



RedRover Readers Program

**Discussion and Activity
Guide for**

Buddy Unchained

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Concepts

- What do dogs need to be healthy and happy?
- Why do you think having a home important to a dog?
- What are dogs learning about us (people) from our behavior (how we treat them)?

Write this question on the board before class: “What do dogs need to be healthy, happy and safe?”

Before Reading

Ask students if they have ever *seen* a pet dog.

Ask students how being “safe” includes being “healthy.”

Share the cover with the students. Ask three to four questions, such as:

- Who is the dog shown?
- Describe his face.
- What is in the background? Is Buddy inside or outside?
- The title is *Buddy Unchained*. Is Buddy wearing a chain?
- What does it mean to be “un-chained”?
- Predict (make an educated guess): What do you think will happen in this story?

Clarify Vocabulary

- What does it mean to “remember” something?
- What is “behavior”? What are “actions”?

Ask students to think about the question you wrote on the board ahead of class as they listen to the story. Ask what does it mean to be “safe?”

During Reading

Read the story aloud and make sure all the children can see the illustrations by walking around the room.

On the page where the kids are throwing things at Buddy, ask: “What do you think is going on in this picture?” “How do you think Buddy feels in this picture?” and after listening to responses, ask: “How do you know?” You may also want to ask: “What is Buddy learning about people in this picture?” “How do you think the kids are feeling in this picture?” or “Why do you think the kids are doing this?”

On the page where Buddy is taken off the chain, ask “Who do you think this is taking Buddy off the chain?”

On the page where Buddy’s nails are clipped ask, “What is Buddy learning about people now?”

After Reading

Review the story's illustrations without reading the words. Ask the students to tell you the story using the illustrations. Ask the questions (below) if the students need prompting or to guide the discussion.

- Where is Buddy when the story begins?
- What does Buddy have with the family that keeps him safe? (*treats, walks*)
- What does this family do with Buddy? (*play, teach*)
- Where was Buddy before?
- What happened when Buddy got cold?
- Who do you think took Buddy off the chain?
- Who takes care of Buddy after he is removed from the chain? What do they do?
- Why is Buddy in a cage?
- What does Buddy have when he is chosen by the family to live in a home and be safe?
- Where is Buddy when the story ends?
- What does Buddy learn about people?

After retelling the story, ask: "What does Buddy need to be healthy, safe and happy?" Write the students' responses on the board under your question. If you need to ask more questions, try "What did he lack when he lived on the chain?" (What was missing from his life?) (*slept alone in garage; rain; chain; mean kids; twisted in chain; no clean water; no food; cold*) and "What does he have when he lived with a family that keeps him safe?" (*food; clean water; treats; walks; play; teaching; communicating; saying "Good dog!"; pats and hugs; friends*)

You may also want to ask:

- Do you think Buddy remembers where he lived and how he was treated before the family chooses him to live in a home?
- Do you think dogs remember people they have known and places they have been?
- Why do you think some people help dogs and other animals?

Activity: Looking and Listening

On a white board or chart paper, draw the chart below.

With the students, study two of the story’s illustrations, “They take me for walks” and “Once in a while, kids threw things at me.”

(Or review the two illustrations orally, comparing and contrasting and providing students with an opportunity to summarize.)

Ask students to describe Buddy’s eyes, ears, mouth and tail in each of the two illustrations. Ask the students to infer (figure out) how Buddy feels based on the illustrations.

How does Buddy feel?	with the family that keeps him safe	without the family that keeps him safe
How does Buddy show this feeling? or How do you know? or Describe his...		
Buddy’s eyes	Example: How does Buddy feel in this picture? “He feels happy.” How do you know? Describe his eyes. “His eyes look open, bright, alert.”	
Buddy’s ears		
Buddy’s tail		
Buddy’s body		

Extensions: Choose one or more depending on time and interest.

A. Imagining a story

Bring photographs of dogs from a local shelter. Have students imagine a dog's life before arriving at the shelter. Have students tell the stories aloud to each other, to you or other adults in the room, or compose a story about one dog as a class. Or, if age appropriate, have students write or draw what they imagine the dog's story was before arriving at the shelter.

If appropriate, also have students imagine the dogs' lives with families in homes.

B. Healthy and safe

Prepare in advance enough for each student:

- large pieces of construction paper cut into the shape of a house
- dogs of different shapes
- shapes of things Buddy needs: collar, tag, toys, treats, food bowl, water bowl, leash, soft bed, people to teach him and play with him, friends
- ribbon, cotton balls, sparkles, markers and other decorations
- glue

Have students choose a "house" and a "dog" and create a collage of "their" dog in a home with a family. Allow time for students to describe their collages aloud as a story. Have students explain who each character is and what they like to do. Or have students write a poem starting each line alternately with "In this house lives...." and "She (or he) needs..."

