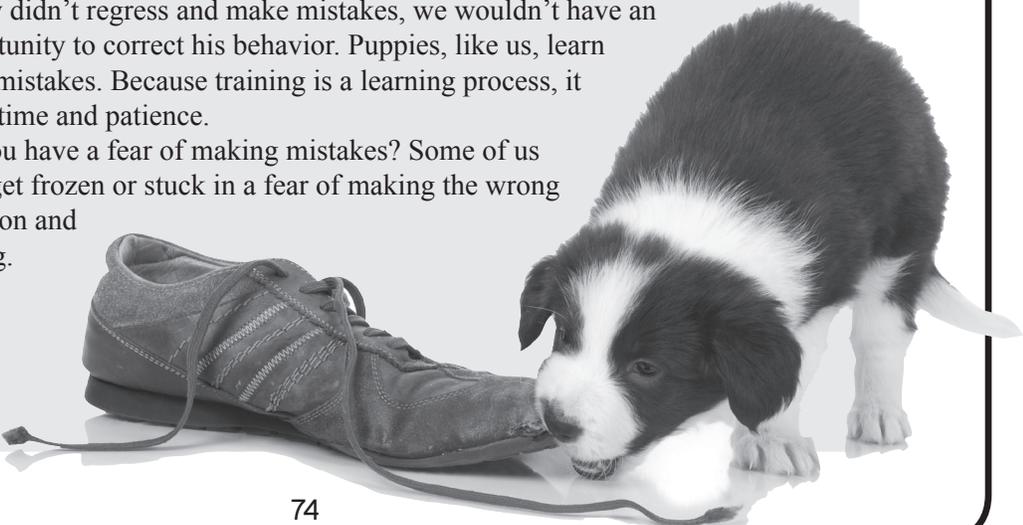
United States War Dogs Association:

<http://www.uswardogs.org/>

S. 2134: Canine Members of the Armed Forces Act:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/s2134>



LESSON	2.6 My Mistake!
Objective	Students will review the power of words, not only to express and manage emotions, but also to control interpersonal conflicts; acknowledging a mistake and apologizing can diffuse resentments. In addition to learning about mistakes that affect others, students will learn about personal failures as opportunities to learn from the experience.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remorse</li> <li>• Make amends</li> <li>• Resentment</li> <li>• Mistake</li> <li>• Failure</li> <li>• Grudge</li> <li>• Forgiveness</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Teachable moment</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Acknowledging and taking responsibility for one's <b>mistakes</b> and knowing how to <b>make amends</b> is fundamental to resilience, positive mental health, and <b>conflict resolution</b>. Students possessing these skills feel better about themselves and others. Such responsibility also leads to a realistic view of mistakes (errors in judgment, blunders, missteps) and the relationship between mistakes and failures, enhancing the realization that these are not catastrophic events. Students, many of whom try to meet others' or their own high expectations, sometimes settle for nothing but being excellent or exceptional; anything less is regarded as a <b>failure</b>. The ability to learn from one's mistakes – and recognizing that failures are opportunities for learning – is an essential life skill.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training a puppy can be a frustrating experience (for both the puppy and the human), so after awhile, owners sometimes resort to raising their voice or yelling – just yesterday you thought you made headway and that the puppy finally learned that leather is off limits, but here we are today and another shoe is ruined! But some owners hold their frustrations in check by reminding themselves that these are <b>teachable moments</b>; if the puppy didn't regress and make mistakes, we wouldn't have an opportunity to correct his behavior. Puppies, like us, learn from mistakes. Because training is a learning process, it takes time and patience.</li> <li>• Do you have a fear of making mistakes? Some of us may get frozen or stuck in a fear of making the wrong decision and failing.</li> </ul> 

Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Fear of failure is common, especially among successful individuals. The words “mistake” and “failure” have different definitions when we look them up, but they are related – you failed your test, but that was due to an error in judgment or a mistake on your part; maybe you simply didn’t study.
- Making a mistake, even if it leads to failure, is not a one-time catastrophic event; it’s what comes next (our reaction to it) that matters.
- A small blunder or misstep for a figure skater, for example, can easily lead to a fall. An example: In a competitive ice skating event, skaters who fell badly, but picked themselves up and finished their program, have gone on to win medals despite the fall; judges pointed out that attempting a difficult jump and failing gets more points than not trying at all. Some of the mistakes we make affect us personally, but often mistakes affect those around us. Just as with a mistake that affects us personally, what we do next makes a difference.
- We’ve all been taught to apologize for our mistakes when these affect others, but is this an easy task? What is the difference between apologizing and making amends? When you make a sincere apology to someone that you’ve hurt, it makes you both feel a little better, but it doesn’t really do anything to correct the situation that you have caused. Making amends is more than an apology; rather, the idea is to directly restore what (or who) we have hurt, broken, or damaged. Ask students to research different words associated with apologizing (make amends, reparations, compensation, express **remorse**, retract, make up for, atone, etc.) and encourage class discussion about the difference between apologizing and making amends.



**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>

Write and Reflect	<u>Fearing failure.</u> Mistakes and failures can be seen as catastrophic, leading us to focus on what we did wrong. Or, they can be seen as opportunities for growth and change. Ask students to identify a time they made a mistake or failed. How did they feel about it? What did they do? What could they have done differently? How can they use this failure as a teachable moment?
Investigate	<u>Forgive and forget?</u> Is there anything you believe to be unforgivable (animal abuse, for example)? One of the most well-known animal abuse cases was the case of professional football player Michael Vick. In 2007, Vick was implicated in an illegal interstate dog-fighting ring. Vick plead guilty to federal felony charges and served 21 months in prison, followed by two months of in-home confinement. Dogs under his care in the Bad Newz Kennels were reportedly electrocuted, drowned, and bludgeoned to death. Those that survived were severely traumatized. Have students research the way(s) in which Vick apologized or made amends. Was his apology sincere? Is his offense forgivable? Did he make up for his mistake? If applicable, highlight local animal abuse cases – what was the community’s reaction? Did the abusers apologize publicly? Encourage students to debate their views on the issue.
Create	 <p><u>Moving forward.</u> Blaming others for your problems is unproductive, a waste of energy, and doesn’t change the situation. A better approach is taking responsibility for your decisions and actions. <b>Forgiveness</b> is really something you do for yourself; it’s not for the other person. Forgiving, moving on, and letting go of <b>resentments</b> can make way for compassion, kindness, and understanding. Forgiveness has also been linked to healthier relationships, greater psychological well-being, less anxiety and stress, lower blood pressure, fewer symptoms of depression, and lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse.</p> <p>Is there anyone who is asking for your forgiveness, but who you are holding a <b>grudge</b> against? Or is there anything you need to forgive yourself for? Have students identify those they might be holding a grudge against and think about opening their hearts to forgiveness. If there is anything they need to forgive themselves for, have students think of ways in which to do so. What steps can they take to move toward forgiveness? The road to forgiveness might not be a straight one; we might come across bumps or obstacles along the way. Have students create a map or maze leading toward forgiveness. What obstacles or landmarks might they meet along the way? What does forgiveness look like on the map?</p>
Closure	Taking a realistic view of mistakes and failures reminds us that these are not catastrophic events. The ability to learn from one’s mistakes is an essential life skill.



*Forgive Me?* by Judy Link Cuddehe  
*Sorry I Pooped in Your Shoe: (and Other Heartwarming Letters from Doggie)*  
by Jeremy Greenberg  
*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

Forgive and Forget?

*The Lost Dogs: Michael Vick's Dogs and Their Tale of Rescue and Redemption*  
by Jim Gorant  
The Road to Recovery for Michael Vick's Dogs:  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129989424>

Moving Forward

Forgiveness: Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness:  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/forgiveness/MH00131>







# ENCOURAGING EMPATHY

GRADES 9 – 12





## LESSON OVERVIEW

Implement as many lessons as time allows, selecting them in the sequence they appear below.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
3.1 From Another Angle	Students will enhance their understanding and awareness of others' emotional states and the importance of valuing and showing respect for others' perspectives and feelings.
3.2 I Am All Ears	Students will enhance their ability to communicate and maintain relationships by developing listening and observational skills that will strengthen their awareness of verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.
3.3 Pack Leader	Students will further enhance their understanding of empathy and its importance in social interactions, using leadership as an example.
LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
3.4 Inside the Canine Mind	Students will learn about canine needs by taking the perspective of a dog, thus enhancing their understanding of empathy.
3.5 Ripple Effect	Students will learn how their behavior has an impact on others and understand how this promotes empathy and compassion.
3.6 Paying it Forward	Students will learn about the benefits of helping others and identify volunteer opportunities in their community.



LESSON	3.1 From Another Angle
Objective	Students will enhance their understanding and awareness of others' emotional states and the importance of valuing and showing respect for others' perspectives and feelings.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Sympathy</li> <li>• Perspective</li> <li>• Point of view</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>The ability to effectively interact with others requires <b>empathy</b> – the ability to listen to, understand, and acknowledge diverse perspectives and feelings. Empathy is especially crucial in our increasingly global and multi-cultural community; students are learning with – and from – others from different cultures and backgrounds. They will continue to experience diversity in the workplace, requiring them to apply perspective-taking skills. Observational and listening skills are the building blocks essential to empathy. Empathy, although innate, needs to be nurtured through practice. However, modeling plays an important role, as well; teachers can model caring behaviors by simply taking the time to ask a student how s/he feels or by sharing a personal story.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recent study shows that dogs feel what we feel. This, in and of itself, is not news to people who have dogs or know dogs; they can vouch for the fact that dogs are attuned to our feelings and somehow always know how we feel and when we need them. However, the study, published in the journal <i>Animal Cognition</i>, provides research evidence that dogs show empathy; the dogs in the study were more likely to respond to a person crying than to a person humming, suggesting that it's not just curiosity on the part of dogs, but a reaction to someone's sadness. This is just one study, and it does not provide a definitive answer confirming that dogs have empathy. However, the study opens doors for further research on the emotional lives of dogs. The study also underscores the fact that dogs are keenly observant, not only of the environment around them, but of us, too. <b>Observation</b> is one of the essential skills necessary for understanding other people, nurturing empathy, and showing others that we care. Another is the ability to listen.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Though they can be closely related, there is a difference between **sympathy** and empathy. Empathy means the ability to identify with and understand someone else's feelings or situation. It is sometimes referred to as the ability to take someone else's **perspective** or **point of view**. Sympathy is the expression of pity or sorrow for someone else's situation, letting them know you care, and having **compassion**. Some people explain sympathy as a feeling for someone else (for example, feeling sorry for) and empathy as actually understanding what others are going through (putting yourself in their shoes).
- Each of us is unique, and we may not react to or feel the same way about the same experience, so having empathy – being able to put ourselves in other people's shoes – is something we have to learn.
- Empathy is clearly important in social relationships. Can you think of how the ability to understand others' perspectives is helpful in your interactions with them? In what other situations besides social relationships is empathy important? For example, empathy broadens cognitive skills and can be helpful in academic achievement and college and career pursuits.



**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>

Write and  
Reflect

**QUICK  
PICK**

Learning to care. There is a quote from the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” Obviously we can never truly know exactly what others are thinking, but taking the time to consider how others may feel is the essence of empathy. Literature provides many examples relating to empathy. Ask students to select a quote, book, or poem and write about its impact on their ability to think about how others might be feeling.

Apply

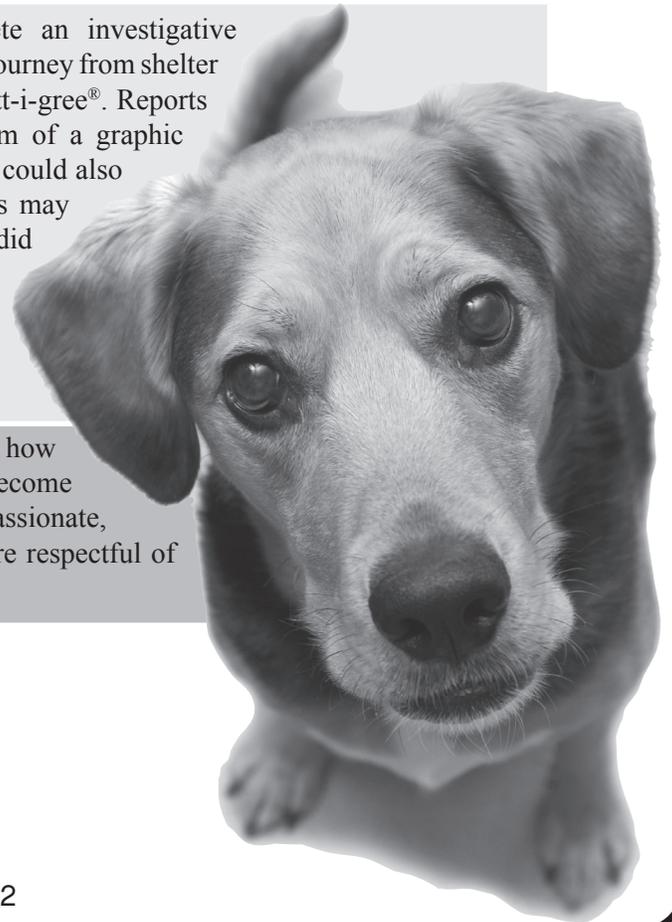
Heartstrings. The expression “to pull at your heartstrings” is used in reference to deep feelings of compassion. Videos featuring starving children or abandoned pets often bring about an emotional response. Select videos of shelters or puppy mill rescues (see *Readings and Resources* for suggestions) and ask students – as they are watching – to think about how they are feeling and how the dogs in the videos might be feeling. Encourage discussion: Can students tell the difference between feeling sympathy for the dogs in the videos and empathizing with them? Were they moved to action? What do they think can be done? Encourage students to write or draw their reflections and share with the class. Discuss the various perspectives.

Investigate

Undercover. Have students complete an investigative report on life in an animal shelter, the journey from shelter to home, or a day in the life of a Mutt-i-gree®. Reports could be written, drawn (in the form of a graphic novel or comic strip), or filmed. This could also be a journalism assignment. Students may share their findings in class. What did they find out? Were they surprised at the findings? Did their experience match their perceptions/expectations of shelter life?

Closure

In today’s lesson we talked about how important empathy is to helping us become more socially aware, caring, compassionate, and understanding individuals who are respectful of how others think and feel.





*A Dog's Purpose* by W. Bruce Cameron  
*The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy - and Why They Matter* by Marc Bekoff

Heartstrings

North Shore Animal League America's Puppy Mill Rescue:

<http://videos.animalleague.org/pages/pupppymillrescue>

North Shore Animal League America's Help Me Heal program:

<http://www.animalleague.org/support/support-rescue-medical-programs/help-me-heal/>

See Snapshots section of binder for more information on puppy mills

Undercover

*Mutts Shelter Stories: Love. Guaranteed.* by Patrick McDonnell

From Rescue to Adoption:

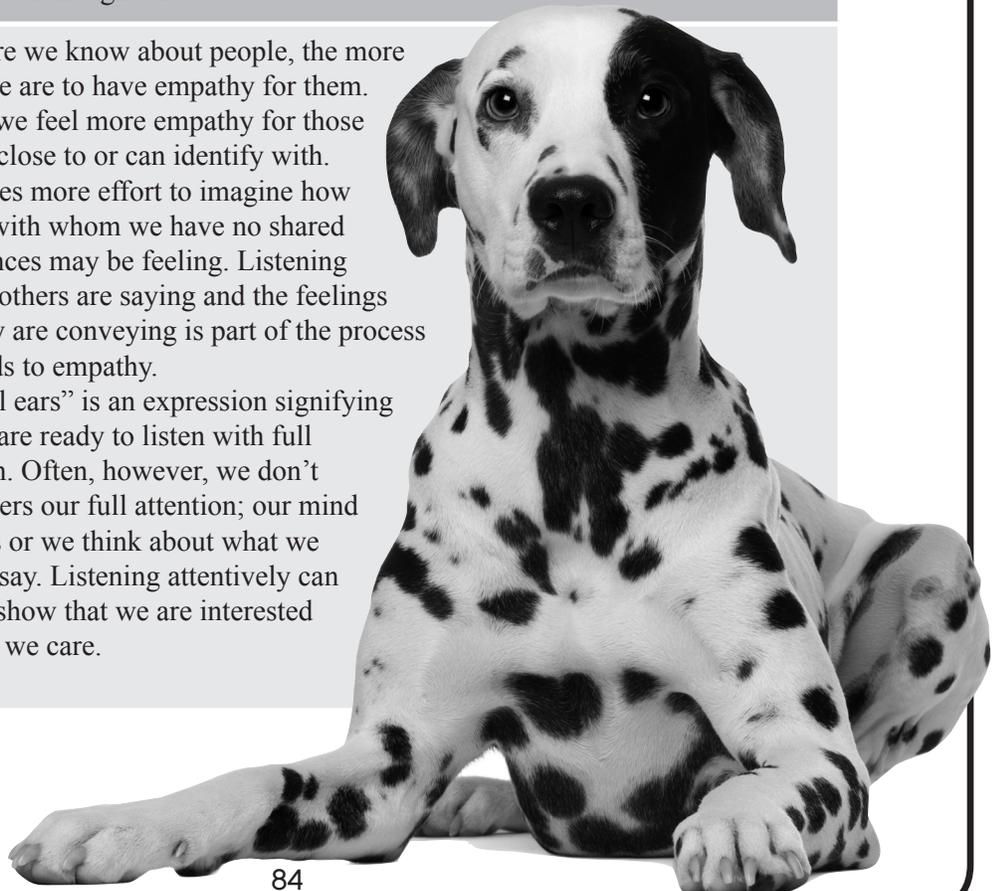
<http://education.muttigrees.org/photo-gallery/rescue-adoption>

Inside an Animal Shelter:

<http://education.muttigrees.org/photo-gallery/inside-animal-shelter>



LESSON	3.2 I Am All Ears!
Objective	Students will enhance their ability to communicate and maintain relationships by developing listening and observational skills that will strengthen their awareness of verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Hearing vs. listening</li> <li>• On behalf of</li> <li>• Civic action</li> <li>• Advocate</li> <li>• Ambassador</li> <li>• Steward</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Although listening is a critical skill, it eludes many of us. We may hear what others are saying, but often we are not actually listening. Not knowing how to listen effectively robs us of the ability to learn from and value others. Listening requires action on our part: paying attention to what is being said so the brain can process words into meaning. It involves listening to others, as well as being listened to. Learning <b>active listening</b> skills can improve interpersonal relationships and reduce conflicts and misunderstandings; active listening is a skill that is essential for empathy. When we are listening, we are not simply hearing, we are actively participating and showing that we are interested and we care. We can learn so much from listening – about others’ ideas, aspirations, and things we never thought of!</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The more we know about people, the more likely we are to have empathy for them. In fact, we feel more empathy for those we feel close to or can identify with. It requires more effort to imagine how people with whom we have no shared experiences may be feeling. Listening to what others are saying and the feelings that they are conveying is part of the process that leads to empathy.</li> <li>• “I am all ears” is an expression signifying that we are ready to listen with full attention. Often, however, we don’t give others our full attention; our mind wanders or we think about what we want to say. Listening attentively can help us show that we are interested and that we care.</li> </ul>



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- We can learn about effective listening from dogs. In fact, dogs are very good listeners and can tell a great deal about other dogs, such as their size, just by listening to their bark. Dogs instinctively want to please us, so they listen to our commands and look to us for guidance and leadership. They are also interested in what we have to say and often show us that they are trying to understand what we're saying. Have you ever seen a dog look at you with her ears perked and head cocked to one side?
- There is another expression, "to lend an ear," which means listening carefully and in a friendly way to someone – especially someone who is telling you about a problem. Remember, everyone deserves the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings and to be heard.
- Sometimes listening to others means **advocating on behalf** of those who cannot speak up for themselves. For example, we can learn about the plight of shelter pets and speak up on their behalf, thus giving a voice to the voiceless. Encourage discussion: Who are the voiceless in our community? Who has a voice? How can we use our voices to speak up for those in need?



**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>

Write and Reflect	<p><u>Hear me out.</u> Think about a time when you felt like you weren't being heard – perhaps you were upset that your team lost, but when you told your best friend, s/he was dismissive. How did it feel? Have you ever been guilty of brushing off a friend or family member when they were sharing something important with you? How do you think that person may have felt due to your actions? Ask students to reflect on these questions and journal their thoughts. Encourage them to share their responses with the class. Another option: How might students advocate <b>on behalf of</b> an animal or give a voice to voiceless homeless pets? Could they become <b>ambassadors</b> or <b>stewards</b> for a cause? Encourage class discussion.</p>
Apply	<p><u>Community profile.</u> News reporters have to be good listeners; if they weren't, they would have no story to tell! What other professions require active listening skills (physicians, nurses, veterinarians)? What is the difference between <b>hearing</b> and <b>listening</b>? Ask students to profile a professional member of the community (shelter director, mayor, animal advocate, etc.) using open-ended and close-ended questions. Encourage students to share their experience with the class. What did they learn from the interview process? Did anything surprise them about the information they gathered? If possible, post the interviews on the school website. Here are a few tips on how to become a better listener:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Look</b> at the person who is talking.</li> <li>2. <b>Show</b> that you are listening by nodding, making eye contact, leaning forward, etc.</li> <li>3. <b>Observe</b> the person's body language and think about what the person is trying to <b>convey</b> and how they feel; consider the person's facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, and gestures.</li> <li>4. <b>Clarify</b> and confirm by asking questions and re-phrasing what you hear the person saying.</li> </ol>
Investigate	<p><u>Can you guess the bark?</u> Have you ever paid attention to the different types of dog barks? The frequency, urgency, and tone of different barks mean different things. All barks may at first seem to be similar, but after listening to dogs, dog owners can become very in-tune with what their dogs are saying and differentiate different barks. It takes practice and requires truly knowing the dog, but we are going to attempt it. As we listen to some barks together as a class, let's see if we can guess what the dog is trying to tell us. You will see it may take us more than one try to get it right! Listen to <i>NOVA Dog Barks</i> and discuss with class. Encourage students to pay attention to their own dogs' barks – can they understand what their dog is trying to tell them? Ask students to reflect on how listening to others impacts us and how it can contribute to social interactions.</p>
Closure	<p>Listening does not mean waiting your turn to speak or thinking about something else while someone is speaking. To really listen well, we have to look at someone, think about what they are trying to convey, and consider how they might be feeling. Listening to and observing others can lead to <b>civic action</b>; when we pay attention to others, we can become advocates for those in need.</p>



**QUICK PICK**



Hear Me Out

*Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life* by Nancy Kay

Can You Guess the Bark?

*Barking: The Sound of a Language* by Turid Rugaas

Dog Dialog: Dog Talk

Dogs Can Tell How Big Another Dog is Just By Listening to Its Growl:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1340191/Dogs-tell-big-dog-just-listening-growl.html>

NOVA Dog Barks:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/meaning-dog-barks.html>



LESSON	3.3 Pack Leader
Objective	Students will further enhance their understanding of empathy and its importance in social interactions, using leadership as an example.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership style</li> <li>• Motivate</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Alpha dog</li> <li>• Democracy</li> <li>• Pack mentality</li> <li>• Social bond</li> </ul>
Overview	Empathy is a critical skill in interpersonal interactions, both in school and in the workplace. Emerging studies show, for example, that effective leaders are better able to prompt smiles and laughter from their subordinates and establish a <b>social bond</b> , thus leading to empathy. Discussing empathy within the context of leadership and teamwork will encourage students to think of ways to positively affect and have empathy for others.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You probably know from experience that how you feel affects others around you. Your emotional energy affects other people and animals. Smile and the world smiles with you, right? But the opposite is true as well; when you are in a bad mood, people are likely to shun you. You probably don't have to tell anyone you are feeling low; it may be written all over your face!</li> <li>• In addition to reflecting how we actually feel, facial expressions have an impact on how we actually feel. If you are feeling down, smiling can help alleviate your mood.</li> <li>• We often adopt the emotional energy of others; we're more likely to feel happy if we surround ourselves with positive people. On the other hand, we might feel depressed, frustrated, or upset if we spend time with pessimistic people.</li> <li>• How does the concept of emotional energy relate to leadership? What kind of impact do you think an empathetic emotional energy might have on one's leadership skills? Encourage class discussion.</li> <li>• Studies have shown that empathetic managers often have the happiest workers. When leaders can identify with and understand the needs of the people they are leading, their subordinates feel respected, appreciated, and valued, thus leading to a more productive work environment.</li> <li>• People feel more respected and <b>motivated</b> when their feelings are acknowledged, resulting in higher degrees of <b>engagement</b> and cooperation. Taking the feelings of others into consideration before making decisions leads to a happier work climate.</li> <li>• What words/qualities do you associate with a good leader? Encourage discussion about the connection between empathy and leadership. Students may have experience with different <b>leadership styles</b> (a strict, no-nonsense coach or captain versus a caring, understanding teacher or counselor, for example). Which leadership style did students prefer? Is there a difference between an empathetic leader and a sympathetic leader?</li> </ul>

**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>

Write and Reflect	<p><u>What's your motivation?</u> One of the challenges many leaders face is learning how to effectively motivate others. Intrinsic motivation is driven by an interest in the task itself and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure. Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain a desired outcome. What motivates you to succeed? Does it come from inside you or does it come from an external source? For example, does advice or encouragement from a friend, tutor, or coach fuel your motivation? Or are you motivated by your own desires or goals? Have students reflect on and write about what motivates them and share with the class.</p>
 <p>Apply</p>	<p><u>Wow, what a difference a leader can make!</u> The goal of this activity is to illustrate how the perceptions of others' emotions and reactions affect how we feel and act. Divide the class into two groups and select a student to facilitate each of the groups. Instruct one of the facilitators to be happy and positive throughout and continually show support and enthusiasm. Instruct the other facilitator to be non-committal (e.g., shrugging shoulders) and if the group asks anything, to show no enthusiasm and keep a blank expression. Both groups will be given any materials that may be available: books, pencils, paper, someone's scarf, etc. Allow the groups 10 minutes to create something using the materials. After 10 minutes, each of the groups will show what they did. Generally, positive leader groups finish the task and display great pride in their creation, whereas the negative leader group accomplishes nothing, but provides a number of reasons why they were unable to finish (we needed more time, we began late...). At the end of the activity, explain the instructions given to each of the groups and discuss how a person's enthusiasm and support can make a difference.</p>
Investigate	<p><u>Pack mentality.</u> 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 <b>pack mentality</b>; 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 – one dog is the pack leader (<b>Alpha dog</b>) while the rest are followers. Pack leaders show dominance over the other dogs in the pack. Dominance does not mean that one dog is, or thinks he is, better than the other dogs; rather, the pack leader shows consistent benevolent 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, providing a sense of security and confidence. What leadership style does the pack mentality highlight? Why does it work for dogs? Does this style of leadership work for humans? Why or why not? Discuss different leadership styles (autocratic, <b>democratic</b>/participative, coercive, bureaucratic, etc.). Which leadership style is more effective? Encourage class discussion.</p>
Closure	<p>Empathy is an essential leadership skill. When leaders can identify with and understand the needs of the people they are leading, they are more likely to establish a productive work climate.</p>

RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCESPack Mentality

*First Dogs: American Presidents and Their Best Friends*

by Roy Rowan and Brooke Janis

*How to be the Leader of the Pack...And Have Your Dog Love You For It*

by Patricia B. McConnell

*Be the Pack Leader: Use Cesar's Way to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life*

by Cesar Millan and Melissa Jo Peltier

How to be the Pack Leader:

<http://www.cesarway.com/tips/basics/rules-boundaries-and-limitations>



LESSON	3.4 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"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> <li>• <i>How Much is the Doggie in the Shelter?</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Calculators</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Energy level</li> <li>• Financial responsibility</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Compatibility</li> <li>• Consequences</li> </ul>
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 <b>responsibilities</b> associated with dog ownership will enable them to consider options and <b>consequences</b> 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"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• If you do decide to get a dog, be sure to select one that is <b>compatible</b> with you and your family, not just a dog you find cute or charming. Adopting a dog that matches your family's <b>energy level</b> 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?</li> <li>• Owning and caring for a dog is a lot of work. It's also a huge <b>financial responsibility</b> and requires a long-term <b>commitment</b>. 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?</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Making a decision about owning a dog provides an example of the various options and the consequences underlying all decisions we make.</li> </ul>



**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.

**QUICK  
PICK**





### 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?

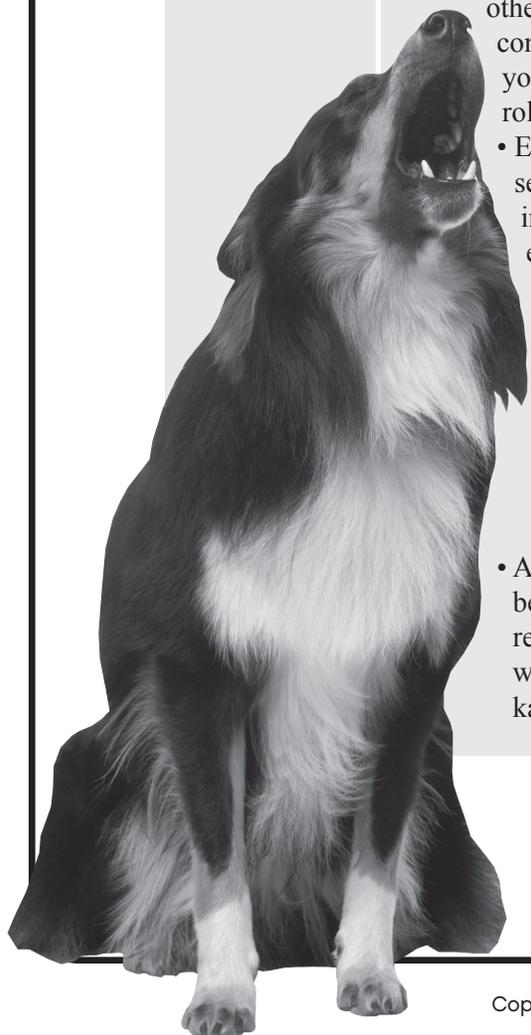
Consider the expenses in the table below (can you think of anything else?) and create a budget or list of estimated expenses for a dog for one year:



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?

LESSON	3.5 Ripple Effect
Objective	Students will learn how their behavior has an impact on others and understand how this promotes empathy and compassion.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Keeping Tabs</i> template</li> <li>• <i>Good Citizens</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social responsibility</li> <li>• Role model</li> <li>• Chain reaction</li> <li>• Canine Good Citizen</li> <li>• Karma</li> <li>• Manipulate</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Learning how one's actions impact others promotes perspective taking and compassion and contributes to empathy development, positive interpersonal relationships, and well-being. Also, helping others promotes <b>social responsibility</b>. Moreover, the experience of helping another person or animal encourages students to appreciate how empathy benefits others and is intrinsically rewarding.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you aware of just how much your behavior impacts others around you? As high school students you might consider how you can be a <b>role model</b> (or pack leader) to your peers or to younger students. Think about what it means to be a role model – what words do you associate with this term?</li> <li>• Empathy is sometimes described as a gift we can give to others. We serve as an example to others in what we do and how we act. The impact of our actions is broader than we might think; it has a ripple effect. People are affected by what we do, even if they simply hear about our actions.</li> <li>• A ripple effect is a gradually spreading effect or influence; similar to a <b>chain reaction</b> or domino effect. For example, your neighbor's dog starts barking, which prompts your dog to howl, which prompts the dog down the street to howl...pretty soon you hear an entire chorus of barking dogs, right? The point we are making is that what you say and how you say it combined with how you act can have a ripple effect on those around you.</li> <li>• A simple act of kindness can help someone you know and can be rewarding for you. <b>Karma</b> is a concept that means one is rewarded or punished according to his/her deeds. In other words, what goes around comes around. How can you use the notion of karma to broaden the impact of kind acts?</li> </ul>



**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>

Write and Reflect

Behind every kind act there is a.... Some argue that there is no such thing as an unselfish act; that behind every act of kindness, we secretly want self-gratification. Sometimes, even when we think we're being nice, we're actually **manipulating** others to elicit a desired response. Is there such a thing as a completely unselfish act? Have students reflect on this question and write a persuasive paper defending their belief. This may be a good topic for a class debate.

Apply

Take a smile. Spreading kindness can improve school climate and promote a more effective environment that is conducive to learning. Have students create posters with kindness tabs, using the *Keeping Tabs* template for inspiration. Post these on school grounds and throughout the community. If time permits for follow-up, monitor and document the use of the tabs and present the results in class.

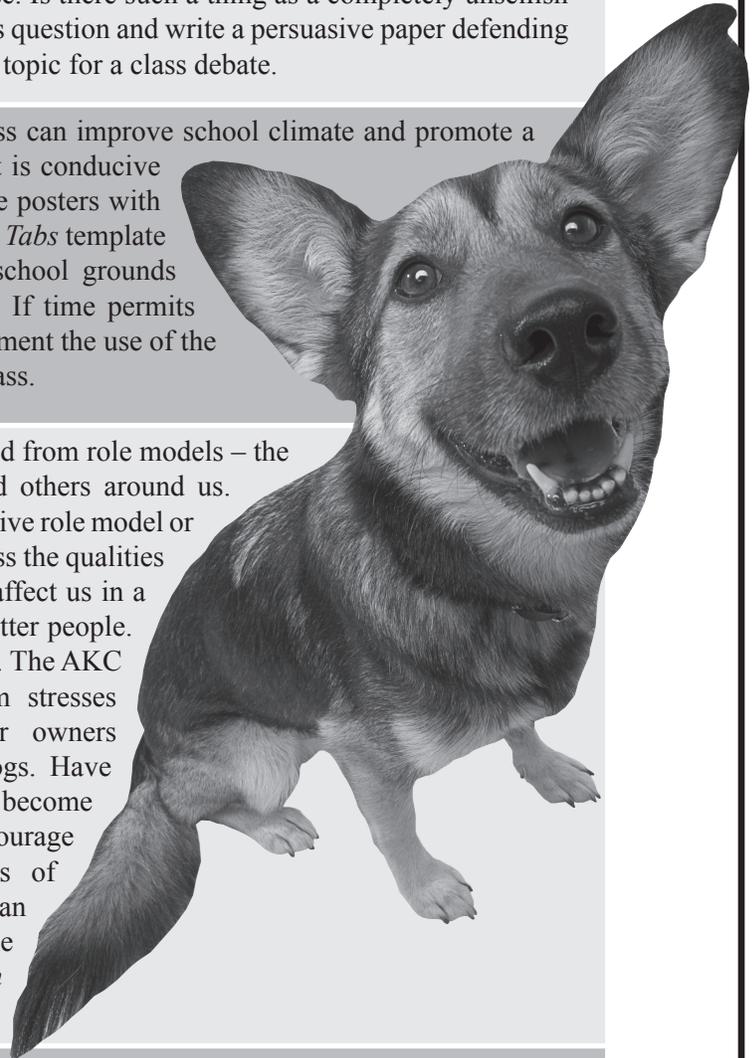
Investigate

Good citizens. Empathy is learned from role models – the actions of parents, teachers, and others around us. What are some qualities of a positive role model or mentor? Good role models possess the qualities that we would like to have and affect us in a way that makes us want to be better people. Dogs can be role models, as well. The AKC **Canine Good Citizen** Program stresses responsible pet ownership for owners and basic good manners for dogs. Have students research what it takes to become a Canine Good Citizen. Encourage them to compare the qualities of good citizenship from a human perspective and from a canine perspective. Use the *Good Citizen* worksheet to get started.

Closure

We serve as an example to others in what we do and how we act. Remember, the impacts of our actions are broader than we might think!

**QUICK PICK**



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

Behind Every Kind Act There is a...

*Random Acts of Kindness by Animals* by Stephanie Laland

Good Citizens

*The Canine Good Citizen: Every Dog Can Be One*

by Jack Volhard and Wendy Volhard

AKC Canine Good Citizen Program:

<http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/>

5 Healthy Habits to Copy from Your Dog:

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/living-well-usn/articles/2012/03/08/5-healthy-habits-to-copy-from-your-dog>



# Keeping Tabs

# Take A SMILE



# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I WILL

I WILL

I WILL

I WILL

I WILL

I WILL

# Good Citizens

Qualities of a Good Role Model/Good Citizen

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Qualities of a Canine Good Citizen

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Which characteristics/qualities overlap?

Who are your role models?

Explain why you choose to look up to these people/animals.



LESSON	3.6 Paying it Forward
Objective	Students will learn about the benefits of helping others and identify volunteer opportunities in their community.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> <li>• <i>Working Together</i> worksheet</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer</li> <li>• Donate</li> <li>• Altruism / Heroic altruism</li> <li>• Intrinsic</li> <li>• Pay it forward</li> </ul>
Overview	Empathy provides the context for and is the basis for <b>altruism</b> , which is defined as acting unselfishly. <b>Heroic altruism</b> is not only an action directed toward the benefits of others, it also involves high risk. It is done voluntarily and not for any external reward. Dogs epitomize heroic altruism; many have taken great risks to help others in need. Giving students the experience of helping others promotes empathy and social responsibility and encourages students to appreciate how volunteering benefits others and is intrinsically rewarding.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Pay it forward”</b> is a phrase that means paying someone with a good deed in return for something that someone else has done for you. If you were to visit a sick friend and bring her some books to read, she may gratefully ask what she could do to repay you. You could respond by asking her to do something kind for someone else when she gets a chance. How can you “pay it forward” in our school and our community?</li> <li>• We’ve talked about the various ways dogs help us learn life lessons about loyalty, responsibility, leadership, friendship, and more. Did you know that helping someone else can actually improve your mood and also your health?</li> <li>• There is an <b>intrinsic</b> reward in helping others. When we help others, how are we enriched? How does it affect our own development? How have you shown someone you cared about them lately? What did you do? How did it make you feel? How do you think the other person (or animal) felt? Encourage class discussion.</li> <li>• <b>Volunteering</b> with organizations you believe in or advocating for causes close to your heart are some ways to put compassion into action. Studies on volunteerism and its health benefit have shown that there is a threshold – 100 volunteer hours per year or two hours per week – to gain health benefits from volunteering. If students have volunteer experience, ask them to share with the class. How did volunteering their time make them feel?</li> </ul>

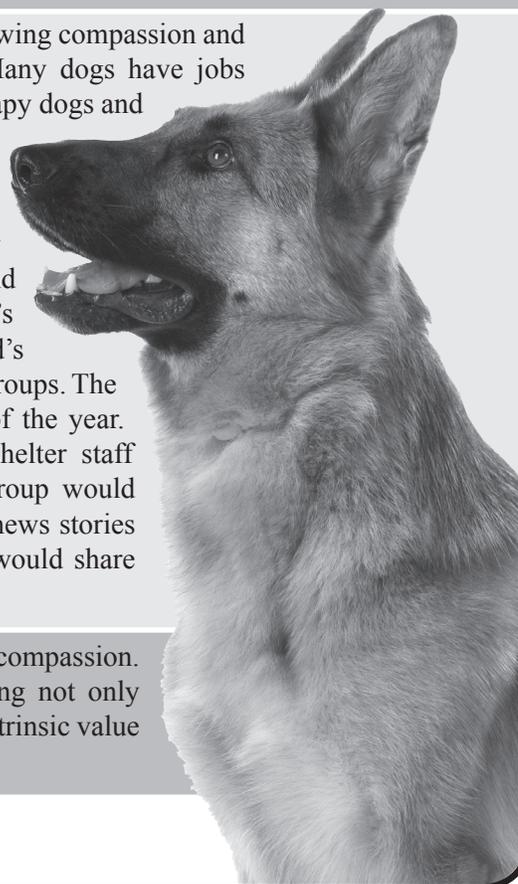


**LEARNING BY DOING:**

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>Donate or not?</u> During World War II, patriotic Americans <b>donated</b> their dogs to an organization called Dogs for Defense (with the stipulation that the dogs would be returned to their owners at the end of the war). Dogs for Defense trained and prepared dogs to enter the military and help the war effort. This must have been a difficult decision for some to have made during the war, but they must have felt that the sacrifice was an important contribution. Imagine being confronted with a decision requiring sacrifice, such as this one. If there was a call for canine volunteers for the armed forces, would you donate your dog? Reflect on and write about your thoughts leading to your decision. Have students share their decisions with the class.</p>
<p>Apply</p>	<p><u>The helping hand-book.</u> Perhaps your peers are interested in volunteering their time, but aren't sure how to get started. How could we help them get involved? Or perhaps your school has a community service requirement, but some students don't see the benefits of volunteering – how can we get them involved? What are some benefits of volunteering besides just meeting a requirement? Ask students to create a volunteer handbook with tips and suggestions for their peers. If possible, publish the handbook on the school website or in the school newsletter. Include interviews with students who have volunteer experiences. Another option: Encourage students to identify a local organization with which they'd like to volunteer and work together to come up with a timeline/plan for how they intend to do so. Use the <i>Working Together</i> worksheet to get started.</p>
<p>Investigate</p>	<p><u>Canine heroes.</u> Dogs are known for showing compassion and unconditional love toward humans. Many dogs have jobs that provide assistance to humans (therapy dogs and service dogs, for example), but even companion dogs have been known to help; some have even saved lives! Dog owners have been alerted to fires in their homes by their canine companions, and recently a Great Dane saved his owner's life by protecting her from her boyfriend's physical abuse. Split students into two groups. The goal: Determine some canine heroes of the year. One group would interview animal shelter staff to get recommendations. The other group would conduct an Internet search to identify news stories featuring canine heroes. Both groups would share their findings with the class.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<p>Helping others can lead to kindness and compassion. Today we learned that the act of caring not only helps those around us, but also has an intrinsic value and health benefits.</p>



Donate or Not?

