



End Dogfighting Unit

Lesson One: Game Show

Objective: The students will understand that dogfighting is harmful to people, is illegal, and creates a dangerous community.

Grade Level: Secondary

Character Concepts: Fairness and citizenship- Fairness means giving equal consideration to everyone without judgment or placing false blame. A good citizen does things that help to make the community a better place for the people and animals to live.

Curriculum Connections: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the health risks involved in dogfighting and use evaluation of personal experiences to see that stereotypes and judgments hurt people and animals.

National Standards Addressed

NPH-H.5-8.3 and NPH-H.9-12.3 – Reducing Health Risks

NPH-H.5-8.4 and NPH-H.9-12.4 – Influences on Health

NL-ENG.K-12.3 – Evaluation Strategies

Materials Needed

- laminated picture of a Pomeranian
- laminated picture of a pit bull
- bell or buzzer
- Game Show Questions (see page 3)

Lesson Procedure

Opening:

- 1) Ask students if they have ever been judged because of their age, clothes, music, etc. Do you think people make judgments about you based on these things? Allow for a brief discussion about appearances and stereotypes.
- 2) Display the laminated photos of the Pomeranian and the pit bull at the front of the classroom.
- 3) Ask the students to list adjectives that describe each dog. Allow for several adjectives for each dog.
- 4) Tell the students, "One of these two dogs mauled a 6-week old baby to death in California in 2001. The baby was lying in a bed sleeping and could not threaten the dog physically nor was the child making any noise."

Ask students to raise their hand for the breed they believe killed the baby.

The dog who killed the baby was the Pomeranian. Tell the students that while pit bulls, or any dog, can harm people, it is our job as humans to make sure those injuries do not happen. The best way to do this is by learning how to be safe around dogs and being responsible caretakers of our animals.

Body:

- 1) Tell the class, "Each dog breed has different qualities. Some are considered to be more aggressive than others. Messages put out by the media contribute to the stereotype. The fact is that any dog can be aggressive. Did you know that the bloodhound, the bulldog, and the German shepherd - some of the top working dog breeds in the U.S. - were considered aggressive in the 1800s and 1900s? Much of a dog's behavior depends on how that dog was treated growing up and how we act around the dog. Let's play a game to see how much you know about dogs, the law, proper care and safety."
- 2) Ask the students to count off by twos or split into two teams. Two desks should be turned to face the class; these seats are for contestants and should be empty. Place a bell or buzzer on these desks at the front of each team. (If there is an uneven number of students choose one student to keep score.)

- 3) Read the rules of the game to the class: "I will read a question aloud. The two people who are in the seats at the front of the room and who are representing their team will be trying to earn points by being the first person to buzz in. Only the person who has the buzzer can talk. If a team member talks and does not have the buzzer points will be deducted from the team score. Additionally, the students with the buzzer must wait until the entire question is read before buzzing in. If you buzz in before the question is read points could be deducted from the team score or the question will be given to the other team."
- 4) Question the teams using the Game Show Questions (see page 3).

Closure:

- 1) Once every student has had a chance to participate in the game say, "By the end of our unit we will all know the answers to these questions without guessing and we will be able to make our communities safer and more humane."
- 2) Ask students to look at the pictures of the Pomeranian and pit bull again. Ask which dog mauled the baby. (Answer: Pomeranian.) At the beginning of this lesson many of us thought the answer to that question would have been different.
- 3) Ask students to tell you why stereotypes for dogs or people can be a bad idea. Ask students if they can tell why dogs need to have training. (Students should be able to provide a few answers from the game show and review why judgments and stereotypes are bad.)

Extension

Listen to "Hip Hop for Hounds." This is a compilation of songs that were created by people who are against dogfighting. All songs can be found at myspace.com/hiphopforhounds or myflashfetish.com/playlist/8529218.

Game Show Questions & Answers

1. What does the word humane mean?

- A. Acting like an animal
- B. Acting kind
- C. Acting cruel

Answer: B. Humane means to act kind and compassionate.