C. Sensing the world

Bring items from a dog's life such as a chew toy (best if already slobbered on!), leash, water bowl, food bowl, dog food, chew bone, identification tag, squeak toy, dog treat, brush, pillow, etc. and have students use their senses to explore the items. Include all five senses. Pass around the items and have students imagine how the items look, smell, feel, taste and sound to a dog.

What kind of animal is a dog? (Mammal, bird, reptile, etc.) What do mammals need to survive?

Review the "SIT" "STAY" page of the story. Ask students why they think a hand sign is included with the verbal command. Show students some basic dog training commands.

Ask: "Why do you think people train dogs?" "Do you think a dog learns without being *trained* specifically?" "What might this look like?"

Again review the picture of the children throwing things at the dog. Ask, "How are the children changing the environment for Buddy?" Show students the picture of Buddy at home. Ask, "How have the children changed the environment for Buddy?" Ask students which picture shows a helpful (beneficial) change and which show harmful (detrimental) change. Ask, "Why?"

D. People and dogs

Ask students what they have learned or already know about dogs. Ask students what dogs have learned about them or will learn in the future.

Ask: What do you say to dogs to praise them? Allow each student a minute to think and then ask for responses.

Ask: What are some ways to play with a dog. Allow each student a minute to think and then ask for responses.

Ask: What do you do when you see a dog who may be in need of help? Discuss options.

Possible Extension Activity: Ask students to learn about laws protecting dogs in your community and share these laws with the students.

E. Animal Behavior Observation

Visit a real shelter to observe animal behaviors for dogs and cats. Some animal shelters may offer virtual tours or be willing to Skype with your class to show off their animals and the facility if a field trip to the actual building is not possible.

Encourage children to choose one animal to focus on and record what they notice about the animal's behavior and body language. Use the form below or create your own to capture the students' responses. A sketch sheet to draw what they observe can also be added.

F. Design a Dream Animal Shelter

Invite students to think about how an animal shelter keeps animals happy, healthy and safe during their stay. Brainstorm as a group some of the things that are needed. (Possible answers include soft beds, food, water, a way to keep animals separated, water bowls, food bowls, an area to play, balls to play, blankets, toys, music, caring staff and volunteers, collars, etc.)

If possible, include a visit to a real animal shelter so they can make observations.

Tell students to imagine they have community support and all of the money in the world to design their dream animal shelter. If they have visited a real animal shelter, ask how their dream shelter might be different from the animal shelter they visited and if there are ways their dream shelter would be the same. Invite students to get creative and design their own dream animal shelter. Ask students to draw their shelter and label what they decide to include in it. Before they begin drawing ask the following questions:

What will your dream animal shelter look like? (How big is it? How many animals can stay there at one time?)

Where will your animal shelter be located?

What types of things will it have in it? What will make animals like it?

(How will it keep them healthy, happy and safe?)

What will make people like it? (How will you get people to visit and adopt animals?)

Why is it a dream animal shelter?

Have students share their designs with a partner or in front of the class.

G. A Dog for a Day

Help students better understand what dogs communicate through body language. First have students complete the matching activity below or do the activity as a class together. Discuss as a class the kinds of situations they think these dogs would be responding to, ask, “What would make a dog happy?” “What would make a dog scared or nervous?” “What would make a dog feel threatened?” Then pretend to be dogs together. Lastly, invite students to write and illustrate a story on their own that includes dog body language.

Physically practice a few dog postures with your students using the images below. Get on all fours on the ground and make sure each child has enough room to move around. Start with “happy/relaxed” with your mouth loosely opened, ears relaxed/loose/up but to the side (use your hands to model ears) with a light tail wag (move your back end). Then try raising a hand/paw up while leaning back or away from what is scary with a crouched posture (your head and rear-end lowered) to practice a “frightened/submissive” posture. Then practice a play bow by lowering your front arms down and sticking your rear-end up in the air to communicate that you are a dog who wants to “play.”

Now ask students to think about what it would be like to be a dog for one day? Ask, “What would you want to do if you were a dog for a day?” “What would you think about?” “Where would you go?” “What would you look like as a dog doing all of these things throughout your day?”

Invite students to write a story and complete this sentence, “If I was a dog for a day, I would...” Encourage students to include illustrations. The dog body language should match what is happening in their story. For example, “If I was a dog for a day, I would go to the dog park and play.” [Picture of a dog doing a play bow or looking happy/excited]. “After the dog park I would go to my favorite pet store to get yummy treats.” [Picture of a dog with a wagging tail/ relaxed mouth.] “On the way to the pet store I saw a huge truck that scared me.” [Picture of a dog who is frightened.] “At night I’d curl up with my human brother while he read books.” [Picture of a happy/content dog curled up.]