*The Dogs of War* by Lisa Rogak

The Helping Hand-book

Volunteering in America:

<http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/>

Volunteering May be Good for Your Health:

<http://health.usnews.com/usnews/health/articles/070507/7health.volunteer.htm>

Canine Heroes

*My Dog, My Hero* by Betsy Byars, Laurie Myers,  
and Betsy Duffey / illus. by Loren Long

Great Dane Saves Owner from Abuse:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/13/dogs-welcome-at-domestic-violence-shelter\\_n\\_1204628.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/13/dogs-welcome-at-domestic-violence-shelter_n_1204628.html)



# Working Together

Brainstorm a list of three local organizations with which you might want to volunteer:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which organization would be your first choice? Why?

What do you envision yourself doing as a volunteer? How can your expertise help this organization?

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

Identify the steps you would take to become a volunteer:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.







# CULTIVATING COOPERATION & DEALING WITH DECISIONS

GRADES 9 – 12





## LESSON OVERVIEW

Implement as many lessons as time allows, selecting them in the sequence they appear below.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
4.1 Team Mutt-i-grees®	Students will explore the principles of and skills essential for collaboration and identify what we can learn from dogs about partnerships, teamwork, and seeking help in problem solving.
4.2 You've Got a Friend	Students will learn about the value of friendships and how social interactions with others can reinforce compassion, communication skills, and self-confidence.
4.3 Lean on Me	Students will learn about the importance of support systems and will identify who they can turn to for help in their community.
LESSON TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVE
4.4 Wag Your Tail, Not Your Tongue	Students will review the impact one's choices, actions, and words can have on others and consider the intention behind what they say.
4.5 From Bully to Buddy	Students will learn how they can make conscious decisions that can contribute to creating a school climate that would nurture a change from bullies to buddies.
4.6 What's Next?	Students will identify further education and work opportunities and discuss strategies to help them achieve future goals.



LESSON	4.1 Team Mutt-i-grees®	
Objective	Students will explore the principles of and skills essential for collaboration and identify what we can learn from dogs about partnerships, teamwork, and seeking help in problem solving.	
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> <li>• <i>Report Card</i> worksheet</li> </ul>	
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Constructive criticism</li> <li>• Mutual respect</li> <li>• Reliance</li> <li>• Reciprocity</li> </ul>	
Overview	<p>The ability to work with others as part of a partnership or team is a critical skill that is essential at school and later in the workplace. However, not all students (or adults) are equally comfortable working as part of a team, but can nonetheless learn strategies for collaborating and cooperating with others, including how to offer and accept constructive criticism and how to communicate effectively without being negative. Using examples of the bond between service dogs and people, the discussions and activities in this lesson provide students with opportunities to reflect on the difference between collaboration and cooperation. Several of the activities are placed within the context of the workplace to provide opportunities for students to think ahead.</p>	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs are sometimes part of partnerships and teams used to promote people’s health and well-being in numerous ways. Therapy dogs may visit elderly or sick people to provide some companionship and enjoyment; others help people develop particular skills or abilities. Reading assistance dogs have been used to help struggling readers improve their literacy and language development. Service dogs directly assist people with many different disabilities and have a legal right to accompany their owners in most areas. In the United States, service dogs are part of federal legislation and protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act.</li> <li>• Therapy dogs and service dogs have a bond with their handlers and, in some cases, with the people they serve. Their success depends on <b>reliance</b> and trust, which enables them to work <b>collaboratively</b>, with each one depending on the other.</li> <li>• We are used to being independent and often work alone to complete tasks or solve problems, especially ones that are personal in nature. Even when we work <b>cooperatively</b> on a project, each student may be assigned a specific part, and we could work independently on the same project.</li> </ul>	

Discussion  
(cont'd)

- There is a subtle difference between working cooperatively and working collaboratively. When collaborating, people work together (co-labor) on a single shared goal. When cooperating, people work separately on common goals. The same skill sets are required in both cooperation and collaboration; we need to be able to respect and get along with others. At the most fundamental level, this requires listening to others.
- In collaboration, flexibility, trust, and give-and-take are essential, in addition to critical thinking, encouragement, and contribution. Accepting (and giving) **feedback** in the form of **constructive criticism** is another skill integral to teamwork and collaboration. Encourage class discussion on constructive criticism – what is it and how can it help us work together?



**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>

Write and  
Reflect

**QUICK  
PICK**

Networking. In the workplace, the term networking refers to identifying people one can work with who can be helpful to one professionally; for example, when looking for a job. When we collaborate with others, we get to know them and rely on them. There is **reciprocity** in the relationship, meaning there is give-and-take; people rely on you just as you rely on them. Your friends may constitute a network since you rely on one another in different ways. Reflect on how you work with others. Think about the various groups to which you belong (choir, band, clubs, organizations, teams, etc.). What is your role in each of these groups? How do you contribute? How do others contribute? Ask students to write a one-page brief expressing how they feel as part of a network or what value they might find in being able to network with others once they graduate. If time permits, encourage students to share with the class.

Apply

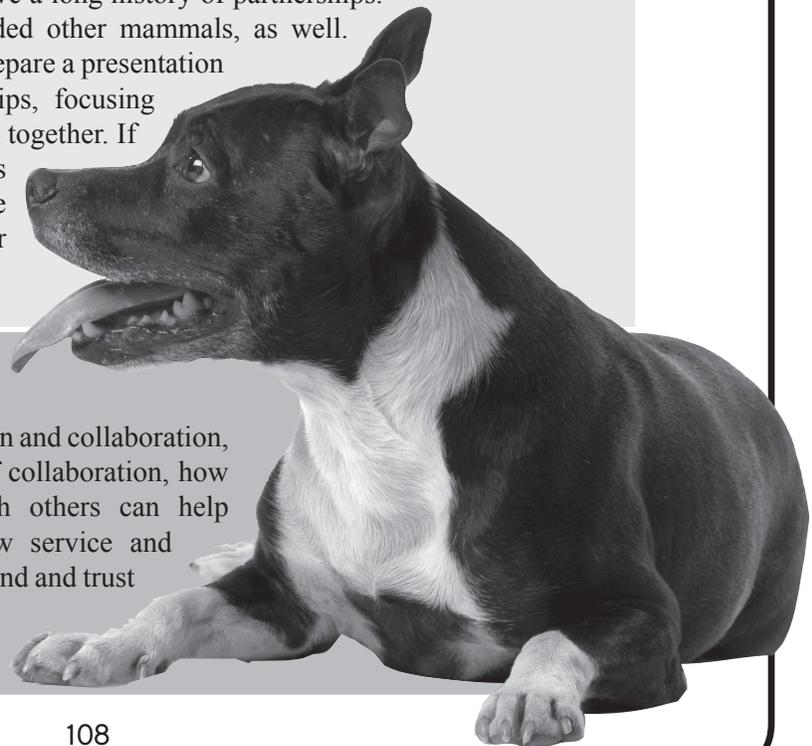
Report card. One aspect common to both cooperation and collaboration is **mutual respect**, which is manifest in the ability to give and accept constructive criticism. Are you able to accept and acknowledge feedback without reacting defensively? When critiquing others, one strategy is to begin with a compliment and point to the positive before proceeding with suggestions for change. Ask students to research a topic related to humane education that interests them and prepare a short report (5-10 minutes) to present to the class. Use the *Snapshots* section of this binder for inspiration for potential research topics. Ask the audience to give feedback using the *Report Card* worksheet. Encourage students to reflect on how it felt to give and receive constructive criticism and prompt for class discussion.

Investigate

Unlikely pairs. Humans and dogs have been working together for thousands of years and have a long history of partnerships. However, dogs have befriended other mammals, as well. Have students research and prepare a presentation about unlikely pet partnerships, focusing on how different species work together. If students have multiples species of pets at home, encourage them to discuss how their pets interact.

Closure

Our discussion today focused on teamwork and the subtle difference between cooperation and collaboration, emphasizing the principles of collaboration, how working collaboratively with others can help us solve problems, and how service and therapy dogs exemplify the bond and trust essential in collaboration.



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

*Trust the Dog: Rebuilding Lives Through Teamwork with Man's Best Friend*

by Gerri Hershey

*Soldier Dogs* by Maria Goodavage

*Where the Trail Grows Faint: A Year in the Life of a Therapy Dog Team*

by Lynne Hugo

*Extraordinary Dogs* [DVD]

Dog Dialog: Part of the Pack

Unlikely Pairs

*Unlikely Friendships: 47 Remarkable Stories from the Animal Kingdom*

by Jennifer Holland

Amazing Photos of the Most Unlikely Animal Friends:

[http://www.cesarsway.com/news/photos/Amazing-Photos-](http://www.cesarsway.com/news/photos/Amazing-Photos-Unlikely-Animal-Friends)

[Unlikely-Animal-Friends](http://www.cesarsway.com/news/photos/Amazing-Photos-Unlikely-Animal-Friends)



# Report Card

Name of presenter:

Topic:

Strengths of presentation:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Areas for improvement:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can you offer advice for improvement in a constructive way?



**LESSON****4.2 You've Got a Friend**

## Objective

Students will learn about the value of friendships and how social interactions with others can reinforce compassion, communication skills, and self-confidence.

## Materials

- *Setting Boundaries* worksheet
- Computers with Internet access

## Key Words

- Socialization
- Isolate
- Alienate
- Boundaries
- Social capital
- Personal identity
- Emotional support
- Connection
- Clique

## Overview

Friendships are developmentally important throughout childhood, but especially in adolescence when students strive to attain a **personal identity**. In earlier grades and in middle school, friends are valued as confidants. In adolescence, loyalty and faithfulness are important characteristics of friendships, and students value friends for the **emotional support** they offer. Hence losing a friend is difficult and finding a new friend is celebrated. Being a friend and having friends may be difficult for some. Additionally, larger social networks - **cliques** and gangs, for example - can exclude outsiders, especially those who are **alienated**. Using examples about dogs (man's best friend) can help students with strategies for initiating and maintaining friendships. Establishing positive relationships with peers requires and reinforces compassion and social skills and is also important for academic and life success. Recognizing the need to make friends and learning strategies to make and maintain friendships will enhance students' confidence and their capacity to interact with peers. This will also enable them to appreciate how they can help others who feel left out.

## Discussion

- Dogs need to be **socialized** early in life. There is a critical period – around 3 to 12 months – when they need to meet people and experience new situations. Some consequences of **isolating** dogs during this period might be aggression and fear. Socialization is so vital for dogs during this period that some recommend that a puppy be introduced to four or five new people a week!
- Is the socialization process important for humans? Encourage class discussion: Do friends matter? How? What are the qualities you look for in friendship? What does it take to maintain friendships? What does it feel like to lose a friend? What words do you associate with friendship? How important are your friends to your life? Handle this discussion with care in the event that some in the class may have no friends or may feel isolated or alienated.



Discussion  
(cont'd)

- The sociological term **social capital** has various meanings, one of which is the positive value of **connections** among individuals and the results of reciprocity, trust, and support that arise from them. The more people one can count on, the greater their social capital.
- Interestingly, studies show that social interactions (being around other people) are important not only for establishing friendships, but also for good health and for developing cognitive skills; social interactions exercise our minds and contribute to physical and mental well-being!
- Although friendships are important, some of us are comfortable with one or two friends, while others may prefer larger groups of acquaintances. Encourage students to think about which they prefer and why.



**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>

Write and  
Reflect

**QUICK  
PICK**

Leader of the pack. In humans, a pack mentality might be misinterpreted as sticking close to your own group of friends or **clique**. This is not how dogs view a pack. For dogs, having a pack mentality means they think about the good of pack rather than what is best for each individual dog. This keeps the pack stable, organized, and effective. How might the concept be interpreted negatively and/or positively? Might misinterpretation of the concept of a pack mentality lead to negative outcomes? Ask students to write their own definition of a pack mentality and share with the class. Encourage students to think about ways they might be able to expand their pack to include others who might be feeling alienated or left out.

Apply

Setting boundaries. Dogs need rules, boundaries, and limitations; this helps them to be on their best behavior. Setting healthy **boundaries** is beneficial for us, too. The purpose of having boundaries is to protect ourselves. It gives us an opportunity to stand up for ourselves and tell others when they are acting in ways that are not acceptable to us. Setting boundaries creates healthy relationships. Each of us has a right to protect ourselves from the negative actions of others and to stand up for our own best interests. Using the *Setting Boundaries* worksheet, have students come up with some ways to stand up for themselves.

Create

What money can't buy. There are certain things in life that are considered priceless: friendships, positive relationships with others, love, etc. What do you consider to be invaluable in your life? Have students write a poem or essay about what money can – and cannot – buy. Encourage them to share their thoughts and creations with the class.

Closure

Social interactions are important, both for dogs and for people. Establishing positive relationships with our peers can reinforce compassion, communication skills, and self-confidence.



