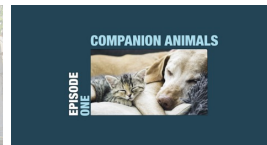


ANIMAL LAW & YOUTH ACTIVISM EDUCATORS' GUIDE



EPISODE 1 – COMPANION ANIMALS

Educational Package written by Mike Farley
mike@humaneeducation.org

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to:
- Identify the differences between types of companion animal operations (e.g. backyard breeders, rescues).
- Describe the negative effects of puppy and kitten mills.
- Analyze some aspects of the law related to companion animals such as animal cruelty and breed-specific legislation.
- Understand a variety of cosmetic alteration procedures done on companion animals and their negative effects.

PRE-VIDEO QUESTIONS

1. The video we are about to watch is titled 'Companion Animals'. Why do you think this term is used instead of the term 'pets'?
2. Do you have a companion animal? Tell us about them.
3. Have you adopted an animal before? If so, why did you adopt and what was the process like?

“Adopt don’t shop”

1. What do you think are the differences between a puppy or kitten mill, backyard breeder, [established breeder](#), animal shelter, and rescue organization?
2. Hundreds of [cities and jurisdictions](#) in Canada and the United States have implemented humane companion animal sales laws that greatly inhibit puppy mills. Is your town or city on this list? Should the breeding of companion animals be more regulated? What might that look like?

Animal cruelty

1. Why do you think companion animals are usually classified as “property” and not family members (e.g. Canada and the United States)? What do you think about this? What challenges does this designation present when dealing with animal cruelty? Family law?
2. In 2013, a two-year old dog named Breezy was beaten to near-death and left in a dumpster by his guardian’s son Steven Helfer. After extensive surgeries and rehabilitation, Breezy recovered. Helfer was [handed a 2-year jail sentence for the attack](#), which at the time was the longest sentence ever made in Canada for animal abuse. Do you agree with the judge’s decision? What do you think would be an appropriate punishment if Breezy had been a human being? How about a raccoon? Explain your rationale.

Breed-specific legislation

1. Breed-specific legislation (BSL) either bans or restricts ownership of certain dog breeds. The most commonly targeted dog breed in North America by BSL is the pit bull. Pit bulls are often the focus of BSL because of their historical involvement in dogfighting and their perceived “threatening” appearance. But the data suggests that BSL has little effect on reducing the number of dog attacks, suggesting that aggression is not specific to any one dog breed. Numerous professional organizations, such as the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#), oppose BSL. What do you think could be some more effective approaches to reducing dog attacks?

Cosmetic alteration

1. In terms of dogs, what is devocalization? Tail docking? Ear cropping? What negative effects do you think these procedures have on dogs?
2. What negative effects do you think declawing has on cats?
3. Why do you think people still engage in these cosmetic procedures on dogs and cats?
4. Many provinces, states, and cities in North America are beginning to legislate to ban these cosmetic procedures on companion animals. Do you think these procedures should be outlawed nationwide? Explain.

[Companion Animals Kahoot](#) (8 questions)

POST-VIDEO REVIEW

Extension/Research Questions

1. Where can you adopt a companion animal in your city or town? Research one option and briefly describe the adoption process.
2. Dog sledding tourism attractions are very popular in countries like Canada. To find out more about the unseen aspects of many of these operations watch this W5 video [Uncovering the shocking treatment of sled dogs in Canada](#) (30 min). Research some dog sledding tourism companies and describe their messaging with regards to the welfare of the dogs (either direct or indirect messaging). Do you think dog sledding tourism should be banned, or is it possible to do it in a way that respects and protects the dogs?
3. Read *The Guardian* article, "[Is it time to end cats' right to roam?](#)" Do you agree with policies prohibiting or limiting times for cats to be outdoors? Is requiring cats to be on [leashes](#) a valid alternative? Explain.
4. If American dogs and cats made up their own country, that country [would rank fifth in global meat consumption](#). Dogs and cats consume [about a quarter](#) of the total calories derived from animals in the United States. What are the environmental impacts of feeding this amount of meat to companion animals? What are some ways to reduce this impact (e.g. [plant-based food for dogs](#))?

Field Trips (live)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit a local animal shelter (e.g. The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth field trip offerings) • Attend a veterinary camp (e.g. The Atlantic Veterinary College Summer Academy in PEI or VetSummer Camps in New York City or Washington, DC) • Watch a live cam (e.g. go to Explore.org Live Cams and search for kittens, cats, dogs, etc.)
Field Trips (recorded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front Street Animal Shelter - City of Sacramento (9 min) • Ontario SPCA Provincial Education & Animal Centre (12 min) • Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in 360/VR (11 min) • Story Book Farm Primate Sanctuary (4 min)
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to Know Before Getting a Dog (Humane Canada) • Companion Animals in Canada and Canada's Puppy Mill Problem (Animal Justice) • Companion Animals in the United States (Animal Legal Defense Fund) • Companion Animal Fundamentals (Faunalytics)
Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teens pushing WA Legislature to ban retail puppy sales (Crosscut) • 7 reasons why you shouldn't keep wildlife as exotic pets (World Animal Protection)
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reality of Puppy Mills (The Humane Society of the US - 3 min) • Gill Dalley: Co-Founder of the Soi Dog Foundation (We Animals Media - 4 min) • Dogs (Netflix - each episode is approximately 50 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bravo, Zeus (S1.E2) • The Protectors (S2.E4) • Territorio de Zaguates (S1.E5) • Second Chances (S1.E6) • Life in the Doghouse (Docutainment - 84 min)
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue Road: One Man, Thirty Thousand Dogs, and a Million Miles on the Last Hope Highway (Peter Zheutlin - non-fiction) • Poppy in the Wild: A Lost Dog, Fifteen Hundred Acres of Wilderness, and the Dogged Determination that Brought Her Home (Teresa J. Rhyne - non-fiction)