

# SAFETY WITH ANIMALS

## LESSON 1: Grades K-3

### LEARNING TO SPEAK “DOG”

**Show-Me Standards:** Academic Goals: 1.3, 1.5, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2 & 4.7

Knowledge Goals: Communication Arts: 1, 4, 5 & 6; Science: 3; Health & Phys Ed: 5

**Objective:** To introduce students to the body language and sounds dogs use to express how they are feeling. Students will be able to recognize warning signs.

**Materials:**

- “What is This Dog Telling You?” handout
- Writing utensils

**Method:** Ask students to act out several different emotions such as mad, sad, afraid, and glad. Have them do this using their bodies and faces only – no talking. Explain that dogs also use their bodies to express feelings. By observing dogs’ body language, we can usually tell when a dog is more likely to bite.

We can look at dogs’ mouths, eyes, ears, tails, and hair, as well as the way dogs stand to see what they are thinking or feeling. Distribute a copy of the “What is This Dog Telling You?” handout to each student. Look at each dog’s body language as a group, and discuss his body language. Then identify how that dog might be feeling. First illustration - ears are stiff, tail is high, teeth are showing. Did students guess this dog is mad? Second illustration - dog is afraid. Ears are low, tail is between legs, he is crouched down, teeth are showing. Third illustration - ears are up but relaxed, tail is low, mouth is open but relaxed. No teeth are showing. This dog is happy. Fourth illustration - dog is displaying a typical “play bow,” with head lowered, back end up in the air, tail wagging, ears up and relaxed. He’s playful.

Ask students which dogs are safe to pet. The correct answers are the happy and playful dogs in the third and fourth illustrations – but even then, only with the owner’s permission. Remind them to be cautious with dogs that are playful and excited. They may jump or bite if played with too roughly. Play only gentle games, like fetch. Don’t play tug of war, which can make dogs aggressive.

Stay away from dogs who are mad or afraid, because those dogs are more likely to bite. Explain to students that dogs also express themselves another way. Dogs “speak” using sounds, just as humans speak using words. By understanding the meaning behind each sound, we can usually tell when a dog is more likely to bite.

Ask students to imitate the sounds dogs make and discuss the meaning behind each sound. Begin with a bark. A bark can mean many things - an expression of loneliness or playfulness. It can signal that a dog needs to go out or serve to alert us. It’s often used to get our attention. A yelp almost always means “That hurt!” Dogs sometimes yelp when scared. A whine is a sound dogs use with humans to get something they want such as food, a treat, or attention. A growl is the most important sound to understand. This is a warning sign to let you know to stay away or a bite may follow. A dog is saying, “Back off!”

**Call to Action:** Have students pretend to be dogs who are mad, sad, happy, or afraid. Use body language only. Ask the students to observe pets at home, or a neighbor’s or friend’s pet, for expression of emotion. Have them draw a picture of the pet expressing the emotion they observed.

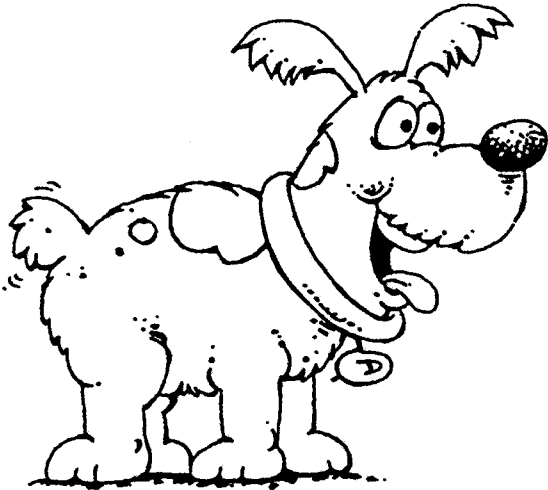
**Web sites:** For recommended animal-related web sites visit [www.apamo.org](http://www.apamo.org) and choose “Animal Issues” from the left-side menu, then choose “Links” from the top of the page. Or [click here](#) to launch your browser and link directly to the list.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

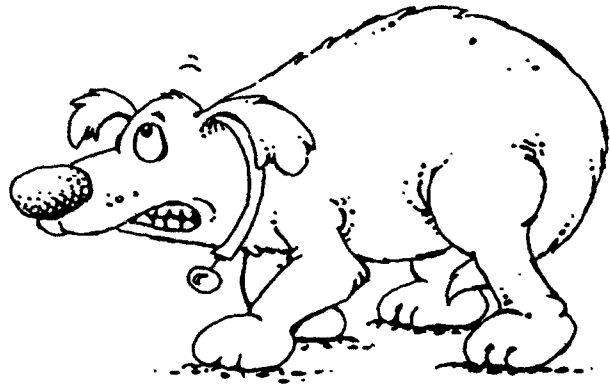
# What Is This Dog Telling You?

Just like people, dogs have feelings. Sometimes they are happy, afraid, angry, or playful. We can often tell how dogs are feeling by their body language.

