Leading the Pack

Fun Activities for You and Your Dog

Name ____________________________
County __________________________
Note to the Project Helper

If you were a project helper for one or more youth who participated in Dog 1, Wiggles and Wags or Dog 2, Canine Connection, you know what a rewarding and important role this is! Helpers are able to help youth grow and develop in positive ways as they learn about dogs and themselves. You can nurture and cultivate youth’s interest in this project by guiding their planning, helping them complete their project and recognizing them for a job well done.

Girls and boys can’t do this project without you! You can help young people get the most out of their experience through your enthusiasm and ability to ask thought-provoking questions. With your help, youth can set goals, identify resources, practice presentations and evaluate their own progress as they complete the Dog Achievement Program. Each activity gives youth an opportunity to LEARN BY DOING before being told or shown how. Your challenge is to stay in the background while the youth explores and learns from the experience. You can help best by listening as youth consider the questions and offer their answers.

Your Role
- Become familiar with the material in this guide and the Dog Helper’s Guide.
- Support youth in their efforts to set goals and complete each Achievement Program.
- Discuss, date and initial the activities of the Dog Achievement Program as youth complete them.
- Help youth to know themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses.
- Encourage the use of the experiential learning model described on this page.

About This Curriculum
These guides are not text books. They are activity guides. Several fact-filled books about dogs are listed as resources on page 36 of this guide. The activities are active, hands-on, and engaging and guided by the 4-H motto: Learning by Doing. As youth explore a dog project topic of interest to them, they also practice essential life skills. Although a few dog project youth will find careers with dogs, ALL youth will benefit from the life skills they acquire as they complete the activities in these guides.

Dog Project Learner Outcomes
Youth who engage in this curriculum will develop essential dog project skills such as selecting a dog; investigating breeds; appreciating dogs’ places and roles in society; practicing grooming, fitting, showing and training; caring for dogs; and exploring dog-related careers and activities. Youth will also practice the life skills of communication, responsibility, planning and organizing, decision making, leadership and more.

The Dog “Skills for Life” Series

1 – Wiggles and Wags  BU-08166
2 – Canine Connection BU-08167
3 – Leading the Pack  BU-08168
Dog Helper’s Guide BU-08169

Guides 1, 2 and 3 are developmentally appropriate for grades 3–5, 6–8 and 9–12 respectively, but may be used by youth in any grade based on their project skills and experience. All activities include a description of the skills to be practiced, discussion questions, suggestions for additional activities and other helpful information.

Achievement Program and Evaluation Tools
Each of the guides includes an Achievement Program to encourage youth to learn more about dogs while developing important life skills. “What Do You Know?” is a quick and fun way for youth to assess their knowledge after they complete the Achievement Program. The “Success Indicator” listed for each activity is an excellent way to evaluate the youth’s success. In the Helper’s Guide you will find another evaluation piece titled “Evaluating the Impact.” Use this before beginning each level and after the youth has completed each level.

Dog Helper’s Guide

The Dog Helper’s Guide contains more learn-by-doing activities that can be adapted for families, classrooms, after-school activities, child care settings, 4-H groups, other youth groups or camps. You’ll also find information about the characteristics of youth, life skill development, teaching experientially, meeting ideas and answers to many of the activities in the youth guides.

Experiential Learning Model
This five-step model is used in each activity in this series.

1. Experience the activity, perform, do it.
2. Share the means, reactions, observations publicly.
3. Process by asking, talking about the experiential analysis, reflect.
4. Generate to connect the experience to real-world examples.
5. Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation, practice.

Youth describe what was important and about what they did.

As you can see, the youth first attempt the activity on their own. After the youth do as much of the activity as they can, you then meet together and discuss: What did they do? What was important? How does what they did relate to their lives? How might they use these life and project skills in the future? Your ability to ask thought-provoking questions and listen to the youth’s ideas will add to the educational impact of the experience.

