

Responsible Pet Ownership, Step by Step

Language Arts

Grades 3 and 4

Objective

To understand why we are responsible for our pets and why they depend on us.

Skill

Through participation in a class discussion, students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts *responsibility* and *dependency* as they relate to pet ownership.

Materials

- cloth strips for blindfolds

Activity

Students will be blindfolded, paired with partners, and led on a trust walk to illustrate the concepts of responsibility and dependency.

Helpful Background Information

- www.hsus.org/programs/companion/pet_care/pet_care.html

Procedures

1. Have students line up and count off by twos. Blindfold one student in each pair and instruct the sighted students to lead their blindfolded partners on a predetermined path around the classroom or in another part of the school building. Have students regroup in one or two minutes to reverse roles.
2. After everyone has completed the walk sighted and blindfolded, have students describe their feelings or concerns when they were blindfolded and dependent on their partners. Answers might include such feelings as fear, uncertainty, trust, security, curiosity, and insecurity. Next, have students explain how they were responsible for their blindfolded partners. Ask them to complete the following sentence: *I had to make sure my partner _____*. (Answers may include: *did not get lost, followed my directions, felt safe and comfortable, did not get hurt, avoided hurting or distracting others, could trust me*.)
3. Relate students' answers to ways in which people are responsible for their pets. Have students speculate on what could happen when someone isn't responsible for his or her pet.
4. As a class, develop a definition of a responsible pet owner.