

Why Did My Dog Bite?

Suggested Grade Levels: K-3

Subject: Language Arts

Character: Respect – Safety with Pets

Materials and technology to be used:

- Individual whiteboards with dry erase markers – **x1 per student**
- Props: dog food bowl, dog bed, dog toy and dog bone – **x1 of each**
- Magazines – **x enough for each student**
- Scissors – **x1 per student**
- Glue – **x1 per student**
- Large poster board or paper (**x1**) or smaller poster paper for each student (**x1 per student**)
- Writing utensils
- “Dog Bites Dos and Don’ts” activity sheet – **x1 per student**
- “Act Safely Around Dogs” reading passage – **x1 per student**
- Sticky Notes – **x1 per student**

Objective(s):

To increase students’ awareness regarding when a dog is most likely to bite.

Anticipatory Set/Hook:

Ask students: “Who do you think is bitten by dogs most often?” Write four different age brackets on the board: 1 to 4 year-olds, 5 to 9 year-olds, 15 to 23 year-olds or 70 to 80 year-olds. Ask students to come up to the board and place a tally by their choice, limit these options for younger students. *Children ages 5 to 9 are bitten most often than anyone else. So, it’s important to learn when dogs are most likely to bite. You can live safely with dogs by remembering to be more careful during those times.*

Lesson Beginning:

1. Ask students to raise their hand if they have ever been bitten by a dog before – have students look around the room at the number of hands. Share a surprising fact: “Did you know that most people are bitten by a dog that they already know? That includes their own pets and those of neighbors, friends, and family. Most dog bites happen at home.”
2. Gather the listed props and select eight different volunteer student “actors” to pretend to be a dog engaged in the different behaviors noted below. For each behavior, have the rest of the class utilize small whiteboards and tell you whether they believe that behavior is ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ to approach the dog. Pretend the dog is:

***Eating (use dog food bowl)** – dogs may bite when surprised or scared. Do not ever sneak up on pets or bother pets when they are eating or near food.

***Sleeping (use dog bed)** – dogs may bite when surprised or scared. Do not sneak up on pets or bother pets when they are sleeping or in the dog's safe space.

***Guarding something (use dog toys and bone)** – dogs may bite when they are protecting their things like toys, food, puppies, home, owner or even an owner's car. Avoid teasing dogs behind fences or in cars. Never try to take food, toys, or treats out of a dog's mouth. Get an adult to help if your dog has something he should not.

***Sick or hurt** – when dogs are sick or hurt, they may bite if you come too close. Stay away from pets that are not feeling well. Get an adult if you think a dog needs help.

***Fighting** – dogs may bite people who try to break up a dog fight. Never try to break up a dog fight. Ask an adult for help! Pro-tip: Throw water on the dogs to separate the fight.

***Playing rough** – dogs may bite when they are playing rough. Do not play rough with your dog. This includes playing tug-of-war. Try a walk or a game of fetch instead.

The teacher will need to make sure to explain each unsafe behavior very carefully to the students and check for understanding before moving on to the next behavior.

Middle of Lesson:

1. Split students up into numerous small groups.
2. Have students search through magazines and cut out pictures that show when a dog is most likely to bite. You may want to write the behaviors noted above on a board for students to reference.
3. Have students take turns gluing their images onto a background to create a large, class collage of photos. At the bottom of the collage, write "Leave your dog alone when they are....".
4. You may wish to display the collage poster on a prominent bulletin board somewhere in the school so that other students may learn from it. Another option is to have each student create an individual collage to take home and share with their family as a way to further the learning at home.

End of Lesson:

1. Either individually or as a class, have students read the "Act Safely Around Dogs" reading passage and decipher the picture codes.
2. Have each student complete the "Dog Bites Dos and Don'ts" coloring page on their own. Review it the same day or use it as homework and discuss it the following morning.