Good luck in your role as Project Helper and thanks for contributing to the positive development of young people!
Leading the Pack

Chapter 1: Health and Care
Fido 911 .................................................. 6
All Systems Go! ....................................... 8
To Breed or Not to Breed, That Is the Question 10
Your Dog’s Golden Years ......................... 12

Chapter 2: Behavior and Training
Planning a Puppy Pre-School .................... 14
K-9s and Youth Leading the Way ............... 16
Is Your Dog a Good Citizen? .................... 18

Chapter 3: Dogs and Society
More than Best Friends .......................... 20
Going to the Dogs! .............................. 22
Doggone Laws .................................. 24
Gifts You DON’T Want to Receive! ........... 26

Chapter 4: Showing Leadership
Show What You Know! ........................... 28
Coming Full Circle ................................ 30
Cherishing Memories ............................. 32
Time to Howl! ..................................... 34

Dog Talk 3 (Glossary) ............................. 35
Dog Project Resources ............................ 36
Dog 3 Photo Credits .............................. Inside Back Cover

Acknowledgments

2005 Dog Revision Team: Susan Kerr, WA; Coordinator; Andrea Pleinmanich, AK; Stacey Holmann, MD; Darlene Locke, TX; Candace Meehling, VT; and Nellie Wyatt, TN.

Special thanks to the developers of the first dog series: Christine Keeney Miller, MN; David D. Pyle (Coordinator), IL; Lowell Breeden, KS; and R. William Seidler, IL.

Liaison: Stephen Sutton, TN.

Design, Illustration and Production:
Northern Design Group, MN

American Veterinary Medical Association
Welcome to Leading the Pack

Hot Dog!

Congratulations—you’ve made it! Welcome to Level 3 of the dog project. If you’ve completed Levels 1 and 2, you should be proud of yourself for accomplishing and learning so much! If you are starting with Level 3, you may need to refer to the Level 1 or 2 activity guides or the Helper’s Guide for help now and then. Your helper can help you decide if you need to do this.

Because youth development programs help build tomorrow’s leaders, leadership is a strong theme in Level 3 activities. You’ll be asked to organize events, investigate complicated issues, give presentations, make decisions and teach others because those are some of the skills good leaders have. You’ll delve deeper into some topics from Dog 1 and 2 and meet new topics, as well. Here is what you’ll do as you work through Dog 3:

- Assess a dog's vital signs
- Explore functions of dog body systems
- Investigate dog breeding
- Consider needs of older dogs
- Conduct a class for puppies
- Recognize the value of guide dogs
- Assess dogs as good citizens
- Appreciate dogs as service animals
- Explore careers with dogs
- Identify dog ownership laws
- Investigate diseases spread from dogs to people
- Plan and organize a dog project skilithon
- Organize a showmanship clinic
- Communicate feelings about a deceased pet
- Sponsor a dog fun day

Dog 3 Project Guidelines

- Set your goals and record project highlights
- Complete at least seven activities in the Leading the Pack Achievement Program each year and complete the program within three years
- Practice and develop the life skills of communication, responsibility, planning and organizing, making decisions and practicing leadership
- Increase your knowledge about dogs and improve your skills needed to be a good dog owner

Leading the Pack Achievement Program

While you are having fun doing the activities, you’ll also be completing Level 3 of the Leading the Pack Achievement Program. This program will help you set goals, record your successes and be recognized for your good work.

Your Project Helper

Now that you are older, more knowledgeable about dogs and have experienced the success of completing Level 1 and 2 activities, you should be much more confident than you were when you began Level 1. Although you may not rely on your project helper as much as you did when you were in Level 1 or 2, he/she is still a valuable resource for you. Your helper may become a mentor to you and continue to be a positive influence in your life for years to come. In Level 3, your project helper will probably give you more freedom to set your project goals and may not directly provide as many answers as you’d like—that’s to encourage you to become an independent and mature learner. Each time your helper initials and dates your achievement program, remember to say THANK YOU for all the help—that is all the “pay” your helper will receive!

Write your project helper’s name, phone number and E-mail address here.

