

LESSON: Animal Communication

PROGRAM: Online Presentation

AGE GROUP/GRADE LEVEL: K-8th

OBJECTIVE:

To get students familiar with the way animals are feeling based on their body language.

PURPOSE:

To give students a better understanding of how dogs and cats use their bodies to communicate. Also, to teach students how to identify friendly/unfriendly of body language in cats and dogs in order to prevent future bites.

TIME FRAME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Laptop
- Projector
- Extension cord or power strip

OPENING:

Leaders should begin by opening up with a discussion on why it is important to be safe around animals.

PROCEDURE:

- Set up laptop and projector
- Select PowerPoint presentation
- Give a brief description of spcaLA
 - Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Los Angeles protects animals from abuse, harm, and neglect; finds homes for animals; and educates the public. The spcaLA has been around since 1877.
- Begin Presentation

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF SLIDES:

- **Slide 7-** It is extremely important to understand that this dog is feeling angry at this moment. A bite almost always follows this body language.
- **Slide 8-** Note that some students may have their thumbs down because this dog is a pit bull type breed. Please help students understand that, based on the body language, this dog appears to be friendly. It is the body language we are looking at, not the breed of dog. All breeds of

dogs are capable of biting. Understanding how a dog is feeling helps people stay safe.

- **Slide 9-** Dogs do not like to be disturbed while they are eating. Many dogs will guard their food and will growl, glare, hover over, or bite to protect it. This is called resource guarding. Many dogs will learn that if something is taken away from them, then they should do everything to protect it the next time someone tries to take it away. If you want to pet this dog, do so in an area away from its food or any other high value item.
- **Slide 10-** A mother will protect her puppies from any harm, and she might not understand that you will not hurt the puppies. She may bite to protect them.
- **Slide 12-** Many dogs will guard their toys and will growl, glare, hover over, or bite to protect the toy. This is resource guarding behavior. A good way to play with dogs so that they do not guard their toys is to trade the toy for another toy or a treat. Notice how still this dog is. Tension in the body once again is very important to notice. Eyes are an important factor to look at, as well. This dog's eyes are very hard and staring at whomever he feels may take his toy.
- **Slide 13-** This dog is very nervous. Some dogs warm up to people quickly, others take much longer. Always be sure to let the dog come to you. Let the dog decide if they want to be pet. Remember: a scared dog can bite too.
- **Slide 18-** It is extremely important to understand that this cat is feeling unsure and nervous at this moment. A bite or scratch would very likely happen if someone were to approach at this time.
- **Slide 19-** The best way to interact with this cat would be with a toy. Cats and kittens who play can sometimes become overstimulated and can use their mouths and claws to play. A scratch or bite can easily occur. Hands are not toys; it is important for them to play with toys, never hands.
- **Slide 20-** It is extremely important to understand that this cat is feeling angry at this moment. A bite or scratch almost always follows this body language.

CLOSING:

Close the presentation by asking for questions.