

College Guild
PO Box 6448, Brunswick ME 04011

DOGS
~ DOGS & HUMANS ~
Unit 4 of 4

*If dogs could talk, perhaps we would find it as hard to get along with them as we do with people.
~ Karel Capek ~*

*Ever occur to you that some of us can be this much concerned with animal suffering? Because the government is not. Why not? Animals don't vote.
~ Paul Harvey ~*

The last Unit ended with dogs who star in movies and TV. One form of entertainment provided by dogs is surrounded by controversy.

Dog racing consists of the competitors chasing an electric "lure" that speeds around the track just ahead of the dogs. To win, the dogs must have agility and endurance in addition to speed. They must concentrate on the lure, keep their eyes on the other dogs, and not intentionally bump into or fight with them – grounds for a penalty. Winners are drug tested after the race.

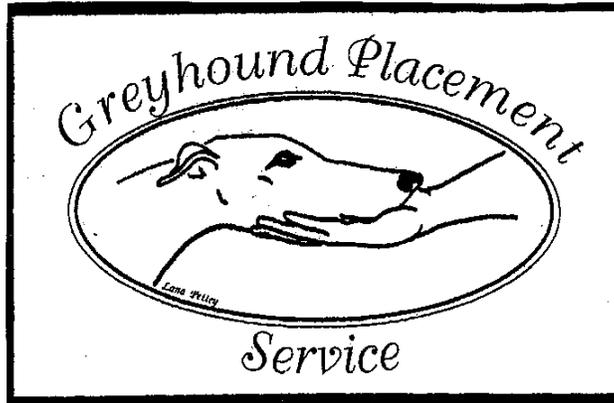
In a common arrangement, greyhounds are housed in kennels located in a compound on the racetrack grounds. Dogs belonging to different owners live and train there. Many owners never meet their dogs, buying and selling racers over the phone. The dog owners pay nothing toward maintaining their dogs at the track, but when their dogs win, the kennel owner gets around 65% of the take, about 5% of which goes to the trainer. It benefits the trainers to treat the dogs well, so they'll in turn perform well on the track.

Training consists of a consistent routine with 4 or more training sessions per day. In between work-outs, dogs are housed in crates (2 ½' x 3' x 3 ½') as shown in the picture below. Dogs race every 3-4 days.



Young greyhounds who haven't placed at least 4th after 6 races, racers whose performance begins to decline, or those who have reached the age of 5 are "retired." Unfortunately, retirement for greyhounds doesn't mean moving to Florida and enjoying the sun and surf. Those who are not adopted are "euthanized" (put to sleep / put to death.)

A volunteer, non-profit organization, Greyhound Placement Service, has been founded to rescue and find homes for ex-racers. (You'll hear about one success story at the end of this Unit.)



1. How would you define gambling?
2. Is greyhound racing any different from horse racing? Explain.
3. What do you think about the life of a racing dog?

Using dogs for research is another controversial issue. Benefits include advances in our understanding of science and medicine, and the development of new medications for both humans and animals.

4. Do humans have the right to use dogs for research? Why or why not?
5. Is there any kind of research using dogs that is justified and another that is not? Explain.

One very, very old nursery rhyme tells an unhappy story about a dog:

*Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard
To fetch her poor dog a bone.
But when she got there, the cupboard was bare
And so the poor dog had none.*

6. Would this nursery rhyme tell a young child that it's OK for dogs to go hungry, or would it encourage the child to help by finding the poor dog some food?
7. Does children's literature have any effect on children's behavior towards dogs? Explain.

Animal abuse by children is a problem receiving more and more attention from counselors, teachers, and researchers. It can be the first warning sign that something is very wrong in the child's life, and is (and will be) affecting his / her ability to relate normally to people.

Animal cruelty may indicate a child is being abused, or that he / she has witnessed violence toward other people or animals. This behavior is not, as some would suggest, a harmless, impulsive outlet for anger, and anger management training cannot solve the underlying problem.

Similar problems exist when adults lash out at animals, children, or the elderly. Mistreatment of a family pet may indicate that people in the home are in danger, too. An abuser may threaten to harm or kill a pet as a tactic for controlling a partner or child. Family members can be intimidated into silence or delay seeking help out of concern for the safety of the animal.

8. Do you agree with the theory that the relationship between children and their pets predicts their behavior as adults? Why or why not?

**9. What do you think the harshest penalty for animal cruelty should be?
What should be the minimum?**

10. Come up with a plan to decrease animal abuse.

Like the Greyhound Placement Service, animal shelters are in the business of rescuing and finding homes for dogs (as well as other animals of all kinds.) Although shelters are concerned with the welfare of animals, they are usually short of funds. Frequently, dogs are kept in pens with concrete floors, and a short, caged in run; volunteers may come to take the dogs for a walk. More and more shelters are adopting a "no kill" policy, regardless of how many dogs they have. Shelters also have programs to educate the public.