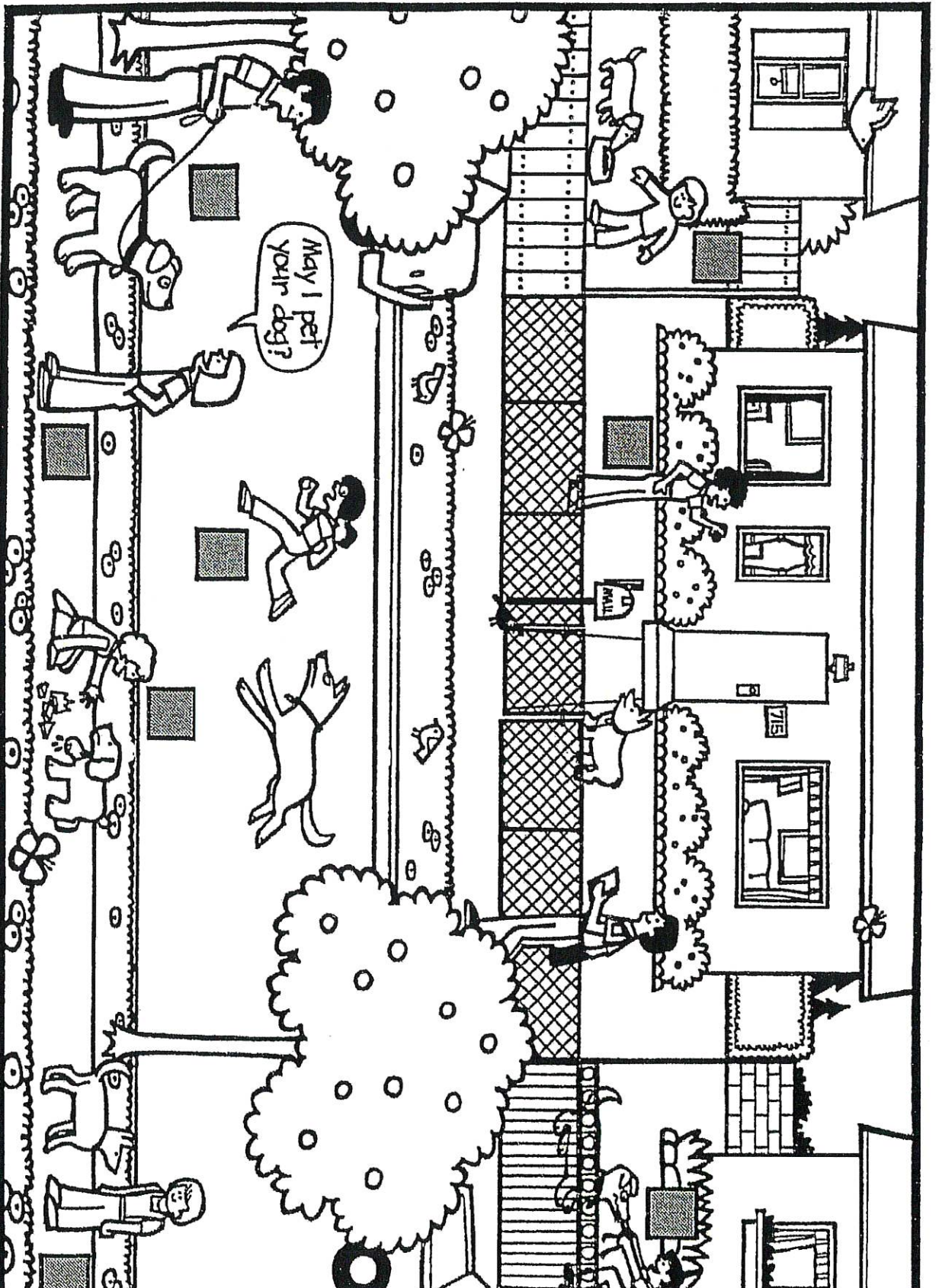
Closure:

Review the “Dog Bites Dos and Don’ts” page if desired. Provide students with 1 minute to self-reflect on what they just learned. Encourage students to write their thoughts on a sticky note, or share out loud, and submit these thoughts as an exit ticket before leaving the lesson.

