



Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Identify several important factors to consider when deciding to adopt an animal.

Time Needed

30–45 minutes

Materials

- “Finding Your Match” questionnaire
- Optional: Books about animal care for different species (and different dog breeds)

Insider Tips

- Consider doing some research in advance so that you are ready to suggest which animals might be good matches for your students if they ask for help.
- Remember to emphasize that it is important not to make assumptions about an animal’s personality because each animal is an individual, but that it can be helpful to become familiar with the tendencies of certain breeds of dog. For example, Jack Russell Terriers tend to be very high energy. Hound dogs tend to be calmer dogs. Staffordshire terriers tend to be very loyal dogs.
- Encourage students to talk to the staff at the adoption center about what they are looking for in a companion. The staff members will help them find their match and be impressed that they have thought ahead about the qualities they are looking for in a companion.

Activity 3: Finding Your Match

Overview: Students will complete a questionnaire to consider what they are looking for in their perfect companion. They will also think about what their companion animals will need so that they can be the best guardians.

Procedure:

Introduction

Introduce the activity by asking the students if they ever think about having a companion animal when they are older. Explain to them that many people choose animals based only on appearance, not personality or the time and space they can provide for their animals.

Finding Your Match

1. Let the students know that they are going to fill out their own “Finding Your Match” questionnaire and that they will discuss their responses as a group afterward.
2. Hand out the “Finding Your Match” questionnaire and give students time to fill it out.
3. Once the students have completed the questionnaire, ask them to find a partner with whom to share all their responses, except the last one.
 - When partner #1 finishes sharing, partner #2 should suggest what animal s/he thinks would be a good match and why.
 - Then partner #1 should say whether or not that was the animal s/he thought would be a good match and why. If the suggested animal was not the same, partner #1 should consider partner #2’s suggestion and then decide whether or not s/he wants to change his/her answer.
 - They should then switch roles so that partner #2 can share.

Group Sharing

1. Start by asking students what they think finding a perfect match really means. Allow students to respond.

Take home point: Remind students that match means two, so when thinking about a perfect match it means finding a companion animal who fits what you are looking for, but it also means that they fit what the companion animal is looking for – meaning that you have to consider whether or not you have the means and ability to provide for all of the animal’s needs.

2. Ask the whole class the following questions:
 - *Were there certain questions on the questionnaire that you thought were more important than others? Which ones? Why or why not?*

Insider Tips (continued)

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension activity, assign students different species of animals to learn more about their natural behaviors and how to provide them with proper care to meet their needs. Afterward ask the students if there is an animal they learned about that they think would be a good match for them and why.

Outside Humane Educators

- If possible, bring a few books on animal care for a few different species of animals so that the students can use them as a reference for deciding on a perfect match. The books can also be a good resource during the group sharing session.
- Remind students that they can find many different species of animals available for adoption through Petfinder.com, which provides personality descriptions of the animals so that potential adopters can know more about them.

Activity 3: Finding Your Match (continued)

- *Were there any questions that did not matter to you? Why or why not? (e.g., what the animal looks like)*
- *Did you have an animal in mind that you thought would be your perfect match but then reconsidered? If so, why? (e.g., a student may have thought s/he wanted a dog, but then realized without a yard s/he would have to take the dog out multiple times a day for exercise and to go to the bathroom and s/he would not have the time.)*
- *What type of animal did you think would be your perfect match and why?*
- *What are some additional considerations, not on the questionnaire, that you should make before choosing an animal to adopt?*

Wrap Up:

1. Ask the students whether they think this activity can help someone find his/her perfect match.
2. Tell the students that if their whole family wanted to adopt an animal, all family members might consider filling out the questionnaire together to help them decide on the perfect match for the whole family.
3. Let the students know that there are many different types of animals that are in need of adoption, such as dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, reptiles, birds, hamsters, and a wide variety of other companion animals.



Finding Your Match

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What commitments do you have that keep you busy? (Circle all those that apply.)
School Homework Sports Arts Clubs Chores
Hobbies Time with human friends Other _____
2. How many hours on average do you think your activities take every day? Add them up, then add 8 hours for sleeping and 2 hours for eating. How much time do you have left to spend with your animal?
3. How much space do you have for an animal? How will your animal get exercise?
4. Do you want an animal who is more independent and only needs a little of your time or an animal who is really dependent and wants to be with you all of the time?
Independent or Dependent
5. Do you want an animal who cuddles and sleeps in the bed with you or an animal who sleeps in his/her own place?
Cuddles or Sleeps in his/her own place
6. Do you want an animal who is full of energy and wants to play a lot or a calm animal?
High energy Medium Energy Low energy
7. Do you care about size? A big animal or a small animal?
Very small Small Medium Large Very large
8. Do you care about what your animal looks like? If yes, describe.

Finding Your Match (continued)

9. Do you care about the gender of the animal?
Male Female It doesn't matter
10. Do you want a younger animal or older animal?
Baby Young Middle-aged Senior Animal (older)
11. What do you most look forward to about having an animal? (Circle all that apply.)
Playing with him/her Watching his/her behaviors Going for walks
Petting him/her Cuddling/holding
Other _____
12. How would you describe the personality of your perfect animal? (Circle all that apply.)
Lovable Serious Courageous Smart
Silly Affectionate Curious Mischievous
Shy Playful Peaceful/Calm Sweet
Fun Other _____
13. Is there anything else you are looking for in your match?
14. What animal do you think would be the best match for you and why?
(you can be general or specific)