

CANINE COMPANIONS

LESSON 5: Grades 4-6

WELCOME HOME

Show-Me Standards:

Academic Goals: 2.1, 2.3, 4.1, 4.3

Knowledge Goals: Communication Arts: 1, 4, 6; Science: 3

Objective: To teach children how to introduce a new dog or puppy to his/her home.

Materials:

- “I Care for My Dog” Contract – handout
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons

Method: Your new pet’s first day at home is a very important one. He will learn all about his new surroundings and family. Today we’re going to talk about how to make his transition into your family a smooth one. Give your dog time to adjust and you will be rewarded with licks, loyalty and love.

Before you bring a pet home, there are a few things you will need to do:

- 1) “Pet-proof” your house to keep your new dog or puppy safe from danger.
 - a. Put electrical cords and wires out of reach.
 - b. Place trashcans in a cabinet, or get cans with lids.
 - c. Move dangerous chemicals (like cleaners) to high shelves.
 - d. Clear low tables of small, breakable items and plants.
- 2) In an earlier lesson, we talked about important items your pet will need. Go shopping before you bring your pet home so that you will have all the items you need on hand. These include food, dishes, toys, crate, treats, leash, and collar.
- 3) Before your pet leaves the shelter, be sure to put an I.D. tag on his collar with your name, address, and phone number. If, by chance, he escapes from you on the way home, he will be able to be returned to you.

When your pet arrives home with you and your family:

- 1) Take him to the designated area of the yard you and your family have chosen for him to “do his business.” Praise him when he goes to let him know he did the right thing.
- 2) Next, give your dog some time to explore your house. Follow him – he’s not quite ready to be turned loose yet.
- 3) Initially, try to keep the house as quiet as possible. You can introduce new sounds slowly after the first day, so as not to frighten him.
- 4) If you have other pets at home, introduce them slowly. If you have a cat, put the new dog or puppy in his crate for a short time and allow your feline friend to investigate at her own pace. If you have a dog, allow the two canines to meet for the first time outdoors in your fenced yard in or a local park. When all are comfortable with each other and there is no fighting, allow them to spend time together for short periods when you are home. If they do fine then, you will know it’s time to put them together permanently. This process can take days, weeks, or months depending on the mix of pets.
- 5) You might want to hold your new puppy or dog all the time, but give him a chance to meet and become familiar with all the human members of your family. Hold him just a few minutes at a time, until he feels comfortable with everyone. Wait a few days to introduce your new buddy to your human friends.

- 6) Prepare your dog's crate for him with a soft blanket or cushion. Puppies and adults need a quiet place to sleep and rest. A crate should be a dog's safe haven, so never use it as a punishment. Puppies should never stay in a crate more than two hours and adult dogs never more than four hours. Consult your local animal shelter or veterinarian for more crate-training information.
- 7) Don't forget to let your puppy outside after eating or drinking. Be patient. Housetraining can take some time. And don't forget about adults either. In a new environment a dog's housetraining may lapse briefly, but he'll catch on again quickly.
- 8) Have some toys ready for your dog to play with. He may not feel like playing his first day, but there will be a lifetime of fun ahead!
- 9) Give your pup some food after he is calm and feeling comfortable. Some dogs will be too excited or nervous to eat the first day.
- 10) And the most important thing to remember – always be kind and gentle with your pet. Never hit or hurt him.

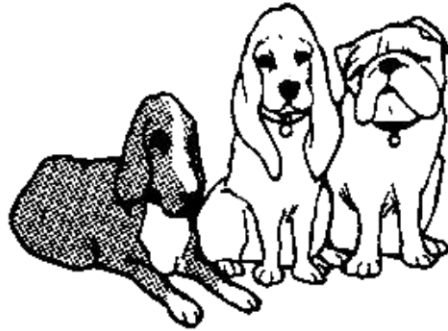
Even if you and your family don't have a pet now, you may have one someday. About 60 percent of all households in the U.S. have a pet. There are about 53 million dogs and about 59 million cats in U.S. households.

Sign the "I Care for My Dog" Contract; if you don't have a dog, choose a name for the dog you would like to have some day. This contract will help remind you of the things responsible pet owners do.

Call to Action: Write a story about why you want a pet. Be honest about all your reasons, feelings and expectations. Then draw a picture of the pet of your dreams to share with the class. Why is that the perfect pet for you? Or, if you already have a pet, write a story about your pet's first day at home. What has your pet learned since he or she first came home and how has he or she changed? You may take a photo of your pet to show to the rest of the class or draw a picture. Share your story and pet drawing/photo with the rest of the class.

Web sites: For recommended animal-related web sites visit 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.

I Care for My Dog Contract



I, _____ promise to take care of my dog, _____ during his/her whole lifetime. I will teach my dog to trust me by treating him with love and respect. I will be kind, gentle, and generous to my dog at all times. I will be responsible for providing him with the things that he needs to be healthy and happy. I am making this commitment to my dog.

- ♥ I will give food and water to my dog in a clean dish every day.
- ♥ I will make sure my dog has shelter from hot, cold and wet weather.
- ♥ I will provide a collar and ID tag for my dog to wear at all times.
- ♥ I will keep my dog from running loose in the neighborhood.
- ♥ I will make sure my dog gets obedience training so he behaves well.
- ♥ I will keep my dog clean and groomed.
- ♥ I will spend time every day with my dog playing, resting, or going for a walk.
- ♥ I will always protect my dog from people or things that might hurt him.

Your signature _____ Date _____