



Ralph's Responders

AKC Canine Ambassador and LSART Ralph's Responders

STEAM Activities

Purpose: To teach children about the role that animal control and shelters play as community helpers, different types of dogs, caring for dogs, and sports and activities they can do with their dog. The book *Rowen and the Animal Shelter* by Sara Deen Kimball can be read and then any of the STEAM topics below can be used as part of the discussion on themes in the book. These can be done as part of a series with their pet rock continuing with each day or as stand-alone activities. The goal is to teach kids about responsible pet ownership and building bonds with their pets through proper training and dogs sports.

As a bonus, you can do a collection drive for your local animal shelter or rescue. There are suggestions for what to collect or things you can do to help your local rescue, but we also recommend calling to find out what their greatest needs are.

Student Outcomes:

1. To understand the role animal control and shelters play in our community
2. Introduction to dog breeds, their differences, and history of task they were bred to perform
3. To understand basic care and what environment dogs need to thrive in
4. To understand the role of veterinarians and keeping dogs healthy. The lifecycle of heartworms will be introduced.
5. A discussion on technology that is used to care for pets from microchips, tracking devices, cameras, temperature monitors, and auto-feeders.
6. To understand the human animal bond. We will discuss training and how dog sports can strengthen this bond. This leads to happier homes and is a great way to get exercise to stay healthy.
7. Bonus- How to help your local shelter and/or rescues through volunteering or holding collection drives for things they need.

Recommended Readings/Activities:

There are many resources under the Kids Corner of the LSART website at www.lsart.org that are available in both English and Spanish as well as www.akc.org

Rowen and the Animal Shelter By Sara Deen Kimball- Learn who animal control is, what an animal shelter does, about heartworms, and how you can help your local animal shelter. Book includes discussion questions and games at the end.

Ralph's Responders Pet Activity Book- An activity book that includes small, large, and exotic pets. There are coloring pages, matching, mazes, connect the dots, crosswords, seek & find, and learn to draw pages.

Heartworm Freeze Tag- Kids will learn the importance of heartworm prevention. Instructions for how to play are on the LSART website. Play multiple times and add the number of mosquitos and/or decrease the playing space to demonstrate how disasters can cause diseases and parasites to spread faster.

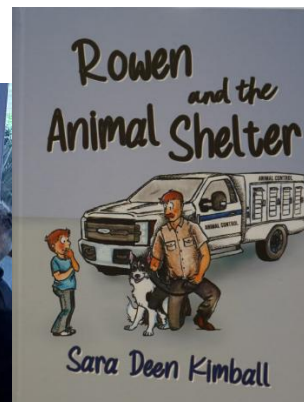
Pet profile sheet- This is a pet information sheet that is included in a pet's go-bag. It includes a space for the pet's photo, pet info, owner info, vet info, vices, known commands, and care instructions.

Guest speakers- Consider reaching out to your local veterinarian or kennel club to be a guest speaker.

Course Outline:

Designed for Kindergarten and elementary. Time tailored to session and can be done as a series or just one activity.

- **Rowen and the Animal Shelter**- Read *Rowen and the Animal Shelter* and discuss the role that animal control and shelters play in our community. There are discussion questions for comprehension to guide discussion and other resources in the back of the book.



- **Dog Breeds and Purposes**- Shelters and rescues have lots of different looking dogs. There are many dog breeds that range sizes, characteristics (ex. long/short ears), and purposes. Choose a few breeds you would like to feature, talk about what they look like, and why they were bred. Students will then use craft materials to design their pet dog and talk about what they choose and why. This can be done by coloring or making pet rocks.

AKC classifies dog breeds into 7 main groups based on their purpose, characteristics, and heritage. Below are a few examples you can show pictures of.

Sporting- Bred to help in hunting and retrieving game. They are active, alert, and often enjoy water. Examples are the Pointer, Golden Retriever, Irish Setter, Labrador Retriever, and Weimaraner.

Hound- Hunting breeds that use scent or sight to track. They vary in size and coat. Examples are the Beagle, Basset Hound, Blood Hound, Greyhound, and Whippet.

Working- These are intelligent, strong, and large dogs bred to perform tasks such as guarding, pulling sleds, or rescuing people. Examples include the Great Dane, Huskey, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Boxer, Pyrenees, Mastiff, and St. Bernard.

Terrier- Spirited and determined these dogs were originally bred to hunt and kill vermin. Known for feisty personalities and wiry coats. Examples include the Rat Terrier, American Hairless Terrier, and Russell Terrier.

Toy- These small, affectionate dogs were bred for companionship. They are ideal for people living in cities and apartments. Examples include the Pug, Shih Tzu, Pomeranian, and Papillon.