My project helper ____________

Phone ______________________

E-mail ______________________

Why I selected this person ______________________

Good luck and have fun with Dog 3,
Leading the Pack!
My Dog Project Goals

My name ____________________________

My dog's name ________________________ Breed ______________

What I want to do and learn in Dog 3:

1. _____________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________
5. _____________________________________________

Before and After — What do you know?

Here's an easy way to tell if you learned something new and developed important project skills. AFTER you do all the activities in this guide, indicate what you knew BEFORE you started and what you know AFTER you completed this guide. You may be surprised how much you learned! Share the results with your helper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know how to…</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize a canine emergency and develop a plan of action</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a demonstration about dog body systems</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe consequences of breeding a dog</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe special needs and health concerns of older dogs</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a puppy training class</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the role and impact of guide dogs</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a Canine Good Citizen training program</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe ways dogs serve people and society</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe dog-related careers and how to prepare for them</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research dog ownership laws</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe diseases transmissible between dogs and humans</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor a dog project skillathon</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and conduct a dog showmanship clinic</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe feelings involved with the death of a pet</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and sponsor a dog fun day event</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dog Project Highlights

Date and list the exciting things you do and learn

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Paste a picture of you and your dog here.
**Leading the Pack Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Helper's Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1 Health and Care</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fido 911</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Systems Go!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Breed or Not to Breed, That Is the Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Dog's Golden Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2 Behavior and Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning a Puppy Pre-School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-9s and Youth Leading the Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Your Dog a Good Citizen?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3 Dogs and Society</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Best Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the Dogs!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doggone Laws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts You DON'T Want to Receive!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4 Showing Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show What You Know!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Full Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherishing Memories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Howl!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leading the Pack
Completion Certificate

I certify that

has completed all requirements of the Leading the Pack Achievement Program in the Dog 4-H “Skills for Life” Series.

Helper's Signature ____________________________

Date ________________
CHAPTER 1
Health and Care

Fido 911

Dogs are called humans’ best friends, but if your dog has a medical emergency, you could become his best friend! It isn’t always easy to tell if your dog has a life-threatening emergency. For some conditions, seconds count; for others, simple at-home procedures can save your dog’s life. In this chapter, you’ll practice how to take a dog’s vital signs. You’ll also investigate how to give first aid for some emergencies you could encounter with your dog, while keeping yourself safe at the same time.

Jump In With help from a friend or family member, take the vital signs on your dog. Remember to keep everyone safe; don’t risk getting someone hurt just to measure one of the vital signs.

My Dog’s Vital Signs

Temperature (T) ____________________________ °F

Pulse (P) ________________________ beats per minute

Respiratory Rate (R) ____________________________ breaths per minute

Mucous Membrane Color (MM) ____________________________

Capillary Refill Time (CRT) ____________________________ seconds

Normal Dog Vital Signs

T: ____________________________

101°F – 102.5°F

P: ____________________________

60–180 bpm

15–30 breaths per minute, up to 200 pants per minute

R: ____________________________

MM: ____________________________

pink, moist

CRT: ____________________________

1–2 seconds

Woofers & Tweetees

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!
**PAWS to Consider**

**Speak! (Share what you did)**
- What were your dog's vital signs?
- Which vital sign was the easiest to measure? The most difficult? Why?

**Chew on This (Process what's important)**
- Why is it important to take your dog's vital signs if you think she is hurt or ill?
- Why should you always keep human safety in mind when trying to help a sick or injured animal?

**Catch the Scent (Generalize to your life)**
- What types of first aid have you given or received?
- How is first aid for dogs similar to first aid for humans? How is it different?

**Point the Way (Apply what you learned)**
- How can you prevent injuries and illnesses in your dog?
- How can you make your activities and environment safer for you?

---

**Vital Information**

Canine first aid is the immediate, temporary care given to a dog until he can be transported to a veterinarian. *Never put yourself at risk to help an injured or sick dog!* Get help from an adult to approach and assess the dog. Even your own dog may require a muzzle to let you examine and move him safely if he is in pain and scared. Vital signs help you assess what is going on inside a dog's body.

