

# CANINE COMPANIONS

## LESSON 4: Grades 4-5

### ALL KINDS OF DOGS

#### Show-Me Standards:

*Academic Goals:* 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7

*Knowledge Goals:* Communication Arts: 1, 4, 6; Science: 3; Health/Physical Education: 5

**Objective:** To help children learn how to choose a dog that best matches their family's needs.

#### Materials:

- "A Perfect Mix" handout
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons

**Method:** Today we're going to learn about the different breeds of dogs. There are all kinds of dogs in the world. Every dog has a unique personality just like people, but certain dogs were bred to do certain things. Dogs can do lots of things, but some will be more likely to act certain ways because of their heritage. Some dogs were bred to hunt; some to dig; some to herd; some just to be companions. It's important to understand a breed before you decide if it will fit into your lifestyle. For example, if your family is very active and spends a lot of time outdoors, find a sturdy breed that is energetic and is built to run, jump, and play hard. If your family is more sedentary and prefers to stay indoors to watch television and read books, find a breed that is small enough to sleep on your lap and needs less exercise.

Purebreds generally conform to a specific "breed standard" because their parents and other ancestors are all members of the same breed. This means you have a good chance of knowing what general physical and behavioral characteristics a puppy or kitten of that breed is likely to have. However, getting a purebred doesn't mean that you are also getting a guarantee of health and temperament. The only thing "papers" from purebred dog and cat registry organizations certify is that the recording registry maintains information regarding the reported lineage and identity of the animal.

The American Kennel Club recognizes seven groups of purebred dogs:

- 1) Hound Dogs: They were bred to hunt game without feathers. They hunt mammals like deer, fox, and rabbits. Some hound dogs are the Greyhound, the Basset Hound, the Dachshund, and the Rhodesian Ridgeback.
- 2) Working Dogs: They were bred to serve man. They pull sleds, are police dogs, war dogs, and search and rescue dogs. Some working dogs are the Boxer, the Doberman Pinscher, the Rottweiler, the Alaskan Malamute, and the St. Bernard.
- 3) Herding Dogs: They were bred originally to herd sheep. They are good watchdogs. Some herding dogs are the Collie, the Old English Sheepdog, the Shetland Sheepdog, the Welsh Corgi, and the German Shepherd.
- 4) Toy Dogs: They were bred to be companions to people. They were considered portable because of their size. Some toy dogs are the Pug, the Chihuahua, the Pomeranian, the Pekingese, the Yorkie, and the Shih Tzu.
- 5) Terrier Dogs: They were bred to dig into the ground to hunt animals in burrows. Some terrier dogs are the West Highland Terrier, the Fox Terrier, and the Welsh Terrier.
- 6) Non-Sporting Dogs: They are very smart and can perform many different kinds of activities. Some non-sporting dogs are the Bulldog, the Chow Chow, the Dalmation, the Lhasa Apso, and the Poodle.

- 7) Sporting Dogs: They were bred to hunt feathered game like pheasants. Some sporting dogs are the Cocker Spaniel, the Pointer, the Irish Setter, and the Golden Retriever.

And, let's not forget mixed breeds! Mixed breeds are also called mutts. When you adopt a mixed breed, you get the benefit of two or more different breeds in one animal. Mixed breeds are less prone to genetic defects common to certain purebred dogs and cats.

The size, appearance, and temperament of most mixed breed dogs can be predicted as well. If you can recognize the ancestry of a particular mixed breed dog or cat, you can see how a puppy or kitten is likely to look as an adult.

Whether you're thinking about adopting a purebred or a mixed breed, visit your local animal shelter or rescue group to find the pet that's just right for you and your family. Believe it or not, 1/3 of all shelter animals are purebred and there are plenty of mixed breeds, too!

To help students learn more about dog breeds, distribute the "A Perfect Mix" handout.

**Call to Action:** Assign groups of students to the eight groups of dogs (don't forget mixed breeds!). Student groups will work together to research their assigned breed group, then do an original project. Students may wish to give a report to the class, make a collage, or bring in a guest speaker, for example.

Hang students' artwork from the "A Perfect Mix" handout in a visible area in the school, along with information about each breed group. This will teach other students the important information your class has been learning.

**Related Reading:**

*The Complete Dog Book for Kids*, AKC , 1996

Here is the ultimate show-and-tell for children who love dogs! With its lush, four-color portraits of all of the AKC-recognized breeds, and information on history and character of the breeds, *The Complete Dog Book for Kids* is the ideal way to teach kids about dogs.

**Web sites:** For recommended animal-related web sites visit [www.apamo.org](http://www.apamo.org) and choose "Animal Issues" from the left-side menu, then choose "Links" from the top of the page. Or [click here](#) to launch your browser and link directly to the list.



Teacher's box: Use this creative exercise to encourage students to take on a new view of "mutts." Remind them that plenty of purebred and mixed-breed dogs can be found at animal shelters.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# A Perfect Mix

Thinking of adopting a dog? Consider the kind of dog who suits you best. Do you want a pet who's big or small? One who's a hot tamale or a couch potato? What's your type? For many people, the perfect dog is a mix of different breeds. A mixed-breed dog (or "mutt") might have a mom who's a Dalmatian and a dad who's a boxer. Every mixed-breed dog is one of a kind.

Experts say mixed breeds are often the friendliest, healthiest dogs. Sixty percent of dogs who live past the age of 17 are mixed breeds! One of the nicest things about mixed breeds is that they tend to have a great combination of features. Their personalities usually reflect what's best about two or more different breeds.

So, let's say you're thinking of adopting a mixed breed dog. What would be a cool combination? If you like a big, furry detective, you might like a dog who is part bloodhound, part chow. What would you call her? A blood chow? A chowhound?

Look over this list of purebred dogs. What might be some neat combinations of breeds? Choose one combination and write a personality profile of that dog below. How might your mixed-breed dog look and act? How would you combine the breed names? Draw your marvelous mutt on the back of this page.



Boxer	strong, energetic, learns quickly, loves children
fox terrier	plucky, brave, devoted, keen
bearded collie	patient, considerate, graceful, friendly
bulldog	calm, bold, vigorous
Great Dane	dignified, noble, powerful
toy poodle	active, clever, easy to train
bloodhound	gentle, good detective, hard-working
whippet	quiet, elegant, friendly, fast
German Shepherd	confident, loyal, smart
Pekingese	courageous, sensitive, independent, sometimes jealous
Doberman pinscher	lively, alert, trustworthy, loving
giant schnauzer	high-spirited, watchful, reliable, active, robust
golden retriever	bright, friendly, trusting, good with kids, playful