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

*A Letter to My Dog: Notes to Our Best Friends*

by Robin Layton, Lisa Erspamer and Kimi Culp

*Notes from the Dog* by Gary Paulsen

*How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend: The Classic Training Manual for Dog Owners* by Monks of New Skete

*My Dog Skip* by Willie Morris

*Sergeant Rex: The Unbreakable Bond Between a Marine and His Military Working Dog* by Mike Dowling and Damien Lewis

*Hachi: A Dog's Tale* [DVD]

Leader of the Pack

*Be the Pack Leader: Use Cesar's Way to Transform Your Dog*

*... and Your Life* by Cesar Millan and Melissa Jo Peltier

*How to be the Leader of the Pack...And Have Your Dog Love You For It*  
by Patricia B. McConnell

Setting Boundaries

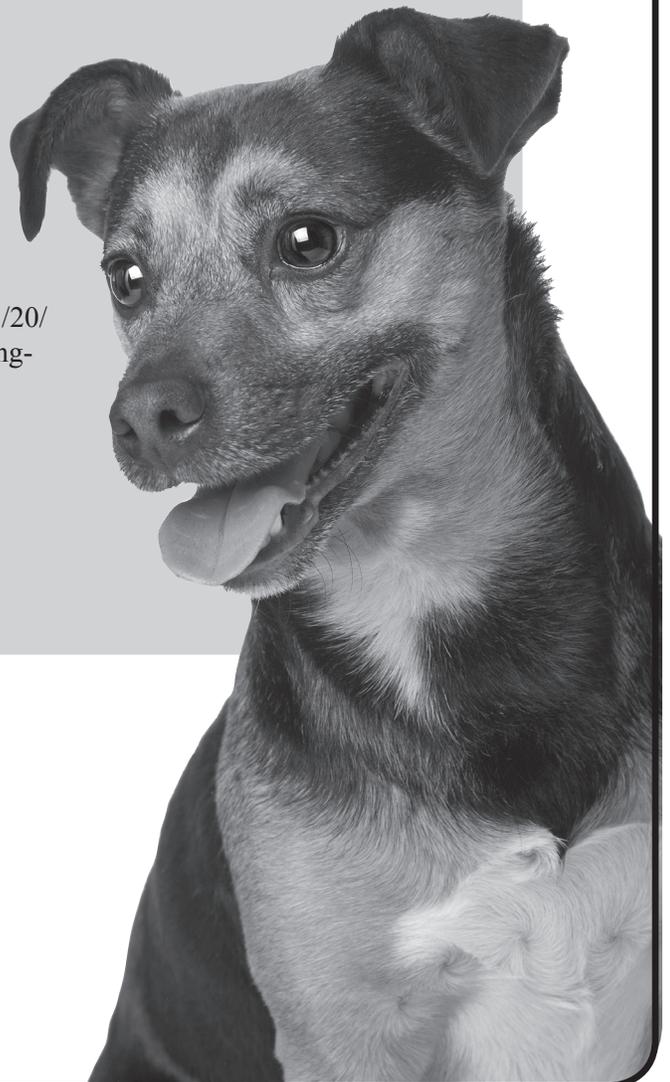
How to be the Pack Leader:

[http://www.cesarsway.com/tips/basics/  
rules-boundaries-and-limitations](http://www.cesarsway.com/tips/basics/rules-boundaries-and-limitations)

What Money Can't Buy

Fiona Apple Postpones Tour to Be With  
Her Dying Dog:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/  
fiona-apple-cancels-tour-stay-home-dying-  
dog\\_n\\_2167320.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/fiona-apple-cancels-tour-stay-home-dying-dog_n_2167320.html)



# Setting Boundaries

Select one or more of the situations listed below, and/or add another, based on your or others' experiences. For each one you select, list the strategies you would use to address the problem and stand up for yourself.

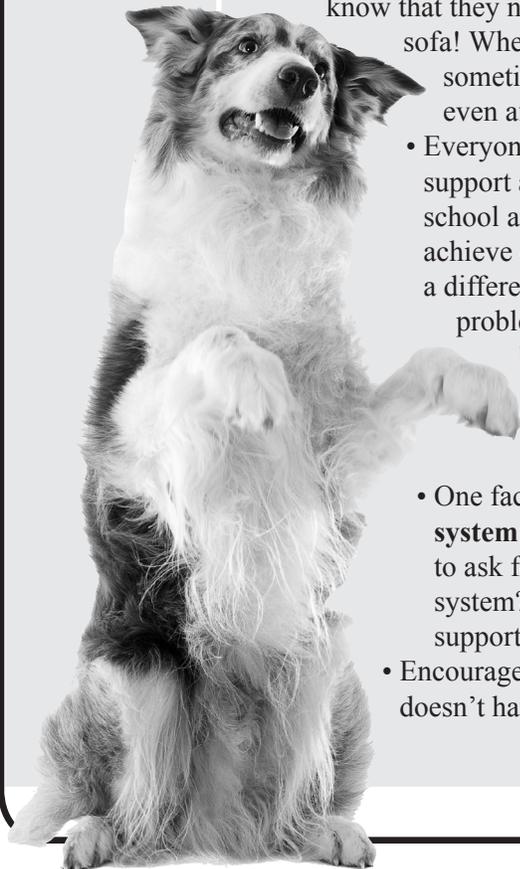
Your ex-girlfriend/ex-boyfriend won't stop harassing you and has been sending threatening texts.

Your brother always wants to borrow money from you but he never repays you.

A group of friends is pressuring you to skip class and you don't want to.

Your basketball coach wants you to stay after practice to work on your free throw technique, but you have a lot of homework.

LESSON	4.3 Lean on Me
Objective	Students will learn about the importance of support systems and will identify whom they can turn to for help in their community.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Circle of Your Life</i> worksheet</li> <li>• <i>It Takes a Village</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Small box to decorate for <i>Help Me, Mutt-i-gree</i>®! help box</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support system</li> <li>• Guidance</li> <li>• Resource</li> <li>• Confidential</li> <li>• Anonymous</li> <li>• Collective wisdom</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Increasing students' awareness of the impact others can have on their lives and of the people and organizations within their school and community that can offer support and assistance will provide them with confidence to ask for assistance, increase their knowledge regarding helpful resources, and bolster their coping skills and resiliency. The ability to ask for and give help when asked are positive traits associated with resiliency. For some students, relying on others is difficult and, at times, also embarrassing, so they may keep their problems to themselves. The message inherent in this lesson is that some problems are difficult and trying to resolve them may seem insurmountable, but we don't have to tackle such problems alone. Working in collaboration with others, we can solve problems, break down barriers, and overcome obstacles and challenges.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs ask us for help all the time. They're never too embarrassed to let us know that they need to go outside or that their ball is stuck behind the sofa! Whereas dogs do not hesitate to ask for our help, people sometimes feel awkward, embarrassed, too proud, and perhaps even afraid to ask for help – why?</li> <li>• Everyone benefits from having someone they can count on for support and <b>guidance</b>. Knowing that there are people in our school and community who can help us learn, improve and achieve our goals, and feel better is reassuring and can make a difference in our lives. Even if you have a deeply personal problem, there are people who can help who are bound by rules that require them to keep your information <b>confidential</b>. These people may not know you need help, however, so you need to take the first step; You have to ask.</li> <li>• One factor that helps build resiliency is having a <b>support system</b>: a person or people to count on. Another is the ability to ask for, as well as give, help. Who makes up your support system? Who can you count on? Could a dog be part of your support system? How do dogs help?</li> <li>• Encourage class discussion: What might be the outcome if a person doesn't have a support system to turn to when they need help?</li> </ul>



**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>

Write and  
Reflect



Circle of your life. Think about the various relationships you have with the different people in your life (friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, parents, coaches, tutors, etc.). The ways in which you interact with these people is specific to their roles. Make a list of the five most influential people (and animals) in your life and place them in the appropriate circles on the *Circle of Your Life* worksheet. Encourage students to reflect on who makes up their inner circle and who makes up the outer circles and why. Do people move in and out of different circles at different times? Is your pet a part of your inner circle?

Apply

It takes a village. There are both risk factors (for example, stress) and protective factors associated with resiliency. Knowing that one needs help and being able to ask for help is a protective factor that can lead to resilience, or the ability to bounce back from adversity. Another protective factor is having a support system – people and organizations that can help. There is a saying: “It takes a village (community) to raise a child.” What community organizations shaped your upbringing? Who is there to help? Using the *It Takes a Village* worksheet, ask students to design a community **resource** map identifying community organizations that are there to help or that may have played an integral role in their lives. Share the resource map on the school website or in the school newspaper.

Create

Help Me, Mutt-i-gree®! There are many different reasons and ways to ask for help; sometimes you can even do it **anonymously**. Have students create and decorate a Help Me, Mutt-i-gree® Help Box and place in the classroom. Encourage students to ask for help with any problems they may have by writing a question or issue on a slip of paper and placing it in the box. Assure students that no names will be used and encourage them to place a slip of paper in the box whenever they’re having an issue that they can’t solve on their own. Some students may wish to ask questions about issues with which other students are struggling. Read the slips of paper aloud occasionally and ask the class to use their **collective wisdom** to provide suggestions for ways to help. Another option: Have students create a support group or advice column for the school newspaper or website. Encourage other students to ask anonymous questions and have a team of students respond. This activity can be the basis of a mentoring project for high school students to help younger students identify problems, ask for help, and receive advice through the voice or pen of Mutt-i-grees®. Students may team up with a teacher or school counselor to respond to the problems.

Closure

Today we identified the people in our family, school, and community who are there to support and help us. We also discussed the benefits of having a support system.



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

*Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*  
by Luis Carlos Montalván and Bret Witter

*A Dog Named Boo: How One Dog and One Woman Rescued Each Other -  
and the Lives They Transformed Along the Way* by Lisa J. Edwards

*To the Rescue: Found Dogs with a Mission* by Elise Lufkin and Diana Walker

*Saved: Rescued Animals and the Lives They Transform*  
by Karin Winegar and Judy Olausen

Help Me, Mr. Mutt-i-gree®!

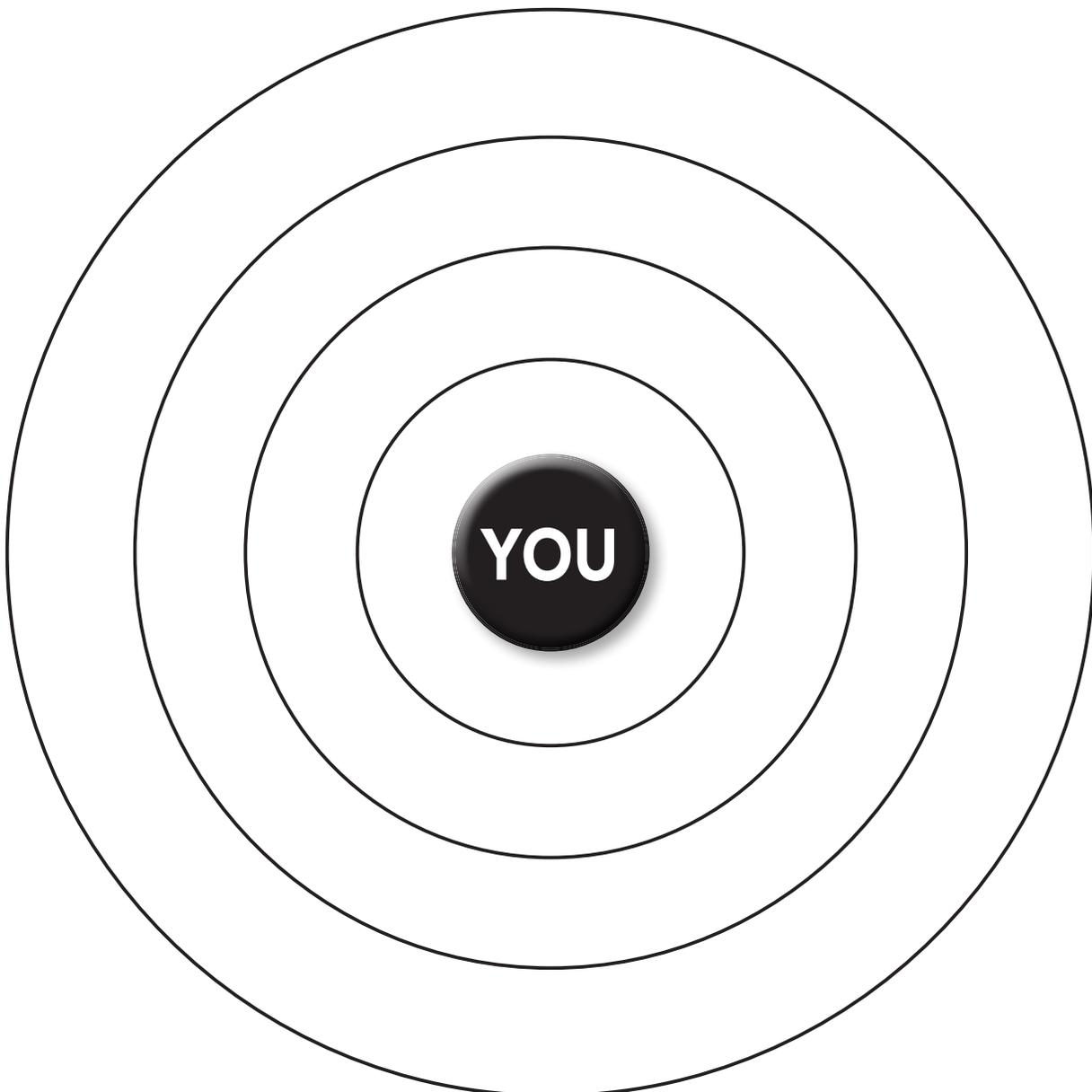
*Help Me, Mr. Mutt! Expert Answers for Dogs with People Problems*  
by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel



# Circle of Your Life

Make a list of the five most influential people or animals in your life and place them in the appropriate circles. Who makes up your inner circle? Who makes up your outer circle? Why? Do people move in and out of different circles at different times? Is your pet a part of your inner circle?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



# It Takes a Village

Use the chart below to identify and list local organizations in your community that can help in times of need. Can you think of any other categories? If so, add to this chart.



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**MENTAL HEALTH**

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**RELATIONSHIPS**

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**ADDICTION**

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**RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

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**TEEN PREGNANCY**

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LESSON	4.4 Wag Your Tail, Not Your Tongue
Objective	Students will review the impact one's choices, actions, and words can have on others and consider the intention behind what they say.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student computers with Internet access</li> <li>• Rubber bands</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Social standing</li> <li>• Intention</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Teens value belonging to a social group; the peer group provides a sense of shared experiences, encouragement, and affirmation. However, it can also become a breeding ground for gossip and the alienation of others outside their group. Encouraging discussion and reflection on the potential harm associated with spreading rumors or shunning students who are not part of their group will help students to become more aware of the effects their actions may have on others, as well as on themselves. Thinking about the impact one's choices – what we choose to do as well as what we choose to say – will lead students to consider the intention behind their words, and will help students gain empathy, and influence decision-making. The lesson encourages students to think about what dogs would say (if they could) as an introduction to the topic.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rumors can spread like wildfire, especially due to the rise of social media and electronic communication. This high-tech gossip can be particularly damaging because it can be done anonymously and is often unfiltered. Have any of you been the target of gossip in this manner?</li> <li>• If dogs could talk, would they gossip? What would they say?</li> <li>• Words can have great power, both negative and positive, and once something is said, you can't take it back. For children and young adults, in particular, being the victim of gossip can cause long-lasting effects on one's self-esteem. Studies show that victimization is associated with loneliness, depression, anxiety, and even suicide.</li> <li>• Gossip is usually harmful in nature. Often, it involves spreading rumors about a person or people that aren't true. Spreading rumors only hurts others and destroys our credibility. Think about it – who is going to trust us with any information if they think we'll tell everyone else?</li> <li>• We hear gossip every day – think about all the magazines and TV shows dedicated to celebrity gossip! Celebrity gossip columnists glorify gossip so it might seem harmless...until you think of the person who is the subject of gossip. Spreading gossip is a form of verbal abuse and <b>intimidation</b>.</li> <li>• Gossip is also a way we judge others, which is unkind and cruel. Why do you think some people gossip about others (to feel better about themselves, because they're insecure, jealous, bored, looking for attention, want to feel in control)?</li> </ul>

Discussion  
(cont'd)

- Next time you're about to gossip, think before you speak: What is the intention behind your statement? Is it kind? Is it inspiring? Is it creative? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Is it true/valid?
- Are there any lessons we can borrow from dogs that might influence our choices or language? Dogs obviously can't spread rumors or gossip, but if they could, would they? Dogs have a **reputation** for being loyal, faithful companions who are devoted to their pack leader. Would a faithful, loyal friend spread rumors or gossip? Encourage discussion of ways the positive characteristics of dogs might influence our decisions to not gossip or spread rumors.