At the End of the Lesson

Ask students to reflect on the questions, “What did you learn from today’s book and discussion that you didn’t know before?” You can do this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or related class meeting format, by having students fill out index cards, or other formats as you choose. We recommend that you have a variety of formats. After getting a sense of what the students learned, reinforce key themes that they mentioned and add perhaps one or two that you would like them to keep in mind from the key concepts. Also discuss any follow up assignments or take home materials. Remember the students’ responses to the question, “What did you learn?” to add to your report about this reading.



Shelter Animal Behavior Observation

Date: _____ Species/Type of Animal: _____ Name: _____

What was the animal doing before you came up to him or her?

Did the animal's behavior change when you came up to him or her? Yes or no? _____ If yes, what changes did you notice?

Describe the animal and his or her environment:

What do you notice about the animal's ears? (Are they up, down, forward, back or flat against the animal's head?)

What do you notice about the animal's eyes? (Are they bright, open and alert or dim and partly closed?)

What do you notice about the animal's body?

What do you notice about the animal's tail?

Based on your observations above, what do you think this animal is communicating and how do you think he or she is feeling?

Draw a line from each picture to the three words that describe it.

May Be Friendly

Nervous

Frightened

Leave Alone

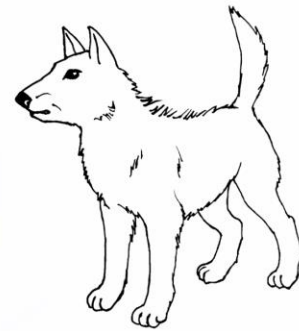
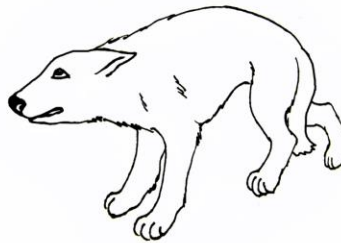
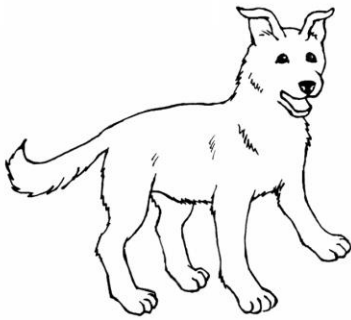
"Angry"

Happy

Threatening

Stay Away

Relaxed



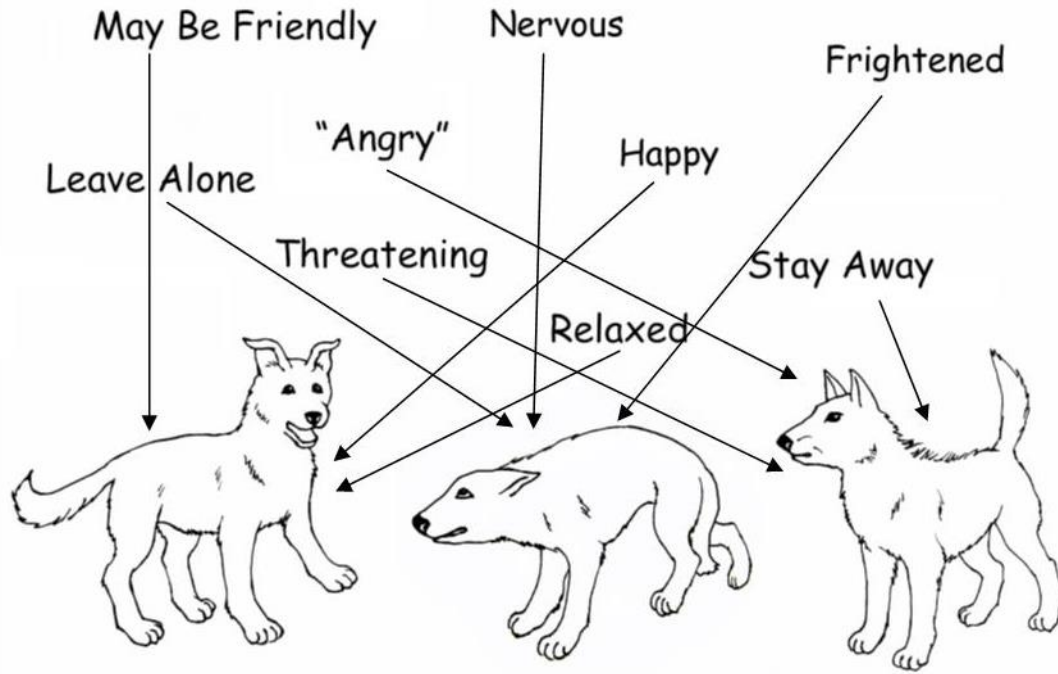
Sarah Wilson, SarahWilsonDogExpert.com

Drawn by Arielle Fischer

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Answer key

Draw a line from each picture to the three words that describe it.



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