

R-E-S-P-O-N-S-I-B-I-L-I-T-Y

Character concept:

Responsibility includes taking care of those who depend on us, being organized, showing self-control and discipline, and planning ahead.

Objective:

Students will understand that taking proper care of a pet involves several responsibilities and that it is important for caregivers to learn as much as they can to keep their companion animals happy, healthy, and safe.

Curriculum connection:

Students will read narrative and expository text aloud with grade-appropriate fluency and accuracy and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression. They will use listening skills to understand directions and spell frequently used words. (language arts)

National standards addressed:

language arts/English (applying knowledge, applying language skills, NL-ENG.K-12.6, 12)

Materials:

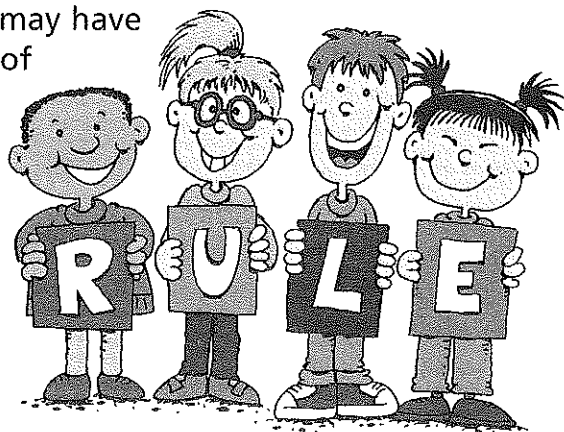
- "Responsible Pet Care Tips," pages 97-98
- two sets of seven cards with the following letters printed on them, one letter on each side: **R/T, O/A, U/B, N/L, D/E, I/S, H/C**
- dry-erase board and markers, or chalkboard and chalk

Activity:

Students will play a spelling game on the topic of responsible pet care. Because this game is a team effort, it allows students who are not particularly strong in spelling to shine.

Procedure:

1. Choose two teams of seven students each to come to the front of the room. Distribute one set of cards to each team, with each member taking a card.
2. Have both teams choose a name for themselves. Encourage names that relate to pets or pet care, e.g., Glorious Guinea Pigs, Fabulous Finches, Cool Cats.
3. Designate students from the rest of the class to be readers and scorekeepers. (Depending on the size of your class, you may have one scorekeeper for each team or one who keeps track of both teams' scores.)
4. Explain that readers will take turns reading aloud tips about responsible pet care. Urge students to read slowly, loudly, and clearly. After each tip, they will repeat one of the words they had spoken. (The word to be repeated is in **bold type** after the pet care tip.)
5. As soon as that word is repeated, both teams will try to spell it as quickly as possible, using their letter



cards. They should stand in the correct order, holding up their cards. (If a team member is holding a card with letters that are not part of the word being spelled, he or she should simply step back.)

6. The team that correctly spells a word first gets a point. The team with the most points after all the sentences have been read wins the game.

7. Review tips for responsible pet care by allowing the winning team a chance to defend its title—and the losing team a second chance at winning. Call on players from each team to recall one of the pet care tips read. Award a point for each tip recalled, adding it to the team's original score. Did the winning team stay on top? Or did the "underdogs" steal the game?

Variation:

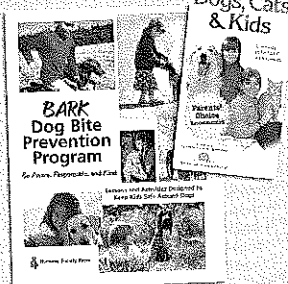
If you have a large class and would like more students to have a turn at the spelling competition, divide up the Responsible Pet-Care Tips list into shorter sections of 5, 8, or 10 tips. Play several rounds of the game, with students alternating as players, scorekeepers, and readers. Each round would involve a new list of tips.

Helpful Resources

Every year, more than 4.5 million people in the U.S. are bitten by dogs. Most are children under the age of 13. Thanks to the **BARK (Be Aware, Responsible, and Kind) Dog Bite Prevention Program**, you can help keep kids safe around dogs, reduce the number of dog-bite-related injuries in your community, and positively enhance the bond between people and dogs. Perfect for use by teachers, humane educators, and parents, the BARK program consists of *Dogs, Cats & Kids*, an award-winning 25-minute video, and a fun, easy-to-use activity book of lessons, reproducible worksheets, and coloring pages designed to teach kids how to avoid being bitten.

BARK Activity Book

- **Proven** to increase children's knowledge about how to react in threatening situations involving dogs
- Encourages responsible pet care
- Fun and educational for kids and adults
- Perfect for classroom or home use



Dogs, Cats & Kids

- Parents' Choice Recommended
- Silver Medal winner at the New York International Film Festival
- Recommended by The Humane Society of the United States
- Features veterinarian Wayne Hunthausen, internationally known consultant, author, and speaker on pet behavior

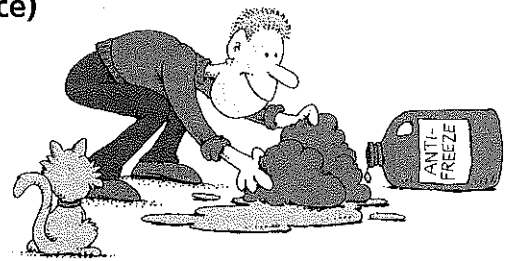
The BARK Dog Bite Prevention Program is \$23.95 and may be ordered online at www.nahee.org. The book and video may also be purchased separately.

Play It Safe with Dogs/Fuera de peligro en compañía de perros provides children with valuable tips on how to avoid being bitten by dogs and how to prevent their own dogs from biting someone. This 32-page coloring book features English and Spanish text and has large, easy-to-color pictures on reproducible-quality paper. Available at www.nahee.org.