**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>

Create

**QUICK  
PICK**

If dogs could talk... Imagine a group of dogs talking to one another. What would they say? Would they talk about the dog down the street that is not part of their pack? Would they reach out to that dog? Would they talk about the humans around them, and what would they say? If these dogs had a computer with Internet access, would they use it to spread rumors or kind words? Ask students to form three groups and come up with a humorous skit about what dogs in a pack would say. Share skits in class.

Apply

Tame your tongue. One's **social standing** is important, especially in high school. Have students wear a rubber band around their wrist. Every time they notice themselves participating in gossip or about to spread a rumor, have them switch the rubber band to the other wrist. Ask students to monitor the number of times they switched the rubber band for one day and discuss in class: What did you learn about yourself? Were you surprised at the number of times you switched bands? Encourage students to take this lesson to heart and think before they speak. As an extension to this activity, ask students to research quotes about gossip and select the one they like the best. Share with the class and/or create a poster or display of all the selected quotes.

Investigate

What's in a name? One's reputation is important, whether one is an individual or an organization, because it influences how others perceive us. Encourage discussion: Why is reputation important? What factors influence one's reputation? What makes a reputation good or bad? Different dog breeds have different reputations, and these can be both positive and negative. For example, golden retrievers and Labrador retrievers have the reputation of being good family dogs, while other breeds have the erroneous reputation of being aggressive or violent. These breeds include Pit Bulls (American Staffordshire Terriers or Staffordshire Bull Terriers), German Shepherds, Dobermans, Rottweilers, and Mastiffs, among others. They're 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 upbringing and environment. Ask students to investigate the impact that reputation has on particular dog breeds and encourage them to share their research with the class. Did anything in their research surprise them? Were they able to debunk any stereotypes about certain dog breeds? Suggested discussion topics: Where does the term "pit bull" come from? How might a dog with the reputation of being aggressive suffer? Might this affect the population of animal shelters? How have people been working to restore the image of these breeds? Do you know anyone who owns any of these dog breeds? What are your experiences with these breeds?

## Closure

Today we reviewed the impact our choices, actions, and words can have on others and considered the **intention** behind what we say. Remember, think before you speak! What is the intention behind your statement? Is it kind? Is it inspiring? Is it creative? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Is it true/valid? At first, gossip might seem like fun. But remember, if someone gossips with you, he or she also might gossip about you. And it never feels good to be on the receiving end.

RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCESIf Dogs Could Talk...

*If Dogs Could Talk: Exploring the Canine Mind*  
by Vilmos Csányi and Richard E. Quandt

What's in a Name?

*Bully: The Pits* by Paul 107

*I'm a Good Dog: Pit Bulls, America's Most Beautiful (and Misunderstood) Pet*  
by Ken Foster

## Bully Breeds:

<http://animal.discovery.com/petsource/bully-breeds/>

A Pit Bull Perception Problem: What's a Dog Owner to Do?

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/29/living/mnn-pitbull/index.html>

How Did Pit Bulls Get Such a Bad Rap?

<http://www.cesarsway.com/dogbehavior/basics/>

How-Did-Pit-Bulls-Get-a-Bad-Rap



LESSON	4.5 From Bully to Buddy
Objective	Students will learn how they can make conscious decisions that can contribute to creating a school climate that would nurture a change from bullies to buddies.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solidarity</li> <li>• Character</li> <li>• Segregation</li> <li>• Unity</li> <li>• Intervention</li> <li>• School climate</li> <li>• Collective goal</li> </ul>
Overview	<p>Having empathy for others and learning about the importance of standing up for others will allow students to reflect on their own actions and encourage them to make better choices. A positive school climate – the extent that the school is an environment that is conducive to learning and where students and teachers feel good about themselves and others – can discourage bullying. Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their actions as a group may lead to their making a collective decision to improve their school experience.</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Solidarity</b> is a term that means union or fellowship arising from common interests. We might say that we stand in solidarity with our teammates or with animals in a shelter.</li> <li>• Our <b>collective goal</b> is a <b>school climate</b> that reflects togetherness and <b>unity</b> of purpose, not one that reflects <b>segregation</b> or <b>isolation</b>. School climate refers to the overall social and academic environment in the school, including how everyone in the school feels about and interacts with others. Studies show that a positive school climate discourages bullying and supports academic achievement – it makes sense; the environment is conducive to learning. As classmates, we are all part of a school community, and this can be quite powerful.</li> <li>• Encourage class discussion: What are some ways to nurture a positive school climate? What factors might detract from a positive school climate? How does being the victim of bullying or intimidation affect the way you think about our school?</li> <li>• Have any of you ever been intimidated or bullied? What do you think causes one person to bully another? Do you think low self-esteem might be a factor? Encourage discussion about what makes a person bully others – can we show compassion for bullies?</li> <li>• If you stand by and allow another to be bullied, how does that reflect on your character? What if you <b>intervene</b> and stand up for someone else... how does that reflect on your <b>character</b>? Encourage class discussion. Teachers may choose to provide examples of dogs that have intervened on behalf of their owners or handlers to protect them.</li> </ul>

**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>

Write and  
Reflect

**QUICK  
PICK**

Speak up and speak out. There is a powerful statement by Martin Niemöller, written about the Holocaust: “First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.” Think about a time when you didn’t stand up for someone else who was being harassed or bullied...how did it make you feel? How might you react differently in the future? Ask students to reflect and write their thoughts. If time permits, encourage students to share with the class.

Investigate

Do we make the grade? What is school climate, and why is it important? A positive school climate – the extent that the school is an environment that is conducive to learning and where students and teachers feel good about themselves and others – can discourage bullying and can positively impact student performance. Ask students to read the school’s mission statement and determine if students and teachers are living up to it. Then have students research school climate standards to see if their school makes the grade. Ask students to develop a school climate questionnaire to administer to three study groups: students, teachers, and administrators. Have them analyze and report their findings.

Apply

Bullies to buddies. Our school should be a safe space that encourages us to challenge prejudices and discover commonalities; we are all a part of the same team. Have students establish a Bullies to Buddies peer mediation club at your school. How could students use shelter dogs to win the hearts of bullies? In the process of forming the club and deciding on its mission, ask students to research anti-bullying programs that currently use shelter dogs for inspiration.

Closure

School climate impacts student performance, so we want to make sure our school is a positive environment that encourages a sense of unity and togetherness.





Do We Make the Grade?

School Climate Measures, compiled by the Committee on Academic, Social and Emotional Learning:  
<http://casel.org/in-schools/assessment/school-climate/>

Bullies to Buddies

The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum and Bullying Prevention - An Interview:  
<http://education.muttigrees.org/videos/39>  
Dogs Help Schools Lick Bullies:  
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011-09-28/Dogs-help-schools-lick-bullies/50592574/1>



LESSON	4.6 What's Next?
Objective	Students will identify further education and work opportunities and discuss strategies to help them achieve future goals.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mutt-i-grees</i><sup>®</sup> <i>Road Map</i> worksheet</li> <li>• Computers with Internet access</li> </ul>
Key Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milestone</li> <li>• Sense of purpose</li> <li>• Qualifications</li> <li>• Obstacle</li> <li>• Potential</li> </ul>
Overview	Thinking about the future occupies much of students' time, especially as graduation nears. However, not all students are able to think clearly about goals and aspirations and the ways in which they might want to work with others in the future. Collaboration and cooperation are essential skills that are necessary to future success, both in school and in the workplace. Reflecting on the future can become an emotional issue for some students; therefore, presenting the lesson with some humor can lighten the task. For example, ask students how a dog would plan his day or what goals dogs might set for themselves.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of their historical connection to humans, dogs like to have a purpose or a job and are most happy when they can be useful to us. Without a purpose, they can act out or become anxious.</li> <li>• The same is true for us – lying around the house once in awhile is okay, but if that becomes a habit, we can lose our <b>sense of purpose</b> and may become depressed or anxious.</li> <li>• You have the power to make your dreams come true; the first step is identifying what those dreams might be. How can you awaken your true potential?</li> <li>• Encourage class discussion of students' future plans and dreams. Has anyone been inspired to pursue a career helping <i>Mutt-i-grees</i><sup>®</sup>? How can they encourage and support their peers?</li> </ul>



**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>You: In 5 years? In 10 years?</u> Within each of us lies the <b>potential</b> for success in life, but what does success mean to you? To achieve something, one first needs to identify what the goal is. Success can have different meanings for different people. Encourage discussion: How do you describe your personal definition of success? Ask students to imagine themselves 5-10-15 years in the future and write about the person they hope to become and the goals they hope to accomplish. How much will have changed from the present? Where will they be living? What will they be doing to make a living? What causes will be most important to them? How will they determine if they've become successful? As an extension to this activity, ask students to complete the same task, but from the perspective of a shelter or stray dog. Encourage students to share their thoughts with the class.</p>
<p>Investigate</p>	<p><u>Dream job.</u> What is your dream job? Have students identify further education and work opportunities that interest them. For example, if you'd like to become a veterinarian, what educational background/training/degrees are needed? Encourage students to research how one's pay is affected by his or her educational background and reflect on the impact of work on one's mental health. For example, how much more does a high school graduate make compared to someone who never finished high school? College graduate? Advanced degrees? What <b>qualifications</b> are needed to reach your personal goals? In considering career goals, does one select on the basis of what one really loves doing and excels in, or is the potential compensation the overriding consideration? Encourage class discussion.</p>
<p>Create</p>	<p><u>Road map.</u> Each year Animal League America holds a national adoption event called Tour for Life. Mobile adoption units ("shelters on wheels") travel across the country and partner with shelters and rescue groups in various cities and states. The mobile units cover thousands of miles and help save the lives of thousands of animals through humane education and adoption events. When Animal League America begins its Tour for Life adoption event, coordinators map out the route that the mobile units will take. What route do you want your life to take? Have students create a visual road map depicting future goals and <b>milestones</b> – this could be done with a drawing or on a computer. What are some important milestones they'd like to reach and what are some <b>obstacles</b> they might expect to encounter? Use the <i>Mutt-i-grees Road Map</i> to get started. A road map is a useful tool that can have various other applications; for example, in providing students with direction for career/life decisions.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<p>Today we identified potential goals and aspirations for our futures, as well as the value of a road map, or plan, to help us navigate toward achieving a goal. We also came up with strategies to clarify what directions we may want to take and what our goals might be.</p>



RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCES

Dream Job

*Careers with Dogs: The Comprehensive Guide to Finding Your Dream Job*  
by Kim Campbell Thornton

Road Map

North Shore Animal League America's Tour for Life:

<http://www.animalleague.org/events-news/events/tours-events/tour-for-life/>



# MUTT-I-GREES

## ROAD

## MAP

Draw or create a road map of how you visualize your future.

What are some milestones you hope to achieve?

What are some obstacles you anticipate encountering?

Identify at least 5 steps you will need to take to achieve your goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Identify one action step you can take today to move you closer to your goals:





# DOG DIALOG LESSONS

GRADES 9 – 12

In this series of Dog Dialog lessons, students will learn about dog behavior in a variety of situations, providing them with insight into canine characteristics and behaviors so they can confidently and effectively interact with and care for dogs. An understanding of canine behavior is essential if students are to have empathy and compassion for dogs. These lessons are also available online: <http://education.muttigrees.org/dog-dialog>.







## PART OF THE PACK

**Objective:** In this first lesson, students are introduced to the concept of the pack and learn that dogs are pack animals; they like to be part of a group and follow the rules established by the pack leader. Students also learn that, although there are differences between people and dogs, both humans and dogs are social, which is why they have bonded so deeply over the ages.

For dogs, life is a game of follow the leader. Called alpha dogs (alpha means “first” in classical Greek), canine leaders control the pack. Left to their own devices, even domesticated dogs will form packs, with one canine in charge: the alpha. But being in

charge does not involve being a bully. Instead, it means showing consistent leadership, demonstrating knowledge and confidence, and setting and enforcing fair rules. A good alpha does not exert violent control over pack members. Instead he is the dog the others depend on and look up to; the dog who knows the territory a little bit better and is able to help the group maintain order, stay healthy, and survive. The alpha leads the pack by setting a confident, positive example. Proper social order within the group lets all the pack members know what to expect and where they stand. Knowing this, dogs acquire a sense of calm and trust.

Sound familiar? Yes, especially if you think of the alpha dog as the canine equivalent of a good leader.

Like humans, dogs are social animals, and as we know, societies and families need leaders. Realizing the similarities between dog packs and human families can help us understand and care for our canine friends in our homes and our 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 that we are members of the same species. Dogs, too, belong to a particular species of animals: canis lupus familiaris. There are many different breeds of dogs and many mixes of these breeds, but all dogs are part of this same species.

Anthropologists are still trying to pinpoint when exactly dogs and humans made their first fateful connection, but the most common estimate is 15,000 years ago. Genetically, there is no doubt that dogs are direct genetic descendants of the wolf, although the two species may have diverged as long as 135,000 years ago. Most experts agree that the dog was the first animal we domesticated. They also maintain that the relationship between human and canine was reciprocal from the start, with both species benefitting from their partnership. Dogs helped humans to hunt and herd, provided warmth, and alerted them to danger. In return, humans provided dogs with safety and reliable food sources. Gradually, this pragmatic symbiosis developed into something more, and dogs and humans became companions...then friends.

