



Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Identify some of the reasons for companion animal homelessness.
- Describe at least three things that a person should consider before adopting an animal.

Time Needed

30–60 minutes

Materials

- “Telling Their Story” worksheet
- Optional: “Homeless Animal Stories” handout (from the Grades 3–5 Activity: Helping Homeless Animals)

Insider Tips

- Create a handout that explains how companion animal homelessness can be prevented. Include the contact information for local animal care and control, shelters, and reputable rescue groups.
- If students have difficulty starting their stories, read one or more stories from the “Homeless Animal Stories” handout from the Grades 3–5 Activity 2 or share any real life homeless animal stories you know.

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension, consider a field trip to a local animal adoption center.
- As an extension, have students hold a fundraiser for a local shelter or animal rescue group.

Outside Humane Educators

- If the site allows, bring a rescued animal from a shelter (provided the animal will be comfortable). Telling the story of an animal they can actually meet will be very effective.

Activity 2: My Story: How Did I Get Here?

Overview: Students will examine some of the many ways companion animals become homeless and end up in animal shelters. Students will translate this new knowledge into creating a first-person point of view piece, which they will scaffold prior to completing.

Procedure:

Introduction

1. Ask the students, “what is a homeless companion animal?”
2. Have the students list all of the dangers a homeless companion animal might face because s/he is living on the street.
3. Lead the students in a discussion about what can happen to animals who are homeless. Explain that they may find forever homes while at adoption centers or they may be euthanized due to overpopulation, health problems, or behavioral issues.

How Did I Get Here?

Ask the students, “Why do you think companion animals end up in animal shelters?” Allow students to respond. Possible answers:

- They were stray and picked up.
- They were abused or neglected and rescued.
- Family could no longer take care of them.
- Family decided they did not want the animal anymore.
- Someone’s companion animal had puppies or kittens.

Telling Their Story

1. Inform students that companion animals find themselves at animal shelters for a variety of reasons.
2. Hand out the “Telling Their Story” worksheet to the students. Instruct the students to complete the worksheet, which will help them create their own animal homelessness story written from the point of view of the homeless animal.
3. After the students complete the “Telling Their Story” worksheet, have them use it to create a one page narrative from the point of view of the animal in their worksheet.

Wrap Up:

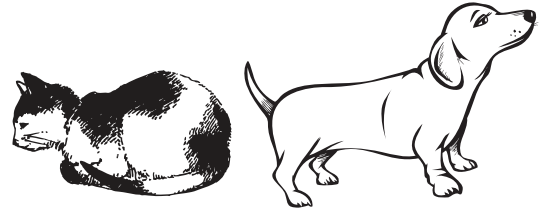
1. Once students have completed their narratives, have volunteers share out loud.
2. Ask students what can be done to prevent unnecessary companion animal homelessness. (Possible answers: spay/neuter; adopting animals instead of buying them; providing animals with an ID tag/microchip; Trap/Neuter/Return programs; supporting local animal adoption centers.)

Telling Their Story

Name: _____

Date: _____

Imagine you are an animal who lost your home. What would your life be like? Answer the following questions as though you were a companion animal who was abandoned in a shelter or became homeless.



<p>What is your name?</p> <p>What kind of companion animal are you?</p>	
<p>What was your life like when you lived with a family?</p>	
<p>What happened that made you abandoned or homeless?</p>	
<p>How do you spend your days?</p>	
<p>What makes you happy?</p>	
<p>What makes you sad or worried?</p>	
<p>What do you wish your life were like?</p>	
<p>How can people help you so that you have a better life?</p>	

On the back, use what you have written above to write a short story from the perspective of your animal.