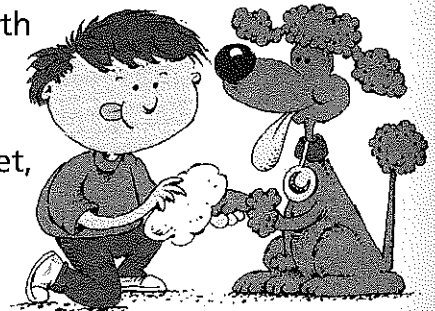
Responsible Pet Care Tips

- 🐾 The best place to get a pet is from your animal shelter. Whether you want a bunny or a basset hound, shelters have lots of critters waiting for good homes. **(hound)**
- 🐾 To take good care of a pet, there is a lot you need to know and do. **(care)**
- 🐾 The first rule of responsible pet care is this: Before adopting a pet, learn what it takes to keep that animal happy and healthy. **(first)**
- 🐾 Taking care of a pet takes love and patience—plus time and money. Be sure you will be able to care for that animal properly. **(able)**
- 🐾 Too often, people change their minds about having a pet. Once you adopt an animal, you must be responsible for your pet as long as she lives. **(once)**
- 🐾 Spay or neuter your cats and dogs to keep unwanted kittens and puppies from being born. **(born)**
- 🐾 Make your house safe for pets; keep plants, antifreeze, lit candles, and other hazards out of their reach. **(house)**
- 🐾 To keep your pets healthy, take them to a veterinarian for checkups and vaccines once a year. A rabies shot, for example, prevents cats and dogs from getting this serious disease. **(shot)**
- 🐾 Buy a good brand of pet food for your animals. **(brand)**
- 🐾 Be careful about feeding your pets table scraps. Many of the foods we eat can make animals sick. **(table)**
- 🐾 Never give your dog or cat a real bone to chew. Chicken and turkey bones are especially brittle; they can splinter and cause pets to choke. **(bone)**
- 🐾 Chocolate seems like a nice treat for pets, but it can be deadly to some animals, including horses and dogs. **(nice)**
- 🐾 Check with your veterinarian about what foods are best to give your pet. **(best)**
- 🐾 Keep a close eye on your dog, even if you have a fenced yard. There is always a chance that dogs can escape, get stolen, or get hurt by other animals. **(close)**
- 🐾 Be sure to shut doors and gates at home so that pets can't accidentally get outside. **(shut)**
- 🐾 An ID tag on your cat's or dog's collar can help someone get in contact with you if you lose your pet. **(lose)**
- 🐾 Of course, remember that collars can get tight. Change your pet's collar as she grows and check that she is always wearing her tag. **(course)**
- 🐾 Use a leash to walk your dog. **(use)**
- 🐾 Keep cats indoors or on a leash, safe from traffic, other animals, and diseases. **(cats)**
- 🐾 Keeping your cat indoors also keeps him from getting into a nest of baby birds or rabbits. **(nest)**



Responsible Pet Care Tips, page 2

- 🐾 Cats allowed to roam outside often kill songbirds and other small animals whose populations are already thin. **(thin)**
- 🐾 Don't leave your dog tied up outside for long periods of time. Provide shelter from the rain, wind, and snow. **(rain)**
- 🐾 Keep your pets out of the hot sun too, by making sure they have cool, shady spots to rest and plenty of time indoors with you. **(sun)**
- 🐾 Never leave a pet in a parked car on a warm day. **(car)**
- 🐾 The temperature inside a parked car can get dangerously hot in only a few minutes. **(hot)**
- 🐾 On snowy winter days, wipe your pets' paws after walking with them. Salt used to melt ice on sidewalks can make pets sick if they try to lick it off their feet. **(ice)**
- 🐾 The chemicals in the salt can also irritate the pads on their feet, making their paws very sore. **(sore)**
- 🐾 During celebrations, keep your pets away from loud noises, such as fireworks or trick-or-treaters. **(loud)**
- 🐾 A loud sound may scare pets and make them hide or run away. **(sound)**
- 🐾 Pets such as hamsters, mice, and guinea pigs like a small, cozy hole to hide in. An oatmeal canister, paper towel tube, or tissue box makes a great little cave for inside their cage. **(hole)**
- 🐾 Hamsters, mice, and rats love to crawl and run through tunnels, which you can buy or make from plastic pipes or cardboard tubes. **(run)**
- 🐾 Exercise wheels are also fun for little critters. They should have no sharp edges or holes where an animal's tail or feet could get caught. **(tail)**
- 🐾 Gerbils, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, and rats have teeth that never stop growing. These pets need hard things to gnaw on, to keep their teeth short. **(hard)**
- 🐾 Gerbils, cats, dogs, and many other pets love to cuddle with their caregivers. Whenever you hold a pet, be gentle and use two hands. **(hold)**
- 🐾 Guinea pigs like to touch noses as a friendly greeting. They'll sometimes try to touch your nose, which means, "I'm curious about you, and I like you." **(nose)**
- 🐾 Dogs wag their tails and sniff as a way of greeting people. But before petting a dog, get permission from the person who takes care of the dog. Then let the dog sniff the back of your hand, so that he gets to know you. **(hand)**
- 🐾 Never hit or shout at an animal. Like people, pets make mistakes and need to be treated with love and patience. **(shout)**
- 🐾 Last but not least, prepare for your pet in case of disasters or other emergencies. **(last)**
- 🐾 Organize a file with your pet's photo and veterinary records. Note important phone numbers, such as your animal shelter, veterinarian, and local hotels that accept pets. **(note)**



This lesson plan was adapted from "The Spelling Game," by Beverly Armstrong and Charlotte Moore, *Humane Education*, Vol. 4, No. 4.