Herding- Up until 1983, these dogs were part of the working group. These dogs are skilled at controlling the movement of other animals and were bred to gather, herd and protect livestock. They are highly intelligent and trainable. Examples include the Border Collie, Australian Shephard, Australian Cattle Dog, German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois, and Corgi.

Non-sporting- This is a diverse group of breeds that do not fit into any other category. They come in various sizes, coats, and personalities. Examples include the Bulldog, Dalmatian, and Poodle.

Supplies for pet rock dogs-

Flat face rocks

Glue (hot glue gun recommended under supervision)

Google eyes

Paints (variety of colors)

Markers or Paint pens

Paint brushes

Felt sheets for ears (variety of colors)

Scissors

Yard (for long-haired dogs)



- **Habitats/Environments-** To care for your dog, you will need to be sure you have the right environment for it to live in and meet basic needs. Talk about basic care needs such as clean water, food, shelter, and a fenced yard for exercise. Students will then create an environment for their dog (you can continue this with the pet rock they made). They can draw it, use craft supplies, or building blocks such as Legos. Discuss their designs and if it met all the basic care needs. Below are pictures of craft examples.

Supplies for Dog houses and yard

Construction paper

Felt sheets

Scissors

Markers/Color pencils/Paint/Crayons

Paint brushes
 Glue sticks (Hot glue guns under supervision)
 Craft/Popsicle Sticks
 Pipe cleaners (great pretend fences)
 Paper bowls



- **Health Care and Lifecycles-** Just like people, dogs need healthcare too. Discuss the job the veterinarian plays in keeping dogs healthy with preventative vaccines and medicine. Students will learn the importance of record keeping and care instructions by make a pet profile sheet for their pet (these can be found at www.lsart.org). Students will also learn the lifecycle of heartworms, how they spread, and how they can be prevented. Play heartworm freeze tag to help understand this (instructions can be found under the kids corner at www.lsart.org). You could also set up a pretend vet station for children to role play. The last page contains a page with the lifecycle of heartworms which can also be found in the resource sections of the book *Rowen and the Animals Shelter*. You may also consider asking a local veterinarian to come be a guest speaker and talk about what they do in an annual exam for pets.
- **Technology for our dogs-** There are lots of ways technology is used to help care for our dogs. Microchips are one way that can help reunite a lost dog with their owner should your dog lose its collar. Explain that a veterinarian can give a pet a microchip and it allows for the owner to update their contact information should it ever change. Allow a student to scan a pet or stuffed animal with a microchip. Tracking devices, cameras, temperature monitors, and auto-feeders also help us care for our dogs. Talk about pet tags for temporary identification and microchips for permanent identification. Students can use craft supplies to make temporary identification tags and collars for their dogs. Discuss what information should be on the dogs tag. Students can also design a pet food dispenser.

Supplies for collars/tags

Ribbon
 Pipe cleaners
 Beads
 String
 Construction Paper

Markers/Color Pencils/Crayons



- **The Human-animal bond, training, and dog sports-** Dogs give us unconditional love and want to spend time with us. Training and participating in dog sports can help strengthen your bond with your dog and provide exercise. Your pet should also be comfortable with you touching its paws, ears, and body, as this can help lower stress during vet visits. Bathe your pet as well so that it will be used to being cleaned and groomed. It's important for your pet to learn to come when called should it get lost or start to run, how to walk on a leash, and how to be calm in a kennel. Pets will enjoy the quality time you spend training and grooming them! Consider having someone from your local kennel club as a guest speaker or to do a demo.

Demo dog basic training-

If you brought a demo dog, have the kids sit in two lines facing each other about four feet apart. Tell the dog to stay at one end as you walk between the rows and then come to you once called at the other end. Walk up and down the line and allow the kids to pet the dog. Talk about how important this socialization is. A pet that is not properly socialized will be more stressed or fearful in strange or new environments or people. There are AKC clubs around the country where owners can take group classes to teach their pet these skills, meet other dog people, and learn about dog sports. Students can make balloon dogs to learn to teach basic commands.

Sports- Scent work

Dog sports are a great way to do something fun with your dog and meet other people. Scent work is an easy game you can play at home with treats or by using essential oils on a Q-tip like in AKC scent work. Hide a dog treat in a toy or spot in a room and tell your dog to "search" or "find it". Praise them when they find the treat. Dogs have a much better sense of smell and it won't be long before they catch on to your game. In AKC, treats are paired with the essential oils birch, anise, clove, and cypress on Q-Tip's. Once a dog understands the command, treats are then used as rewards for after the scent is found. You can use a dog trained in scent work to demo this for kids.

