



Activity 1: Puppy Mills: Exposed

Overview: After being introduced to the topic of puppy mills through an educational video, students will dig deeper into the issue by comparing and contrasting various state laws as they relate to dog breeding.

Procedure:

Introduction

Introduce the topic of the activity by asking students to describe what they believe companion animal overpopulation means. Ask students how many animals they believe are homeless and why this happens. (**Note:** According to ASPCA in 2013, approximately 5–7 million animals enter animal shelters in the United States every year.)

What is a Puppy Mill?

1. Ask students whether they believe it makes sense for people to continue breeding dogs and cats given that there are already millions of homeless animals.
2. Explain to the students that there are places called puppy mills that exist solely to breed more dogs. Tell them they will be watching a video about puppy mills.
3. Screen HEART's Puppy Mill Video.

Tough Love Laws: A Comparison

1. After the video, ask students to share their initial reactions and comments.
2. Ask students what can be done to end puppy mills. (Possible answers: adopt pets; do not buy animals from pet stores or online; educate other people on the issue.)

Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Describe the conditions of a puppy mill.
- Examine the reasons why puppy mills exist.
- Compare & contrast various laws addressing animal breeding.

Time Needed

20–45 minutes

Materials

- HEART's Puppy Mill Video
<http://www.youtube.com/user/TeachingHumane/videos>
- TV & DVD player or computer & projector
- Summary of your state's puppy mill law
- Summary of the strongest state puppy mill law

Insider Tips

- To find your state's puppy mill law, visit Animal Legal and Historical Center's website:
 - <http://animallaw.info/articles/State%20Tables/tbuscommercialbreeders.htm>
 - <http://www.animallaw.info/articles/armpusbreedinglaws.htm>
- Organizations such as Animal Legal Defense Fund (www.aldf.org) and Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org) have detailed information and rankings of each state's animal-related statutes, including ones on puppy mills.



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Insider Tips (continued)

- Go Local. Instead of focusing on state laws, have students examine different cities’ responses to puppy mills. For a list of city ordinances go to this website:
<http://bestfriends.org/Resources/No-Kill-Resources/Puppy-mill-initiatives/Fighting-Puppy-Mills/Jurisdictions-with-retail-pet-sale-bans/>

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension activity, have students compare and contrast their state’s animal cruelty law(s) with the federal Animal Welfare Act:
<http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/>

Outside Humane Educators

- If your teaching setting is not conducive to showing videos, bring in photographs of puppy mill conditions.
- Focus less on the horrid reality of animals being euthanized and focus more on the very clear and possible solutions to the animal overpopulation and puppy mill problems.
- Learn more about puppy mills at:
 - <http://www.asPCA.org/PUPPYMILLS>
 - <http://bestfriends.org/common/pages/resourcearticle.aspx?id=21474836560>
 - <http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/ifaw-report-how-much-is-that-doggie-on-my-browser.pdf>

Activity 1: Puppy Mills: Exposed (continued)

- Important: If not mentioned, explain to the students that legislation can be an effective way to curb puppy mills.
3. Explain to the students that they are going to examine laws addressing puppy mills.
 - **Option 1:** Have students compare and contrast their state’s puppy mill law with that of the state with the strongest law.
 - **Option 2:** If your state does not have a specific law addressing animal breeding, choose the states with the weakest and strongest puppy mill laws to compare and contrast.
 Things to consider: number of animals allowed; penalties; minimum conditions allowed; who is considered a “commercial breeder.”
 - **Option 3:** If your state does not have a specific law addressing animal breeding, choose any state’s puppy mill law and have students brainstorm ways that the law could be improved.

Wrap Up:

1. Once students have completed their comparisons, review them together.
2. Ask students what the motivations are for puppy mill operators and what can be done to shut puppy mills down. (Possible answers: adopt from a shelter; don’t patronize pet stores that sell animals; encourage lawmakers to adopt tougher puppy mill laws; educate the public; profits.)

