Lesson 3: Animal Investigators

Overview: Through discussion and participation in a role-play that involves investigating an animal neglect case, students will understand the concept of needs and that people must provide for the needs of dogs and cats.

Procedure:

Introduction
1. Ask students what the difference is between a need and a want.
2. Create a two-column chart. Label one column We Need and the other Dogs/Cats Need. Lead a discussion about what students need to be happy and healthy. Then guide students to compare the list they just created with the needs of cats and dogs.

Animal Investigation
1. Explain to the students the role of an Animal Investigator, such as a Humane Law Enforcement Officer or police officer. Tell the students they will be acting like Animal Investigators and will be looking for evidence to see who is telling the truth in the story.
   - Students may work as a whole group or in small groups
2. Read the scenario:
   - A woman has called the authorities to report that a dog living in her neighborhood is not being taken care of. The dog, named Bud, lives in a backyard next door to the caller. Bud’s guardian says that she looks after Bud properly. She says he always has water and that she feeds him twice a day. Bud is not allowed inside of her house, but he has his own doghouse. An Animal Investigator will come to see Bud and assess the situation.
3. Show or direct students to Drawing 1 (the environment and dog) from “Animal Investigator” Worksheet 1. Explain that when they first arrive at Bud’s backyard, they should look at the whole situation and describe all the details about the dog and the environment he lives in. Ask students the following questions:
   - What does Bud look like? What is he doing?
   - What is his living situation like? Is he tied down? Is he tangled up?
   - What does the area around Bud look like?
   - Why do you think the neighbor reported Bud’s situation?
4. Show or direct students to Drawing 2 (body condition). Ask students the following questions:
   - What is Bud’s body language saying?
   - Does he look well fed? How can you tell?
   - Does his collar fit properly?
Lesson 3: Animal Investigators (continued)

5. Show or direct students to **Drawing 3** (food). Ask students the following questions:
   - Are there signs that Bud is being fed twice a day like his guardian said he was?
   - What do you notice about the bowl?
   - Has there been food in the bowl recently?

6. Show or direct students to **Drawing 4** (water). Ask students the following questions:
   - Can Bud reach the water bowl? Is it right side up?
   - Does it look like it has held water recently?

7. Show or direct students to **Drawing 5** (shelter). Explain that shelter can be a variety of things, but it needs to protect the animal from rain, snow, wind, the hot sun and other elements. Ask students the following questions:
   - Do you think Bud’s shelter is adequate?
   - Can Bud reach his shelter?
   - Does it protect him from the weather? Explain.
   - Does it have bedding inside such as straw or dry blankets?

8. Show or direct students to **Drawing 2** again (health). Tell students to look for signs of sickness. Ask students the following questions:
   - Do you notice any signs that Bud is sick or hurt?
   - Are his eyes teary or crusty?
   - Do you notice any new wounds or see scabs?

9. Show students **Drawings 1 and 2** again (playtime/activity). Ask the students the following questions:
   - What can you tell by looking at the rope?
   - Do you see evidence that Bud gets to spend time with/be near other people or run around and play with other dogs? Explain.

10. Have students determine whether all the evidence supports the guardian’s claim that Bud is being cared for or the caller’s claim that he is not. Have students write their determinations citing specific examples to prove their findings. Students may do this as a small group, in pairs, or individually.

Wrap Up:
1. Review the needs of a dog or cat.
2. Revisit Bud’s situation and ask the students what can be done to help Bud if he is not being adequately cared for.

**Outside Humane Educators**
- Type out the scenario as an extra handout for the students. This will allow them to follow along as you read the scenario aloud to them.
- Animal neglect and cruelty are sensitive topics, so be prepared for student opinions that do not reflect your own and, without judging, ask questions as to why certain opinions are held.

**Resource Links**

- **Understanding Cats and Dogs**

- **Dog Body Language**

- **Cat Body Language**
  [http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/cat-communication.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/cat-communication.html)

- **Dog Care and Needs**

- **Cat Care and Needs**
Animal Investigator Worksheet 1

Drawing 1
Teacher Note: Be sure that students view the drawings one at a time as described in Lesson 3. This allows students to first assess the whole situation, and then look closely at details.