



## Theme: Getting a Best Friend

### Topic: The Cost of Owning a Dog

#### **Educational Subjects**

- Mathematics
- Language Arts

#### **AKC Materials**

- Cost of Owning a Dog worksheet

#### **Other Materials**

- Calculator
- Dog supply catalogs

**Objective:** To teach students about the ongoing costs of dog ownership, which vary with each breed and each dog.

#### **Preparation**

1. Invite club members to bring dogs of various sizes and grooming needs (i.e. Doberman Pinscher and Toy Poodle). Photos or *AKC Gazette* covers could substitute for actual dogs.
2. Bring copies of dog supply catalogs.

#### **Suggested Procedure**

1. Distribute copies of dog supply catalogs to the students (two to three students could share one catalog). There are many non-essential dog items in the catalog. Ask each student to list five essential and five non-essential items.
2. Ask students which of them own dogs. Then ask those students with dogs how often their family takes the dog to the vet. Discuss how often dogs need to go to the vet and what kind of services they require (vaccinations, checkups, teeth cleaning), the frequency of these services and about how much a dog owner should expect to pay for these services.
3. Describe how different dogs may require more or less expensive supplies that need to be budgeted for when getting a dog.
4. Distribute and ask students to complete the “Cost of Owning a Dog” worksheet. The worksheet may take some students up to a half-hour to complete, so you may choose to assign it as homework.

#### **Suggested Questions**

1. What one-time expenses might adding a new dog or puppy to your family require?
  - *The cost of the dog, spaying or neutering fees (if you don't plan to show or breed your dog), purchasing a dog crate and puppy toys, and obedience classes are all examples of one-time expenses.*
2. What types of emergencies—things not in the budget—might add to the expense of owning a dog?

- *Veterinary fees for unexpected health problems can create significant expenses.*

**Have Each Student:**

- Using the worksheet, calculate the various costs of dog ownership.

**On Their Own:**

- As you discovered, the actual purchase price of the dog is only one expense that your family must consider when deciding if you can afford to get a dog. Furthermore, the cost of supplies and care for a dog can vary greatly. If cost of a dog is an issue in your family's decision to get a dog, research ways to save money on supplies.