**Temperature.** Have an assistant restrain your dog. Put gloves on. Put lubricant on the tip of the thermometer and gently insert it about an inch into your dog's rectum. Leave it there for one minute. Remove, take the reading. Clean the thermometer with disinfectant and wash your hands.

**Pulse.** Gently feel inside your dog's inner thigh for a soft, pulsing artery. Count the number of pulses that occur within 15 seconds and multiply by four to get heartbeats per minute.

**Respiration.** Watch your dog's chest move out with each breath. Count the number of breaths that occur within 15 seconds and multiply by four to get breaths per minute.

**Mucous Membrane Color.** Use your dog's gums or inside of his lips to assess mucous membrane color. Pink is the normal color. Abnormal colors include white, pale pink, blue, yellow, brownish or gray.

**Capillary Refill Time.** With the tip of your finger, gently press the gum or inside of the lips until the pinkish color turns to white. Pull your finger away and count how long it takes for the pink color to return.

**Common Emergencies**
- Trauma
- Ingestion of toxic substances
- Bee sting
- Poisonous reptile bite
- Electrocution
- Heatstroke

**HOW! about this?**
- Never call emergency 911 for a pet emergency!
- Don't apply a tourniquet to a bleeding limb. Instead, keep applying pressure and adding absorbent bandage materials over the original pressure bandage. If you must apply a tourniquet, be prepared for the dog to possibly lose the limb below the tourniquet.

**Begging for More**
1. Visit your library and check out a book on pet first aid to learn more. Take notes on what you discover.
2. Ask your veterinarian if you can volunteer at the veterinary clinic for at least a day. Keep a journal about the dog emergencies you saw. How could these problems have been prevented?
3. Demonstrate how to perform canine CPR.

Activity written by Nelle Wyatt.
All Systems Go!

Breathe, walk, digest, feel, see. You and your dog do these things without even being aware you are doing them. Have you ever thought about all the things that your body does? After completing this activity, you will have good insight concerning dogs' internal organs and how all these systems work together to keep dogs healthy. Much of this information will also help you comprehend how your own body works. There is a lot of information to cover in this activity. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to do it so you will be comfortable presenting the information to other people.

Jump In: Identify resources that will help you learn about canine internal body systems and how they function. On a separate piece of paper, create and label diagrams of at least three canine body systems, such as the one shown below; staple your diagrams to this page. Next, select one system as a topic for a public demonstration. Record the outline of your demonstration in the chart below. If possible, paste a photo in the place indicated that shows you giving your demonstration.

My Demonstration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key point #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key point #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key point #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Props needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Veterinary Parasitology Reference Manual, 4th ed., William J. Foy, 1997, Figure 0. p. 15, Used with permission.

National Educational Standard: NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying language skills

Success Indicator: Gives a demonstration about dog body systems.
### PAWS to Consider

**Speak! (Share What you did)**
- What are the body systems of the dog?
- What was the easiest part of doing a demonstration? The hardest?

**Chew on This (Process What’s important)**
- Which body system do you think is the most important and why?
- Why are demonstrations an effective way to share what you know with others?

**Catch the Scent (Generalize to your life)**
- How are dogs’ body systems similar to and different from humans’ systems?
- What other formal or informal demonstrations have you given or could you give?

**Point the Way (Apply what you learned)**
- If you had to give it again, what changes would you make in your demonstration?
- How will you use what you learned to understand signs of illness in your dog in the future?

---

### Organ-ization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory system</td>
<td>Removes carbon dioxide from the body and brings oxygen into the body</td>
<td>Lungs, trachea, larynx, sinuses, nasal passages and nostrils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular system</td>
<td>Transports blood rich in oxygen to body tissues and blood rich in carbon dioxide from the tissues; transports nutrients to tissues</td>
<td>Heart, arteries, veins, capillaries, lymph vessels, bone marrow and spleen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integument system</td>
<td>Protects the body; first line of defense against invaders</td>
<td>Skin, nails, claws, hair, fur and pads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous system</td>
<td>Receives and responds to information from the environment and controls subconscious, voluntary and automatic body reflexes and processes</td>
<td>Brain, nerves and spinal cord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musculoskeletal system</td>
<td>Supports an animal’s body and helps it move around</td>
<td>Bones, joints, muscles, cartilage, tendons and ligaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastrointestinal system</td>
<td>Digests food and absorbs nutrients</td>
<td>Mouth, teeth, tongue, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, rectum, anus, salivary glands, pancreas, liver and gall bladder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrine system</td>
<td>Makes and releases hormones that help animal respond to changes in environment and keeps body systems functioning normally</td>
<td>Pituitary gland, kidneys, adrenal glands, gonads, pancreas, thyroid glands and parathyroid glands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary system</td>
<td>Removes wastes from the body and controls mineral balances</td>
<td>Kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive system</td>
<td>Produces offspring</td>
<td>Male: testicles, epididymis, spermatic cord, urethra, seminal vesicles, prostate gland, bulbourethral glands and penis Female: ovaries, oviducts, uterus, cervix, vagina, vestibulum, vulva and mammary glands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Howl about this?
- Lungs have a natural elastic quality that helps with exhalation.

---

**Begging for More**

1. Call your veterinarian and arrange to observe a necropsy on a dog. Put protective gloves on; identify and feel the different organs.
2. Perform a physical examination on a cooperative dog. Examine each body system as best you can. Record your findings and share them with your...
To Breed or Not to Breed, That Is the Question

Everybody likes puppies. They are cute, snuggly, and fun to play with for a while. You may like puppies so much that you want to breed your dog and raise a litter. But with so many dogs already in need of homes, you need to think carefully about this important decision. In this activity, you will consider whether or not to breed your dog and the implications of your decision.

Jump In List at least four reasons to breed a dog and four reasons not to.

Next, consult with veterinarians and/or responsible breeders to answer the questions below. Add additional questions if you can think of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to breed a dog</th>
<th>Reasons not to breed a dog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a female dog's reproductive cycle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When should a female be bred?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you decide what male to breed her to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much are stud fees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other tasks and expenses are involved when breeding dogs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What health problems can a female dog have during pregnancy and whelping?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does an emergency C-section cost?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much money can you expect to spend on raising a litter of healthy puppies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time do you need daily to care for a litter?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will you need to care for the puppies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you find buyers for your puppies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much money could you earn selling puppies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PAWS to Consider

Speak! (Share what you did)
- How do you feel about breeding your dog? Why?
- What resources did you use for this activity?

Chew on This (Process what’s important)
- Why should you spend a lot of time considering the risks of breeding your dog?
- How could breeding affect a dog’s possible show career or other activities?

Catch the Scent (Generalize to your life)
- In general, are you a risk taker or a risk avoider? Give some examples.
- What responsible decisions have you made recently? What planning went into the decision that you made?

Point the Way (Apply what you learned)
- What have you decided about breeding dogs in the future?
- How can you encourage other dog owners to be responsible breeders?

Do the Right Thing

Because there are already so many homeless dogs in the world and breeding dogs is a very serious commitment, dog breeding will not be encouraged or covered here in much depth. A great deal of information about breeding is available in dog books, on the Internet and from reputable breeders.

Genetic Disorders
As you learned previously, genetic disorders of dogs can be passed through unwise mating. Responsible breeders are aware of genetic disorders in their dogs and do not breed these animals.

Puppy Mills
Puppy mills are operations where dogs are bred without selection and without regard for the health of the puppies or the females. This mass manufacturing of puppies results in dogs with serious genetic defects, behavioral problems, health problems and poor socialization. Puppy mill dogs are often kept in small, dirty cages; illnesses are common. Puppy mill puppies typically go to pet stores, but some end up for sale along the roadside or in rescues. This is an extreme example of irresponsible dog breeding.