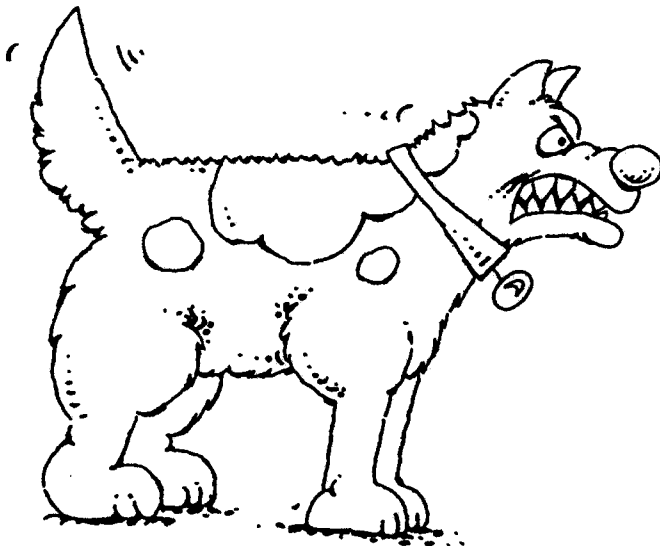
Look at these pictures. In the blanks, write how the dog is feeling. Then write two sentences describing what the dog might be thinking. The first one has been done for you.



This dog is happy.  
"I am in a good mood! I wouldn't mind at all if someone patted me!"



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# What Is This Dog Telling You?

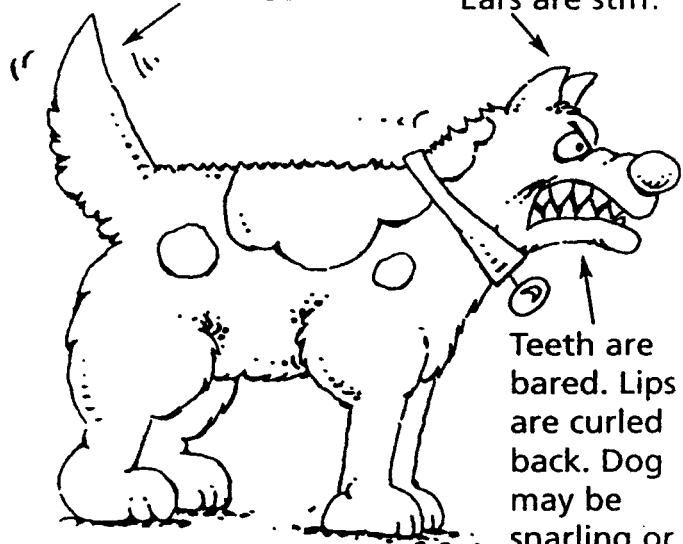
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Tail is held high and stiff and may be wagging.

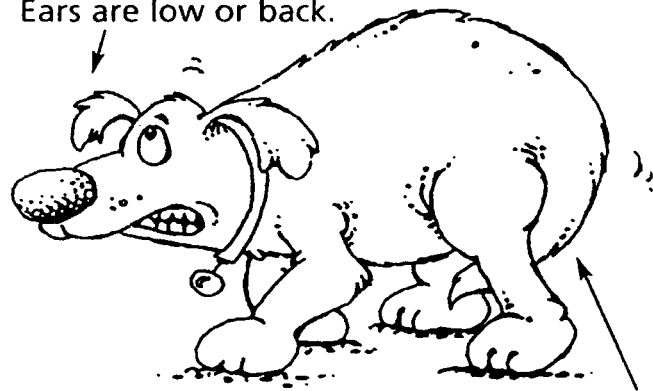
Ears are stiff.



Teeth are bared. Lips are curled back. Dog may be snarling or growling.

Body may be shaking or close to the ground.

Ears are low or back.

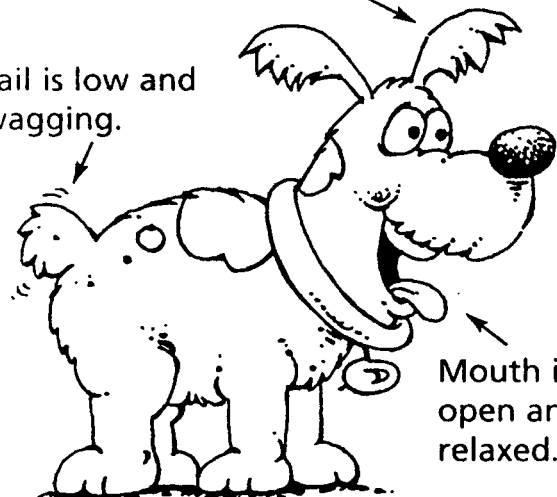


Tail is low or between legs.

3

Ears are forward and relaxed.

Tail is low and wagging.

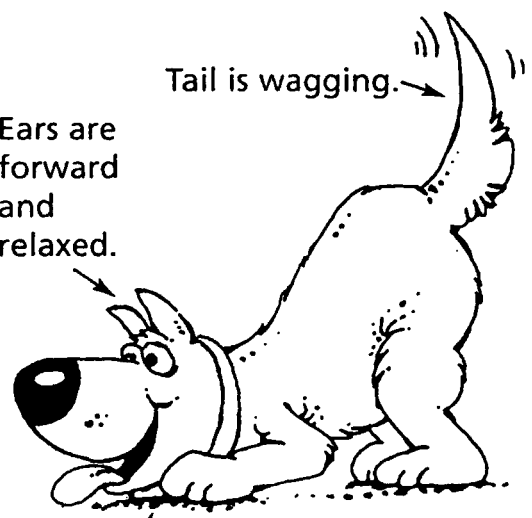


Mouth is open and relaxed.

4

Tail is wagging.

Ears are forward and relaxed.



Head is resting on forepaws.