Ask the students: *Would you rather be around people who are kind or cruel? Would you rather people think of you as being kind or cruel?* Point out that being cool or tough doesn't have to mean being cruel, and give examples of kind but tough guys, including boxer Lennox Lewis, football player Jason Taylor of the New York Jets, wrestler Hulk Hogan, and basketball player Mo Williams of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

2. True or False? You can go to jail for fighting dogs.

Answer: True.

3. True or False? It is illegal to watch a dogfight in most states.

Answer: True. Say to the students: *In the United States we have decided that fighting dogs is not humane and therefore it is a crime in every state. It is even a crime to watch a dogfight: In the state of Illinois, simply watching dogs fight is a Class C misdemeanor. Because dogfighting and watching dogfights are crimes, there are serious consequences.*

4. What is a possible consequence for fighting your dog?

- A. Jail time of up to 3 years
- B. Seizure of your house or car
- C. Fine of up to \$25,000 dollars
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. Say to the students: *All of the above consequences can happen to you if you fight a dog in the United States. Those are some pretty serious consequences! (Go to humanesociety.org/dogfightinglaws to find out your state's specific penalties.)*

5. Dogs evolved from which animal?

- A. Coyote
- B. Wolf
- C. Cheetah

Answer: B. Say to the students: *Most people agree that dogs are descendants of the wolf. Domestic dogs and gray wolves share 99.8 percent of the same genetic makeup. It's important to remember that dogs evolved from wild animals and still have some of the same instincts as their wild ancestors.*

6. In nature, dogs will fight:

- A. Until one of them gives up
- B. To the death
- C. For fun

Answer: A. Say to the students: *In nature, dogs are pack animals; they fight to establish order. Although it is natural for them to fight, the fights are short. The weaker dog quickly gives in to the stronger dog and everybody goes on with their lives. In dogfights organized by people, the dogs are forced to keep fighting even after the weaker dog has turned or given in to the other dog.*

7. If a dog is threatening you, the best thing to do is:

- A. Avoid eye contact and stand still like a tree with your hands to your sides
- B. Run away as quickly as you can
- C. Throw something at the dog

Answer: A. Say to the students: *Dogs are more likely to attack if you are confrontational with them or move suddenly.*

8. True or False? When approaching a new dog, it's best to offer him the back of your hand to smell.

Answer: True. Say to the students: *This is a safe way for a dog to get to know you. You are giving him the option of moving toward you. Do not force yourself on him. Wait for him to sniff or lick your hand before petting him. And always make sure you ask the dog's handler if it's OK for you to pet the dog first.*

9. How many people do dogs kill each year?

- A. 2,000
- B. 200
- C. 20

Answer: C. Say to the students: *On average, twenty people per year are killed by dogs in the United States. This includes attacks by trained police and personal protection dogs. There are 53 million dogs in the U.S., which means that .0000004 percent are involved in fatal dog attacks. You are 25 times more likely to be hit by lightning than be mauled to death by a dog. That should tell you that 99.9 percent of dogs are safe to be around.*

10. In which setting have more people been killed by dogs?

- A. Dog is chained up
- B. Dog is running loose off his property
- C. Dog is inside his home

Answer: A. Say to the students: *Dogs on chains are responsible for more deaths than dogs running loose or dogs inside their homes. You may think because they are restrained they are not a danger, but dogs that spend their lives on chains are not socialized to be with people. They become frightened and feel trapped. Dogs require time with people and other dogs to learn how to behave properly. When people get too close to chained dogs (sometimes even taunting the dog) the dog feels trapped and knows he can't retreat, so he attacks.*

11. Aggressive dogs are typically:

- A. Bred to be aggressive
- B. Treated poorly by their guardians
- C. Unneutered
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. Say to the students: *There are many things that can cause a dog to be aggressive. Abused dogs are aggressive. They do not trust people and can turn on them.*

Another way a dog may become aggressive is when two dogs who are known to be aggressive breed; their offspring are more likely to be aggressive. Some of the dogs used in dogfighting have been bred for hundreds of years, with only the most "game," or aggressive, being used to breed. Even with two "game" dogs, though, not all the puppies will be game. Dogs who aren't game are killed.