If you breed your dog, be prepared to care for and take full responsibility for all the puppies for as long as it takes to find them good homes—maybe forever!

Deciding to breed your dog is a big decision. Don’t contribute to the homeless pet problem!

1. Ask your veterinarian if he/she would let you be present for the birth of a litter of puppies. Record what you see and if it was what you expected. Share what you observed with your group.
2. Visit your local animal shelter and find out how many dogs enter there each year and how many find homes. How many are purebreds and how many are mixed breeds? How does this affect your decision to breed or not to breed?

Activity by Carol Noyes.
Your Dog's Golden Years

Today, dogs are living longer, healthier lives due to advancements in veterinary medicine and nutrition. It is not uncommon for small breed dogs to live 15 years or more and for larger breed dogs to live for 10 years or more. In this activity you will learn how to recognize and understand age-related changes that dogs go through as you research how to improve their quality of life.

Jump In Locate a geriatric dog that you can spend time observing. Your veterinarian may be a good resource for pointing you in the right direction if you can't find an old dog on your own. Visit the dog several times if you can. Interview the dog's owner to see what physical and mental changes the dog has gone through since puppy or young adulthood. Ask how the dog's changes have resulted in changes in the home environment and daily family schedules. In the space below, write what you discovered about the dog you studied.

One Old Dog's Story

There are many products, foods and aids that can make older dogs’ lives more comfortable.

Talk with your veterinarian about the special health concerns of older dogs. Record what you discovered below.

Health Concerns of Older Dogs
PAWS to Consider

Speak! (Share what you did)
- How did you locate the dog you studied?
- How did you prepare for the interview with the dog’s owner?

Chew on This (Process what’s important)
- What factors affect how a family feels about and cares for their older dog?
- Why are interviews such an effective and educational form of communication?

Catch the Scent (Generalize to your life)
- What are some other situations in which you need to use interviewing skills?
- What special procedures are available to help treat age-related problems in both dogs and humans?

Point the Way (Apply what you learned)
- How can you help others prepare for their older dog’s special needs?
- What can you do to help reduce the chances of your dog developing an age-related problem?

Dig This!
Old = Gold

Behavior changes. Even nice dogs may start snapping at people and animals due to arthritis or other sources of pain. Some dogs may get lost in familiar places and not recognize family members. Medications are available to help some age-related changes in your dog’s brain.

Hypothyroidism. The thyroid gland may stop producing normal amounts of thyroid hormone. Affected dogs gain weight, seek warmth and are lethargic. Medication is available to help these dogs.

Senses. As dogs lose their eyesight and hearing, it affects the way that they are able to interpret their environment. They may seem more reactive, even fearful. Cataract surgery can greatly improve vision.

Incontinence. Some older dogs soil their environment due to decreased control of muscles. Medications are available to help with this problem.

Obesity. As dogs become less active, they often become overweight. Feed a dog according to its requirements, not habit.

Dental disease. As dogs age, their teeth and gums may become diseased, which may lead to bacterial heart disease. You may notice bad breath and a decreased appetite. Veterinarians can clean and extract teeth and teach you how to keep them healthy.

Kidney disease. Signs of illness include increased drinking and urination, weight loss and listlessness. With dietary changes and routine veterinary visits to monitor progression of disease, dogs with kidney disease can live longer lives.

Cancer. Cancer can affect any organ or tissue. Signs of cancer can include bleeding from the nose, skin nodules, enlarged lymph nodes, decreased appetite and listlessness. Routine veterinary examinations and owner observations are important in early diagnosis of cancer. Surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation can be used to treat some cancers.

Begging for More

1. Call your local animal shelter to see if they are housing any geriatric dogs. If so, visit the shelter and observe differences between the older dogs and the puppies you see. Discuss with the staff how old dogs can be made more adoptable.

2. Compare the dog food labels on a puppy food and senior food. What are the major differences in nutritional content between the two diets? Discuss with your helper why these differences are important for the health of older dogs.

Activity written by Nelle Wyatt.