



LESSON: Responsible Pet Guardianship, Step by Step

GRADE: 3rd – 4th

TIME: 30—45 min.

DESCRIPTION: Through participation in a blindfolded exercise and class discussion, students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts *responsibility* and *dependency* as they relate to pet ownership. Adapted from “Responsible Pet Ownership” Lesson by The Humane Society of the United States.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: ELA: Speaking & Listening

OBJECTIVE: Students understand why we are responsible for our pets and how they depend on us.

GOALS:

1. Depend on a partner to complete a task.
2. Discuss the experience of depending on a partner in a blindfolded exercise.
3. Develop a definition of a responsible pet owner.

MATERIALS:

- Cloth Strips/Handkerchiefs for Blindfolds (1 for every 2 students)
- ****Optional** (see variation) Numbered Homemade Dog Biscuit Recipe (1 for each student) & Tape

LESSON DETAILS:

1. HOV Introduction
 - a. I am from HOV and we take care of stray and surrendered cats and dogs.
 - b. What does stray mean? *A pet that is lost from his or her family.*
 - c. What does surrendered mean? *When a family can't take care of a pet anymore, and brings the pet to the shelter.*
 - d. We make sure the animal is healthy, behaves well with people/children/pets. If there is a problem, our veterinarians and behavior specialists work with the pet to help fix the problem.
 - e. Once the pet has been checked out, what do we do with him/her? *Find him/her a new family!*
2. Complete The Humane Society's “Responsible Pet Ownership, Step by Step” Lesson Procedure

RULES

Sighted students may not touch their blindfolded partner.

Sighted students must guide their partners around obstacles and other partner teams.

Safety is a priority.

VARIATION 1

Number the backside of Homemade Dog Biscuit Recipes 1-20 (one for each student, write large in visible numbers). Tape the recipes around the room in random but visible spots, number side facing out. Task each pair with finding a card with a certain number. Blindfolded students will keep the recipe (make sure to reverse roles so each student gets a recipe).

VARIATION 2

Create bags (one for each pair) containing a pet care item (leash, collar & ID tag, water bowl, pet food, training booklet, bed, etc.). Make sure the student cannot see the item in their bag. Instruct all the pairs line up at one side of the room and put blindfolds on one partner. Once partners have been blindfolded, place the baggies on the other side of the room and instruct each sighted student to guide their blindfolded partner to pick up a bag. Once all the pairs have retrieved bags, instruct them to sit down with their pairs. Discuss activity using discussion questions below.

Now instruct all pairs to open their bags and take two minutes to discuss with their partner whether that item is necessary to be a responsible pet owner and why. Each pair will then take turns showing the class their item and explaining what they discussed.

a. *Discussion Questions:*

- i. Blindfolded partners, how did you feel? Did you have any concerns? (write answers on board).
- ii. Sighted partners, fill in the blank “*I had to make sure my partner*_____.” Write answers on board.

b. *Additional Discussion Questions:*

- i. In what ways do we depend on our companion animals?
- ii. In what ways do we trust our companion animals?
- iii. Do we have the same dependent relationship with wild animals?
- iv. How is our relationship with farm animals the same? Different?

3. Wrap-up

- a. I hope this activity has helped you better understand what it is like for companion animals to depend on us and trust us, and what responsible pet ownership entails.
- b. (Could discuss how HOV staff and volunteers work to build trust in shelter animals).
- c. If you'd like to come visit the shelter, tell your family. We have some special programs you might be interested in: Junior Volunteer Program, Birthday Parties, Pet Pals Camp.

NOTES: