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Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Explain some of the differences between selling a dog and adopting a dog.

Time Needed

45–60 minutes
1 class period

Materials

- Online or newspaper ads of breeders selling dogs
- “Ads” from [Petfinder.com](https://www.petfinder.com) or local adoption centers about dogs available for adoption
- “Ad Questions Guide” sheet

Lesson 1: How Much is that Doggie in the Window?

Overview: Students will consider the differences between buying animals sold for profit and adopting animals from adoption centers.

Procedure:

Introduction

Introduce the topic by asking students what they think the differences are between pet stores that sell animals for profit and adoption centers that adopt out animals.

A Dog is Someone, Not Something

1. Ask the students what the difference is between getting a dog and getting the latest computer or phone models.

Possible answers:

- Dogs are living beings and electronics are things.
 - Dogs have feelings and electronics do not.
 - Dogs need love and attention, but electronics do not need anything.
 - Dogs are their own beings and electronics are just there for us to use.
2. *Do you think that we should sell living beings?* Allow students to respond.
 3. *Do you think that we should own living beings?* Allow students to respond.

Note: Some people choose to use the word *guardian* instead of *owner* when referring to their relationships to their animals because they believe their role is to look after their animals, to do what’s best for them, and to take care of them, not to own or control them.

Comparing the Ads

1. Let the students know that they are going to compare and contrast ads from breeders and adoption centers to see what they can learn from the ads.
2. Break the students up into groups of three or four. Give each group five or six ads for dogs/puppies for sale from the local newspaper and descriptions of dogs/puppies available for adoption at local animal adoption centers.
3. Ask students to compare and contrast the ads using the Ad Questions Guide Sheet.
4. Once the students have completed the questions ask them to share out loud.

Insider Tips

- You can visit [Petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) to find “ads” for dogs who are up for adoption.
- This lesson focused on dogs, but you could also compare and contrast ads for cats/kittens for sale and cats/kittens who are up for adoption.
- Be prepared to explain to the students that not all adoption centers euthanize, but that the ones that do are trying their best to place the animals in good homes. Have a discussion about the root of the problem and consider ways to reduce the number of homeless animals.

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension activity you could have the students imagine that they are on the state legislature. Let them know that they will vote on a bill that would require all breeders to have licenses and that only a limited number of licenses will be issued. They will need to consider the reasons people will oppose the bill and reasons people will support the bill and then have a class vote.
- This activity aligns to Common Core Literacy Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 1.

Outside Humane Educators

- Be prepared to define euthanasia because some students may not know what it is.
- When breaking students up into small groups, ask the students to assign one person to be the recorder, to write the group’s answers down, and one person to be the reporter to share the group’s answers with the rest of the class.

Resource Links

- PetFinder: <http://www.petfinder.com/>
- ASPCA: <http://www.asPCA.org/about-us/faq>

Lesson 1: How Much is that Doggie in the Window? (continued)

Crossing the Line

Ask students whether they would “cross the line” based on their views. That is, if they strongly agree with each statement listed below, they will cross a “line” (of your making) that divides the classroom. While they are standing, ask students to justify their positions.

- I would get my dog from a breeder.
- I would get my dog from an adoption center.
- I would get my dog from a pet store.
- I know I should get my dog from an adoption center, but I feel uncomfortable doing that and no one should force me.
- Animal homelessness is a serious problem.

Wrap Up:

1. Ask students to share what they have learned from this activity.

Note: Challenge students to articulate the differences between buying a dog from a breeder and adopting an animal from an adoption center.

2. Ask students, if they wanted to have a dog, if this activity influenced where they would go to find a dog and why or why not. Allow students to share.
3. Ask students if they know how many animals enter adoption centers every year in the United States. (Answer: 5–7 million in 2013)
4. Ask students if they know how many animals are euthanized every year in the United States. (Answer: 3–4 million in 2013)
5. Ask students if they think that people have an ethical obligation to adopt animals and why or why not.

Ad Questions Guide Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What information does the breeder's ad provide about each dog?
2. What information does the adoption center's ad provide about each dog?
3. What information does the breeder's ad focus on?
4. What information does the adoption center's ad focus on?
5. What do you think are the main differences between these ads? Why?
6. What do you think is the main goal of the breeders?
7. What do you think is the main goal of the adoption centers?