With time, canine evolution reshaped the wolf to accommodate life with humans. Dogs are much more attuned to human social cues than wolves, even those raised by hand. Dogs are also more sensitive to gestures, such as pointing, and they possess an uncanny ability to read human faces and emotions. Dogs also evolved a large vocabulary of barks, with at least eight different sounds that humans can easily interpret. Wolves, on the other hand, possess a smaller array of vocalizations, perhaps because living exclusively with their own species requires a less nuanced language.

Through years of evolving together, dogs and humans have created a unique interspecies pack. But some things never change: every pack needs an alpha, and all dogs benefit from knowing their place in the pack. Because order is important to a dog’s sense of well-being, the pack leader must assert himself quickly and confidently. If a dog does not perceive a leader, he will feel insecure. When dogs live with a human family, their owners must take on the role of the alpha by calmly but firmly teaching and reinforcing the rules and making sure the dog understands that the rules must be maintained. If humans fail to become the pack’s alpha, their dog may try to take on the leadership role himself, which will make him unstable, anxious, and hard to control. Some early signs of imbalance in the pack include a dog pulling on a leash during a walk or otherwise refusing to obey commands.

For dogs to realize and fulfill their potential, they must have a pack leader. It’s up to us humans to assume the role we have played since the beginning of our relationship with canines. It’s up to us to be calm, confident dog leaders.



## ALL ABOUT INSTINCTS

**Objective:** Students learn about instincts and how they influence behavior. Students also consider the differences between learned behavior and instinctual behavior. Sensitivity to the differences between canine and human instincts is a prerequisite for effective and compassionate interactions with dogs, and it also connects us with nature. Exploring instincts supports the whole-child, holistic approach to education, which focuses not only on intellect and academics, but also on creating links among the mind, the heart, and the body. Through these connections, we achieve a balance in life.

Your dog is sitting next to you on the couch, watching television. His head is resting on your knee, and your hand is buried deep in his silky, thick fur. Peace. Quiet.

Together. And then, boing! Out of nowhere, his ears perk up, his body tenses, and he leaps off the couch, runs to the front door, and starts barking wildly.

Long before you heard the doorbell and realized someone had approached your house, your dog, relying on his profoundly keen senses, flew into action. His nose and his ears, immeasurably more sensitive than we can imagine, told him someone was out there, and his ancient instinct to protect his territory and pack got him on his feet and barking.

Instinct. People use the word all the time, but few of us stop to think about what it really means. “Heather has an instinct for always saying the right thing.” “Mike plays football by instinct.” The fact is neither diplomacy nor athletic prowess is a product of instinct. Both are learned behaviors, and although different people have talents that enable them to learn some things better than others, instinct has nothing to do with it. People do have instincts, however. The human instinct to survive is perhaps the most well known; it governs many of our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, but not in the same way that instincts guide the behavior of animals.

If you want to understand the inner life of your dog, as well as what prompts many canine behaviors, the place to start is with his instincts. Instinct is, by definition, bred in the bone. All animals, human and nonhuman, are born with certain instincts. Instincts are natural behavior patterns that determine certain actions. Instincts require neither thinking nor training. In fact, no animal learns an instinct; instead, instincts are passed genetically from generation to generation. For example, we use our voices to communicate long before we can form words or compose sentences. Think of babies crying for food. That’s instinct. As we mature, we acquire language, which is a learned behavior that builds on one of our most basic instincts: vocalization.

Puppies are born with an instinct for rough play. But a mother dog will discipline her pups if the play gets too rough and endangers the group. Here are two instincts working side by side: the instinct to play rough, which can be directed toward effective hunting later in life, and the instinct to protect and preserve the order of the pack. The puppies display learned behavior when they act on what their mother taught them: that too much rough play is unacceptable.

We know that dogs instinctively look to a pack leader (the alpha dog) to provide rules, boundaries, fairness, and limitations. But dogs have many other instinctive behaviors, too. Dogs in the wild, for example, instinctively hide injuries to avoid attracting predators. Learning the difference between canine instincts and learned behaviors helps us understand how we should behave around dogs. Knowing, for instance, that dogs instinctively guard their food and space reminds us not to approach a dog while he is eating; his instinct might be to react aggressively.



## LEARNING FROM DOGS: LIVING IN THE MOMENT

**Objective:** Dogs tend to focus on the present and react based on instinct and habit. Students learn that dogs also react to us. Our behaviors and actions can influence how dogs deal with adversity and behave around us. Taking our cue from dogs, students learn to be resilient, remain calm and confident, and focus on the present. Students see that although everyday life is full of distractions, making an effort to focus on the present can help us be resilient and calm.

Is your dog a Zen master? Well, no, at least not in every respect; Zen masters, for example, are not inclined to beg for table scraps or bark at passing cars. But in one important regard, your dog has a natural trait that every Zen practitioner strives for: the ability to live in the moment.

Research shows that dogs have a complex sense of time that in many ways is much like ours. Because domesticated dogs live in such close proximity to humans, and because human habits are pretty predictable, dogs have learned to tell time not by using clocks or sundials, but by relying on their responses to human behavior—and even more crucially, by trusting their

instincts. Dogs inhabit an intensely sensory world, with their sense of smell, in particular, guiding them through their days.

Time is an enormously difficult subject: if it weren't, there would be no need for Albert Einstein and quantum physics. But most scientists and philosophers agree that the concepts we use to measure time are human constructs, ideas we created to control and order our natural and emotional experiences. The sun rises; it's time to go to work or school. The sun sets, night falls. Time to sleep. This happens 365.25 times, and we call it a year – the time it takes the earth to revolve around the sun.

People in Western cultures think about time in a linear sense: the past, the present, and the future all marching one after the other along a direct line. Linear time enables us to recall things sequentially, to ruminate on cause and effect, and to remember the past and plan for the future. The Eastern view of time, however, is cyclical, or circular, and is based on patterns of repetition in nature. Many researchers say that dogs experience time in a cyclical manner that depends on circadian or natural rhythms, as well as on immediate responses to their instincts. Which brings us back to our Zen master.

Most experts agree that dogs don't spend time thinking about what happened last year and what might happen someday. Instead, they act and react in the moment. Instincts trigger their actions; a hungry dog looks for food and a cold dog looks for shelter. They live in the present and focus on what's happening now. Even dogs who have been hurt or abused in the past can become balanced, healthy members of their packs. They are able to forgive because, living in the moment, they can more easily move forward.

Some shelter dogs have undergone terrible experiences, especially those who come from puppy mills. We should show compassion, but not dwell on their pasts. Instead, we can help them by being caring pack leaders in the present. Instability and insecurity in dogs often comes from an unstable pack leader. Dogs react to us as their leaders; if a dog senses that you are fearful around her, she will think there is something to be afraid of, not realizing that she, herself, is the source of your fear.

So it's crucial to maintain a sense of confidence and stability. For example, if a dog bit you years ago, you might be fearful of all dogs. (We remember what happened to us in the past and are anxious about what may happen in the future. That's living in linear time.) To move past this fear, we should remind ourselves that we have control over our thoughts and that each dog is different – that each moment is different – and we can choose to transcend past experiences by concentrating on the present.

Staying present in the moment can enrich other areas of life, too. Remaining calm and confident and focusing positively on whatever challenges we face today can give us a sense of calm control and help lead us to success.



## STAYING CALM-ASSERTIVE: ENERGY AS COMMUNICATION

**Objective:** Students learn that their energy – in particular, how feelings of frustration, anger, anxiety, and excitement – can influence a dog’s behavior. They see that when interacting with dogs, it is essential to remain relaxed so as to convey a sense of confidence and being in charge. This is what we call “calm-assertive.”

Dogs live in a world we can barely imagine, and that world is all about smells. A dog’s sense of smell is so highly developed that medical science is beginning to explore ways in which dogs can sniff out cancers and other diseases long before they show up in a medical exam. Some dogs can even sense the onset of diabetic and epileptic seizures in their human companions. Research also tells us that all animals, human and

nonhuman, undergo biochemical changes that correspond to different emotions. Your serotonin, for example, increases when you’re happy; your levels of cortisol increase when you’re stressed. And those are only two examples of the complex relationship between our chemistry and our emotions.

Just think about it: Could your dog be sniffing out your every mood, from frustration and disappointment to contentment and calm? Combine that with the fact that your dog has keen observational skills and pays closer attention to you than you pay even to yourself, and it’s not surprising that everything about you, including your moods and energy, affects your dog. You cannot lie to a dog about how you’re feeling; she will sense your emotions and read you like a book!

Strong emotions, especially negative ones like anxiety or fear, can confuse a dog, presenting a challenge to effective human/dog communication. By simply changing your energy, you can impact a dog’s behavior; for example, speaking to your dog in a quiet, firm voice will be much more effective than shouting at her in a shrill, raised voice. If you are angry, frustrated, anxious, or excited, you will compromise a dog’s ability to focus. In fact, dogs do not listen well to an emotional person and may become unsettled by shouting.

It’s important to project a calm and confident energy and a positive mood in the presence of dogs so they can feel calm and confident, too. When we are around dogs, we want to maintain a calm-assertive energy; the dog will read this as leadership and conclude that we are in control. Sometimes dogs misbehave because they don’t understand how to react to what you are asking of them. Don’t get frustrated or angry. Dogs respond badly to frustration and anger; in fact they often mirror our emotional states and can become frustrated and angry, too. They feel more secure and listen much better when we are in control of our emotions.

If we maintain a calm and assertive state, our dog will maintain a calm, submissive, and cooperative state. For a dog to surrender the lead to us is not a negative trait. On the contrary, dogs need and respect a strong leader they can feel safe following. The trick is to remember that we must be open-minded and confident, realizing that our dog will hear us if we take a leadership role, are positive and supportive, and use calm-assertive energy to communicate our expectations.

Being relaxed, confident, and aware of our emotions will also help us interact with that other complicated species: humans.



## NOSE FIRST, THEN EYES, THEN EARS

**Objective:** Students consider similarities and differences between how dogs and people experience the world around them and discover that dogs learn about their world by using their noses first. Students learn that it's important to respect their way of understanding the world, and that when their senses are overloaded, they can become confused and frightened. Knowing this will help students take another's perspective – specifically a dog's – and subsequently interact with animals more confidently and compassionately. This lesson helps illustrate the differences between people and dogs and provides students with guidance on how to respect and interact with differences, no matter the species.

It's dark, damp, and if you get up really close to it, it looks like something from another planet. But relax. It's only your dog's nose, though in truth, it is pretty alien to us. A dog's sense of smell is 100,000 to 1,000,000 times more sensitive than ours, depending on the breed. For us, vision is the primary sense. For dogs, it's scent. You might say dogs see with their noses. Their eyes are next in importance, then their ears. Have you noticed that dogs often sniff you when

you first meet them? Sniffing provides a dog with volumes of information, and it's how dogs can get to know people and other dogs.

A dog's nose controls approximately 60 percent of his brain, making smell 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 detect. Dogs use their noses not only to learn what is going on around them, but also to distinguish one odor from another. Because of their powerful noses, dogs are especially useful in search and rescue work, drug and explosive detection, and working with pest control professionals to sniff out bed bugs and termites.

Canine vision is also an important sense. Many people think dogs are colorblind, but dogs actually do see color, just fewer colors than humans see. Dogs also use their vision differently. Dogs see best at dusk and dawn and are able to detect movement very well, which helps them fetch and hunt. Canine vision is best at mid-distance, another plus when hunting.

Last, but equally amazing, is canine hearing. Consider this: A dog's ear contains 18 or more muscles that enable his ears to raise, lower, tilt, and rotate, all to refine his ability to hone in on the exact location of a sound. Dogs also hear at a much higher frequency than we do, which means they can detect sounds we cannot possibly hear and pick them up at four times the distance. And because a dog's sensitive ears are connected to his nervous system, loud sounds, including raised, angry voices, can startle and frighten him. So when friends tell you their dog dives under the bed hours before a thunderstorm, believe it.

You might conclude from all this information that dogs live in our world, but also in another world. And in a way, they do. Dogs possess the same five senses we do: smell, vision, hearing, taste, and touch. But these senses vary dramatically in strength and importance from one species to the other. In other words, there are similarities and differences. Understanding how dogs use their five senses gives us insight into who they are and how they experience the world we share. It challenges our thinking so we can try to imagine life as a dog. And it helps us bridge the gap between our perceptions and theirs so we can interact with them with insight and respect. Dogs are loyal, intelligent companions; we have a responsibility to honor the differences between our two species, just as we honor differences between ourselves and other people.



## DOG TALK

**Objective:** Students 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 also learn to pay attention to a dog's bark and use this information to better anticipate and understand a dog's behavior.

The next time you find yourself at a party in a room full of chattering people, stop, close your eyes, and listen to the voices: some loud, some quiet,

some high, others low, some laughing, others murmuring, some shrill and annoying, others smooth and soothing.

Humans use their voices in a variety of ways to communicate a wide range of ideas, needs, and feelings. Dogs, like us, are social animals, but instead of talking, they bark. Barking is as natural to a dog as talking is to you. And just as humans use language, dogs use their barks to vocalize what they want and need from each other and from us. Barking is one way that dogs communicate, and they've been expressing themselves with yips and woofs for as long as there have been dogs. Wolves, the dog's direct biological ancestor, bark differently and for different reasons. Experts note that dogs bark in long, rhythmic stanzas while wolf barking is more isolated and brief. The most likely reason for this difference is canine domestication. Dogs needed to develop a more extensive bark vocabulary to communicate with humans during our long evolution together.

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 offer some clues about what the dog is trying to say. Identifying the different types of barks can help us understand what they are telling us and enable us to respond to them more effectively. Learning to understand barks will also help us anticipate what the dog might do next. And when we can interpret the reason for barking, we will find the sounds meaningful rather than annoying.