Dogs who have not been "fixed"—that is, spayed or neutered—are also more likely to roam to find a mate and get themselves into dangerous situations. Unneutered male dogs are four times more likely to bite than females. Once a dog has been neutered, he is less likely to bite.

12. In Chicago what percentage of people arrested for dogfighting and/or animal cruelty have been arrested for other serious crimes?

- A. 70%
- B. 50%
- C. 10%

Answer: A. Say to the students: *The Chicago Police Department did a study and found that of all the people they arrested for dogfighting and animal cruelty, **70 percent** had been arrested for other crimes, including battery, assault, and illegal drugs. This means that people who are involved in violence toward animals are often also involved in violence toward people.*

13. True or False? The FBI has found that serial killers (individuals who kill numerous people) typically practiced their crimes on animals first.

Answer: True. Say to the students: *FBI studies show that people who intentionally harm animals are more likely to harm people as well.*

14. The following animals can be used in dogfighting:

- A. Pit bulls
- B. Cats
- C. Rabbits
- D. All of the Above

Answer: D. Say to the students: *While it is true that pit bulls are the breed used most for the actual dogfighting, cats, rabbits and even smaller or more timid dogs are used as bait animals to train and bring out aggression in fighting dogs.*

15. True or False? Pit bulls like to fight, so it's OK to fight them.

Answer: False. Say to the students: *First of all, it's not true that all pit bulls like to fight. In fact, unless they are trained or bred to be "game," most dogs, including pit bulls, have no interest in fighting other dogs.*

Secondly, even if some dogs like fighting, that doesn't mean we should let them do it. As people, we are supposed to be caretakers of animals, putting them in situations that are healthy and safe.

16. Which people in the hip-hop community think dogfighting is wrong?

- A. Russell Simmons
- B. DMC
- C. DMX
- D. More than one of the above

Answer: D. Say to the students: *A few years ago some hip-hop artists, like DMX, did things that could be seen as trying to make dogfighting look cool. DMX even put fighting dogs on the cover of his album and wrote songs about dogfighting. Now, hip-hop artists are speaking out against dogfighting, saying that it isn't cool. In fact, DMC, one of the original rappers, did a public service announcement (PSA) against dogfighting for The Humane Society of the United States. We'll talk more in another session about how celebrities influence what we think and do.*

17. True or False? If you fight dogs, you must be tough.

Answer: False. Say to the students: *People who use their dogs to fight their battles are not tough. In fact, they are the opposite of tough. Real men and strong women handle their own disputes. Important people from all types of human fighting associations like the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment), UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship), and MMA (mixed martial arts) have taken a stand against dogfighting.*

18. If your dog has puppies, how long are you are responsible for these dogs?

- A. Never
- B. Until they are 8 weeks old
- C. Forever

Answer: C. Say to the students: *If your dog does have puppies, good pet owners make sure all the dogs are well taken care of. Responsible breeders only give dogs to people they know will take care of them, and they are willing to take a dog back if the person to whom they sold or gave the puppy can't keep the dog. Basically, if your dog has a puppy you are responsible for that dog forever.*

Speaking of puppies, there are far too many homeless dogs, especially pit bulls, who are euthanized (humanely put to death) every year. So it is not a good idea to let your dog have puppies. Your dog should be spayed or neutered to prevent them from having babies. Spaying is when a female dog has surgery so

that she can no longer reproduce and neutering is when a male dog has surgery so that he cannot reproduce. Like we said before, spaying or neutering makes it less likely that your dog will run away from home and get into trouble. Also, spaying and neutering your pets makes it less likely that they will get several different types of cancer.

19. Dogs can be helpful to humans in which ways?

- A. As seeing-eye dogs
- B. As friends and companions
- C. As search and rescue workers
- D. As fighters
- E. More than one answer is correct

Answer: E. Say to the students: *Dogs can be very helpful to humans. They can be seeing-eye dogs, search and rescue dogs, and can help humans in a number of other helpful ways. Dogs should be appreciated for being lovers, not fighters.*