Sports- Agility

Agility is another fun sport you can do with your dog. An agility course is set up with tunnels, A-ramps, see-saws, hurdles, dog walks, and weave poles. As the handler, you learn the order of the course and direct your dog to which obstacle they need to do as they go through the course. Students can use paper or craft supplies to design their own agility course.

Supplies for balloon dog to train

Balloons
Crepe paper
Scissors
Tape
Ribbon
Sharpie



Supplies for Agility Course craft

Construction paper
Scissors
Markers/Color Pencils/Crayons/Paint
Paint Brushes
Pom-poms
Popsicle craft sticks
Straws
Pipe cleaners
Toilet paper tubes



- **Volunteering-** There are many ways that people can help their local animal shelter from volunteering time to read to animals, walking dogs, helping at adoption days, fostering a dog, making enrichment treats or toys, or collecting donations. There are ideas and suggestions in the back of the book *Rowen and the Animal Shelter*. Ask your local shelter or rescue what their greatest needs are and about volunteering. You could also do a field trip to an animal shelter or ask them to come visit as a guest speaker. One great activity is making enrichment treats for shelter animals such as the pumpkin popsicles below.

Supplies for an Pumpkin popsicle enrichment treat

Ice tray

Plastic spoon

Milk bone treats

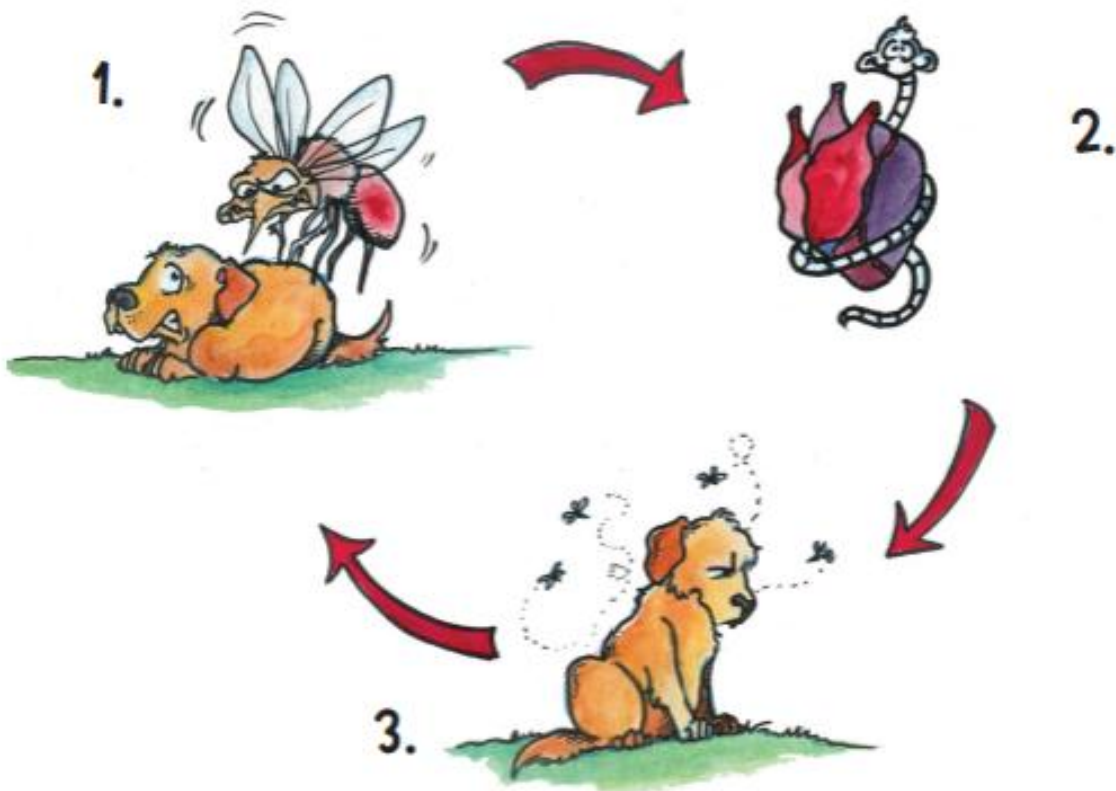
Pumpkin puree

-Scoop pumpkin puree into an ice tray and place a milk bone in the center to freeze for a tasty dog popsicle.



Heartworm Life Cycle

1. A mosquito infected with heartworm larvae bites a dog and passes the larvae into the dog's bloodstream.



2. The larvae travel through the bloodstream to the heart, where they grow into long worms and make it difficult for blood to pass through the heart. They also produce more larvae.

3. A mosquito that bites the infected dog can pick up new larvae and continue to infect more animals.

Heartworm prevention protects pets from becoming infected.