Each dog is an individual, and individual dogs bark for their own particular reasons. But by listening and observing dogs in general, we can learn to distinguish important common barks (a stranger is approaching, I want to go out, I am scared, I'm bored, I'm lonely, where are you?, I want to play...). In addition, 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, we will have reinforced this behavior, and they will bark even more when they want food or attention.

If you live with a dog, you have probably wished she could speak to you just once to tell you what she thinks or how she feels. Well, she can. One of her most obvious communications skills is barking. If you want to understand her, just slow down and listen to what she is saying. Each bark has something remarkable to tell you.

To hear more about barking, visit <http://education.muttigrees.org/dog-dialog/dog-talk/>, <http://education.muttigrees.org/panic-dog-video/>.



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

**Objective:** Students 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 also learn how to pay attention to their own body language and the body language of other people as a way to communicate emotions and intentions.

No matter what language we speak, we all are fluent in body language, a form of non-verbal communication that consists of gestures, facial expressions, body postures, and eye movements. The vocabulary seems universal. A smirk, a wandering gaze, a tilted head all appear to mean the same things whatever the culture. Some experts claim that as much as 93 percent of human communication is body language. And though researchers differ on whether body language is innate, a learned behavior, or a bit of both, one thing is certain: Dogs speak and understand body language, too, and are particularly sensitive to the energy behind it.

We know that dogs communicate with each other and with humans, using vocalization and by reading emotional/biochemical energy. But it's crucial to add body language to the communication skills dogs and humans share. In fact, 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 and facial expressions can give us clues to their energy and what they are feeling. Signs of canine confidence include an erect, tall posture 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, open, and approachable. Signs of fear include a lowered stance, the tail tucked under, or the tail wagging fast or frantically. Dogs experiencing fear may also bark, as if to say, "Keep away."

When some dogs are aroused, they 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, growling, and breathing. A dog with heavy or rapid breathing could simply be tired...or he could be anxious, frightened, or excited. A dog with his mouth or lips drawn back and rolled up or his teeth bared might be agitated or threatened. When a dog yawns and looks away from you, he might be saying he has had enough and is finished playing. Respect the dog's wishes.

Dogs are eloquent speakers of body language. Because dogs use body language so well among themselves, they are highly attuned to our gestures, posture, and expressions. Paying attention to our body language and how it influences others can help us better communicate with both dogs and people.

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

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



## NO TOUCH, NO TALK, NO EYE CONTACT

**Objective:** Students learn when to give affection to a dog and how to act when meeting a dog for the first time. This further develops students' knowledge about dogs and their ability to take another's perspective and adapt their behavior accordingly. It can also prevent dog bites. We should greet a dog using the *no touch, no talk, no eye contact* rule until a dog signals it wants to interact.

Picture this: You're walking down the street and a total stranger marches right up to you, looks you straight in the eyes, puts his hand on your shoulder, and says, "Hey! How ya doin'?"

How would you react?

- (a) move quickly in another direction
- (b) look around for help
- (c) try to decide whether this person is a jerk or a threat

Maybe all three.

People have appropriate and inappropriate ways of greeting each other, and we all know the difference. Each of us has what we call our personal space, a little bubble of security

and privacy that, when burst by an unwelcome intruder, makes us feel vulnerable, anxious, and uncomfortable. We may adjust the parameters of our personal space according to our familiarity with someone and depending on our mood at any given moment, but the bottom line is that personal space is sacrosanct. Invade it at your peril.

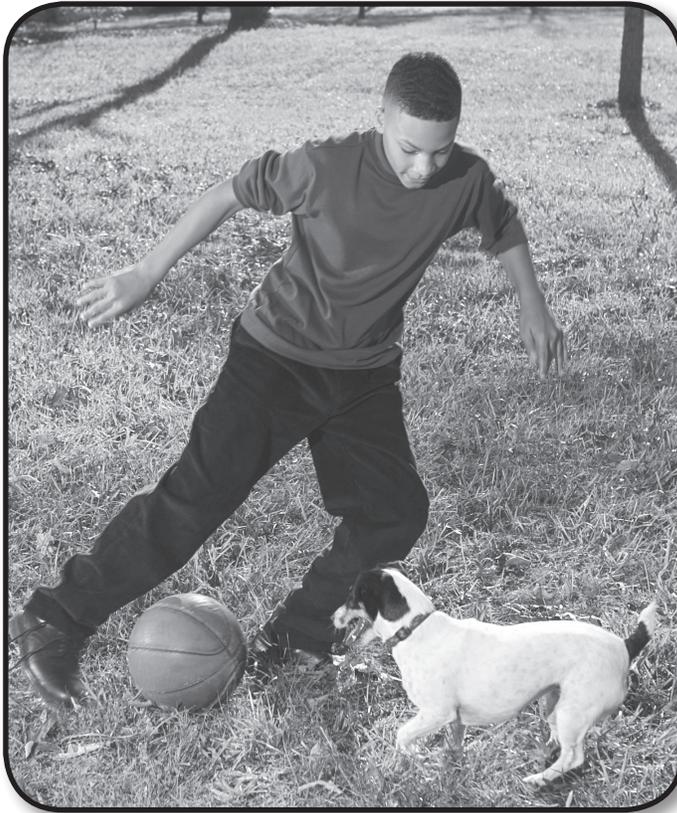
Not surprisingly, dogs have their own sense of personal space, which means there are important things to remember when meeting a dog for the first time. First, approach slowly and ask the dog's owner or handler for permission to pet the dog; remember, some dogs are service dogs and should not be disturbed. Once you receive permission, remain still and calm and let the dog come to you. In fact, ignoring the dog completely and allowing him to smell you is the best plan. No matter how cute the dog is, try not to touch him, talk to him, or make eye contact. Staring is considered rude and even threatening among people; for dogs, it's just plain threatening.

The ability to read a dog's body language is crucial during introductions. Calm dogs usually have lowered heads and ears that fold back. If a dog has his tail up or between his legs, or if his ears are up, he may not be in the mood to say hello. Jumping, barking, and growling are clear signs that he is not ready for affection or to meet someone new. The best time to pet a dog is when he is calm and relaxed. Don't approach a dog while he is eating or when he has a toy or a bone; the dog may react aggressively. Unfortunately, some people forget about a dog's instinct to protect his food and territory, which can lead to dog bites, unnecessary aggression, and a cycle of abuse and neglect that can easily be prevented.

A dog will let you know when he is ready to be petted; once he gives the okay, pet gently and calmly. Focus on maintaining a calm-assertive energy. It's also important to respect differences; some dogs like and are happy with people, but others may feel overwhelmed or nervous around children or new people. It's always important to note the dog's body language and behavior to see if he is ready to meet you. Only when a dog is in a calm, receptive state should we give him affection.

When meeting a dog for the first time, follow these rules: ***no touch, no talk, and no eye contact***. Let the dog make the first move and both of you will have a positive encounter.

Visit <https://education.muttigrees.org/dog-dialog/nice-to-meet-you/> to see the *Nice to Meet You* video.



## KNOW YOURSELF, KNOW YOUR DOG

**Objective:** Students learn to consider both a dog’s energy level and their own and how this energy influences behavior and compatibility. How we interact with different dogs depends in part on their energy level; this knowledge helps students better understand how people and animals interrelate, which reinforces the notion of thinking about others and developing empathy. It is also a helpful lesson for any family that is considering adopting a dog.

Step back for a minute and take a look at yourself. Do you like to play basketball or tennis, ride your bike, and take dance lessons? Or do you prefer to chill out with a good book, take in a movie, or visit a museum? If you tend toward a more active

lifestyle, you’re probably a high-energy person. If you opt for a slower approach to life, you more than likely have a lower energy level.

Clearly, energy levels determine behavior, and that applies to dogs as well as humans. Dogs are born with certain energy levels. Those with very high energy levels like nothing better than an endless game of fetch, while low-energy dogs prefer a leisurely stroll followed by a long snooze. Although energy levels are sometimes associated with certain breeds, even within a breed and among mixed-breeds individual energy levels vary. Some people think a dog’s size determines his energy. Not so. Big or small, dogs can have energy levels that surprise you.

Interestingly, dogs are drawn to other dogs with the same energy level. 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’d say, “I want to play with her because she likes to run and play tug.”

Like dogs, most of us choose friends with energy levels similar to our own, because energy levels help determine shared interests and activities. In general, we prefer to spend time with people who are compatible with us, which means that each person’s traits complement the characteristics of the other, leading to harmony and balance. When it comes to the human/dog relationship, it’s equally important to consider pack compatibility. Ideally, a person should have the same – or higher – energy level as his or her dog. When energy levels are in conflict, frustration and tension can destroy an otherwise promising dog/human relationship.

So get to know yourself. Understanding your own energy level will help you form more harmonious and balanced friendships with dogs and people alike.



## HOW TO BE A GOOD FRIEND... TO A DOG

**Objective:** Students learn that there are basic similarities between human friendship and interspecies friendship. They also learn that underlying all successful friendships is honest recognition of who the other party is, combined with respect for what s/he requires as an individual. Although it is tempting to think that dogs crave nothing but affection, it's important for students to realize that dogs need exercise and discipline first, then affection.

What do you look for in a good friend? What should friends give us and what should we give in return? The obvious answers are companionship, concern, and support. After all, you want your friends to be reliable, honest, trustworthy, and loyal. And you also

need friends who know how to have fun. But more than anything else, you want friends who will see you for who you really are and respect you for being yourself.

Not surprisingly, dogs are looking for the same qualities in their human friends. Granted, the way these qualities play out between human friends and canine friends are very different, but underlying both are the ideas of respect and recognition. If you see and respect a dog for the being she truly is, the rest will follow.

Obviously, a dog requires food, water, shelter, and medical care. She also needs you to recognize that she must have exercise, discipline, and affection, in that order. Being a good friend to your dog means being a calm-assertive pack leader who provides her with enough exercise to keep her body and mind healthy and fit and enough play time to satisfy her instincts for fun and social interaction. Dogs look for fair, firm, consistent leadership, and it's up to you to fulfill that role as pack leader. Dogs respect rules, boundaries, and limitations, all of which helps them know when and how to act. By remaining calm-assertive and consistent in how you communicate with your dog, you will teach her how to understand and follow the rules of the pack.

Different breeds or combinations of breeds need different kinds of stimulation. Identifying what activities might fulfill your dog's individual needs will help you and your dog become a successful pack. For example, herding dogs (like collies and shepherds) generally have lots of energy and stamina, are highly intelligent, and want constant stimulation. They respond well to learning new tricks, going for lots of walks, and taking up canine sports like agility or dog disc.

Finally, showing our dogs that we appreciate and love them is fundamental. Just like our friends, the better we treat and care for our dogs, the better they are likely to treat and care for us!



## RESPONSIBILITIES... TO DOGS AND PEOPLE

**Objective:** Students consider the broader impact of being an effective pack leader. This further develops their capacity for empathy and their sense of social and civic membership and responsibility.

Maybe dogs can't vote, but they're citizens of their communities just the same, with rights and responsibilities unique to their species that only their human companions can help them realize.

First of all, as your dog's best friend, it's your responsibility to make sure he does not contribute to the heart-breaking and costly problem of pet overpopulation. Each year, six to eight million homeless animals wind up in animal shelters across the country; tragically, there are far too few permanent homes for all these animals. Estimates vary, but most humane organizations suggest that three to four million dogs and cats are euthanized in shelters every year, primarily for lack of suitable homes. No one knows how many more are abandoned to live and die on the street. Public

shelters spend about \$2 billion in tax money each year to care for, adopt, and euthanize unwanted pets, and that does not include the cost to communities for damage and disease caused by stray and roaming dogs and cats.

It's a huge problem with a simple answer: spay/neuter. Spaying or neutering our pets greatly reduces the number of puppies and kittens born without permanent homes. It saves lives, prevents pain and misery, and makes our animal companions healthier, happier members of our packs and our communities. It also saves municipalities millions of dollars that can be allocated toward solving other social problems.

As your dog's guardian, you have an array of important responsibilities to make sure your dog measures up as a good canine citizen. For one thing, pick up after your dog; no one wants to smell or step in his mess. Also, train your dog; a well-behaved dog under the control of a calm-assertive pack leader is a good neighbor and a welcome addition to any community. Keep your dog healthy with regular visits to your veterinarian; this includes making sure he's up to date on vaccinations. These steps not only safeguard your dog's health, they also prevent the spread of serious illnesses to other dogs in your town.

Knowing and obeying local pet laws is an important way to earn you and your dog respect. First, be aware of how your dog acts around other people and animals. If your dog is a good candidate for socializing, check out your town's rules for dogs at parks and other public sites. Many towns have regulations about where and when dogs are allowed outside without a leash. Some parks allow leashed- dogs only, while others have set aside special areas where dogs can play off-leash. Some parks allow dogs during certain months of the year or certain hours of the day. And nowadays, many communities are creating dog parks where people and dogs can socialize in their own designated space. If your community doesn't have a dog park, become an advocate for all your town's canines and work with your neighbors and civic leaders to establish one.

Most towns require that you register your dog. This is a simple, inexpensive procedure that protects the community and is also helpful if your dog gets lost. Hang your dog's registration tag on his collar, which he should wear at all times, to provide crucial information on how to get him home should he manage to wander off. Also consider microchipping your dog as another layer of identification. Collars, registration tags, and microchipping can help reunite you and your dog, saving him from becoming just another nameless stray in an overcrowded shelter.

If your family is thinking about getting a dog, remember this slogan: Adopt, Don't Shop. Adopting a shelter dog not only saves the life of your new pack member, but also makes space for another dog to get a second chance. As a bonus, shelters sometimes spay or neuter new pets for free or for a minimal fee.

If you can't adopt a dog yourself, there are still great ways to help shelter dogs. Begin by spreading the word about them. Shelter dogs are good dogs, and rescuing one is a tremendously satisfying experience. Also, urge shelters to keep pets until they find homes for them. Many private shelters are becoming "no-kill," meaning they keep all adoptable dogs and cats until they find homes. It's a difficult task because of space constraints; more pets need homes than there is space in the shelters. Another thing: Ask your shelter if it has a volunteer program. Volunteers do everything from walking dogs and socializing cats to conducting fundraising, providing everyone who cares with a chance to make a difference to the animals and to the community.