Did you know...

The Coastal Humane Society...

CARES

- 7 AM to 7 PM, 7 days a week, for 2000+ stray, abandoned, abused, and owner-surrendered animals each year at an average cost of \$300 per animal
- Evaluates, tests, worms, vaccinates, treats for fleas and ticks, grooms, bathes, socializes, and trains all its animals
- Does not euthanize for lack of space or minor illness
- Spays or neuters all animals of sufficient age prior to adoption
- Found responsible, loving homes for over 300 dogs, 900 cats, and 90 other animals (rabbits, ferrets, guinea, pigs, birds, etc.) in 2003

OFFERS

- Humane education and outreach programs to area schools and community organizations
- Pet therapy visits to local hospitals and nursing homes
- Safe housing and crisis care for animals whose owners are dealing with hospitalization, homelessness, or domestic violence
- A community service venue for individuals referred by courts and schools
- Low cost rabies, animal care, and behavior clinics
- Assistance addressing animal abuse

11. Give some reasons why you would bring your dog to a shelter.

12. What features would you include in a shelter for dogs?

Euthanasia is used at overcrowded animal shelters, race tracks, research labs, and when animal control officers capture dogs too vicious to control. In loving homes where dogs are considered part of the family, owners face a sad problem when their pets become old, sick, disabled, or suffer from chronic pain. They have to ask themselves, "Is euthanasia the best option for my dog?"

"Putting a dog to sleep" is euthanasia put in more simple terms. One veterinarian says, "To those who have decreed a quiet and easy death rather than a life of suffering when such suffering is inevitable, let me say if it were my dog, I would do the same [put the dog to sleep]."

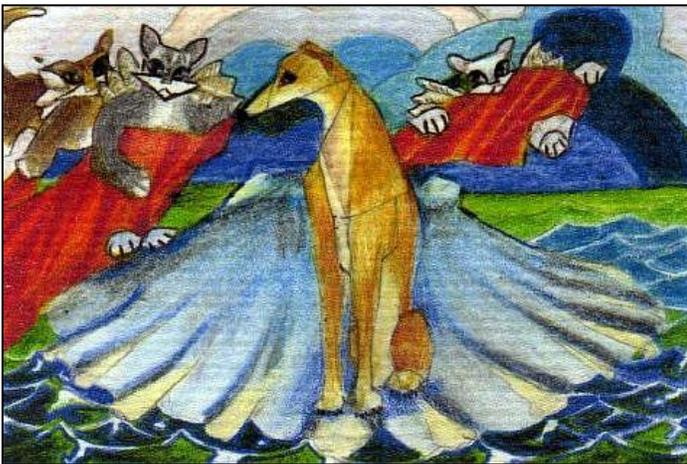
13. Is euthanasia immoral or abusive?

14. The disease of cancer is a common reason to euthanize a dog, but for people with cancer who are suffering and ready to die, euthanasia is generally not permitted. Write your feelings on the subject.

15. How might a dog tell an owner that s/he's ready to die?

A happy outcome for a retired racer who is a candidate for euthanasia is adoption. Life in a home couldn't be more different from life as a racer at the track. Grey hounds can find loving homes with enthralled owners. Initially, there are some necessary adaptations. For example, as sight hounds, greyhounds chase anything that is moving fast. Also, the dogs have to be "cat tested" before adoption. They are sent to these new homes in a crate / kennel wearing a muzzle.

An artist who adopted two greyhounds painted a series of pictures of her beloved dogs which were published in a book. Below is a painting of "Brynna," who looks a lot like the Roman goddess Venus in Sandro Botocelli's famous 15th Century painting, "The Birth of Venus."



"Brynna Rising From the Waves"



"The Birth of Venus"

16. Write a story or poem using a scene you would imagine for your dog.

17. Make a drawing of the scene.

Like Brynna, many dogs are rescued and find happy homes. Dogs and humans can form true partnerships that enrich their lives. An unknown author wrote:

“Money will buy you a pretty good dog, but it won’t buy you the wag of its tail.”

18. Put that quotation into your own words.

Another area connecting dogs and humans is found in English / American idioms (an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of the words used.) For example:

Dog-eat-dog world

Dog days

Dog tired

A dog’s life

In the dog house

Dog star

19. Define / explain three of the above.

20. Write a short description of the dog who was your favorite pet, and why...OR...if you have never had a dog as a pet, describe what kind of dog you would like to have, and why.

Since this is your final Unit, we'd appreciate any feedback or suggestions you have for improving the Course!

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

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