

**LESSON #9: ISSUES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**OVERVIEW:**

*In this lesson, students examine some of the ways humans interact with dogs. Their task is to identify the potential issues and ethical considerations raised and propose any actions needed.*

**SUB-QUESTION:**

How is human culture reflected in the ways we care for our dogs?

**WAYS OF KNOWING URBAN ECOLOGY:**



*Students will...*

**Understand**

- Animals have needs that may be different from our own
- The role of cultural perspectives in animal treatment

**Talk**

- Discuss the various ways we interact with our dogs
- Discuss the pros and cons of each interaction for humans and for dogs

**Do**

- Research the impact of various activities on dogs
- Present both sides of a scenario

**Act**

- Raise awareness about local issues

**SAFETY GUIDELINES:**

None.

**PREPARATION:**

**Time:**

1-2 class periods  
Activity 9.1

**Materials:**

**Activity 9.1**

Ethics Scenario cards – print one for each cooperative group  
Researching the Issue – student handout  
Access to the Internet for group research

**INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE**

**Activity 9.1: What’s your position on the issue?**

1. Divide students into cooperative working teams.
  - Note: depending on your larger instructional goals, you might want to group students homogeneously or heterogeneously. This may be an opportunity to group students by language fluency or other criteria.
2. Tell students that each team will receive a card that describes a way that humans interact with their dogs. Students should discuss the nature of the relationship and build a set of questions they want to research.
3. Based on research and personal knowledge, teams determine the benefits and costs of this relationship to humans as well as dogs.

4. Students decide how they are going to present the issue to the class. This is an opportunity to embed visual presentation skill development such as the use of multimedia. At the end of each presentation, the class decides what side of the issue they are on (to continue or discontinue the practice).
5. Discuss which of these scenarios occur locally. Encourage students to research the extent of local participation as they may not realize that all cards are based on activities currently occurring in Los Angeles.
6. (optional) Students might brainstorm additional scenarios they'd like to research, such as the ethics of dogs living in apartments, dogs being trained for aggressiveness to guard property, or product testing on dogs.

**Concluding the Lesson:**

1. **RP** Talk about the challenges in judging a particular activity and how important it is to understand the cultural context of the situations. Should someone be told they can't have a dog because of where they live or their work schedules? Should owners be punished for certain treatments or actions?
2. **RP** Students may select an issue of personal passion and determine how best to raise awareness about this issue. Students might create visuals or multimedia to inform their peers or their local community, write letters to city officials and local law makers to affect policy, or contact celebrities about behaviors that they feel are unethical.