Information adapted from the Humane Society of Missouri

Dog Bites Dos and Don'ts Coloring Page

Dog bites can be avoided when people behave safely around dogs and pet owners act responsibly.







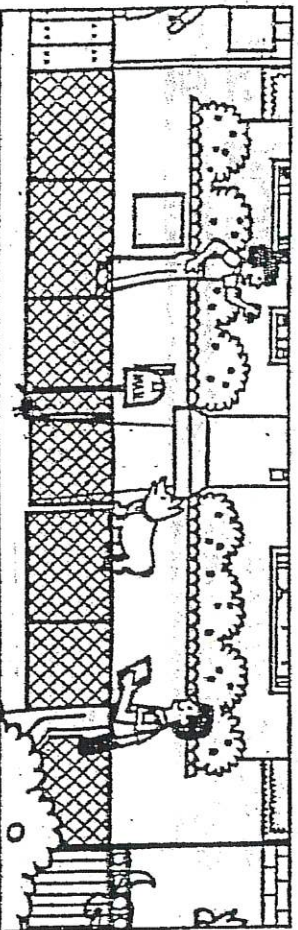
Write an "S" in the box next to each example of someone behaving safely and responsibly with a dog.

Write a "U" in the box next to each example that shows unsafe behavior around a dog.





Did you recognize which examples in the picture showed someone behaving safely and responsibly with a dog? Were you able to spot examples of unsafe behavior? Check your answers here.

Safe, Responsible Behavior (S)

-  Always walk your dog on a leash. Keep your cats indoors, where they are safe from traffic and other animals.
-  Before petting someone else's dog (or cat), ask the owner for permission. After getting permission, always let the dog sniff the back of your hand first.
-  When a dog approaches you, stand still and quiet. Keep your hands at your sides.
-  When you are not walking your dog, keep him or her indoors with you—or in a fenced yard. Spend time playing with and caring for your dog.



Unsafe Behavior (U)





-  Don't pet or approach a dog (or cat) while he or she is eating, sleeping, or guarding something. Pets naturally guard their food, their babies, and their toys. Dogs also protect their owners, as well as property that belongs to their owners—such as an owner's home, yard, or car.
-  Don't try to pull a toy, a stick or any item from a dog's mouth. Also avoid playing tug-of-war with dogs. Playing roughly with dogs may teach them to bite, jump or become aggressive.
-  Don't run away from a dog that is chasing you. A dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch whoever is running away. If you stand still, the dog will most likely stop, sniff you and leave you alone when he or she realizes you are not a threat. Also, don't chase or tease dogs or cats and avoid petting or trying to pick up strange pets.
-  Don't approach a dog (or any animal) that is injured. Instead, tell an adult right away about the animal.

Name _____

Act Safely Around Dogs

There are safety rules every child should know. Some explain how to be safe around dogs. Following those rules can protect you from dog bites.

Can you read the information below? It explains how to behave safely around dogs. In a few places, pictures are used instead of words.

Sometimes you want to reach out and be friendly to a . But dogs do not always know that. They may worry that you will hurt them. They may think you want to take something from them. That is why you should not pet a dog who is . Never pet a dog who is protecting a , or her .

Is it OK to pet a dog who is with his ? First, ask the owner. Next, close your . Let the dog  the back of your hand. (That's how dogs get to know you.) Then gently  the dog.

What do you do if a strange  comes near you? What if the  is not there? Stand still, like a . Don't  or . If a dog knocks you down, curl up like a . Cover your . If you are  and calm, the dog will usually just sniff you. Then he will probably leave.

Write three rules you learned from this worksheet. You can write the rules as sentences. Or you can draw them as pictures.