

College Guild
PO Box 696, Brunswick ME 04011

DOGS

~ WORKING DOGS ~
Unit 3 of 4

*My dog can bark like a Congressman, fetch like an aide, beg like a press secretary,
and play dead like a receptionist when the phone rings.*

~ Congressman Gerald Solomon ~



In this picture, Snoopy is working hard as a detective, but the cartoon is not so far off. Dogs participate in all kinds of detective work. It's unbelievable, all the things they can be trained to detect.

PART 1 - SEARCH AND RESCUE

To prevent a potential catastrophe (explosion, environmental pollution and/or toxic illness), dogs can be trained to detect gas, oil, and mercury leaks. After an emergency, they can be critical in finding people who have been lost or injured.

Dogs participate in many kinds of search and rescue, including recovery of drowning victims. They are also used to find people who have been trapped in an avalanche. Not only is their vision much keener than that of humans, but they have superior senses of hearing and smell. Remember that we are talking about using sight and scent for rescues through snow and water!

But it's not just in crisis that dogs provide invaluable services to humans. Individuals with chronic disabilities or health concerns benefit from the care of dogs.

Guide dogs for the blind is one of the best known examples of helping the handicapped - a person who cannot see can still get around independently with his or her specially trained dog. Humans and dogs form bonds that grow into mutual trust. The dog and the human are trained together so that they will learn what each is trying to communicate to the other.

A dog can be trained to detect oncoming seizures in epileptics. It's easy to understand how a dog can guide a person who cannot see, but how in the world can a dog predict a seizure?! No one is really sure; however, some say it is an "aura" that is given off by a person just before a seizure occurs. (Epileptics can experience a sensory warning in the brain right before a seizure which may or may not be expressed outwardly.)

Here is another example of detecting: dogs can identify various types of cancer. Apparently, some cancerous cells have a different scent from normal cells.

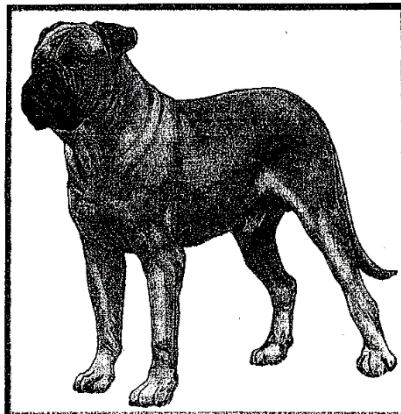
1. **Come up with an explanation of how dogs can perform search and rescue when the victim is under snow or water.**
2. **What is another example of how dogs help with search and rescue, and exactly how do they help?**
3. **How could a dog possibly know what is happening in someone's brain? (Yes, a tough question, but give it a try!)**
4. **Select one of the following and explain step-by-step how a dog could be trained to:**
 - predict seizures
 - find a drowning victim
 - detect cancer cells
 - track a missing person

PART 2 - SOLVING AND PREVENTING CRIME

Finding human remains (cadavers) has been a long time use for dogs. Some of the other detecting they do was not even imagined until relatively recently. For example, it was not imagined that dogs could be trained to detect the special inks used in U.S. currency in order to identify counterfeit bills!

To prevent certain crimes, dogs are used by the U.S. Customs to detect contraband, and in wildlife refuges, where their very presence is a deterrent to thieves and poachers.

Their presence has also been used as a deterrent to violence. The most obvious use of dogs is by police departments, prison guards, and the military. The guard dog intimidates the unauthorized intruder and, if necessary, attacks and maims. The breeds that are best for guard duty have the following traits: territorial sense, willingness to engage in physical aggression, adequate size, and physical strength. There are thirteen breeds that have been bred to carry these traits; two that come to mind are Dobermans and Rottweilers. Below is another, the Bull Mastiff:



5. Exactly how and why would a dog work at Customs?
6. What is the relationship between the canine and human divisions of a police force?
7. Describe the relationship between a policeman and his guard dog.

PART 3 - HERDING

Most working dogs do not have the exciting life of detecting and guarding. Like most humans, they hold regular jobs. On a farm, for example, a flock of sheep is kept under control by the herding dog. At night, a dog can also protect a herd from wolves or other predators.

As descendants of wolves, dogs have the same built-in programming. In social organization, there is the "Alpha" wolf. The others are members of the pack, and they watch and follow the Alpha's lead. The shepherd is the herding dog's Alpha leader. The herding dog has certain instincts or natural abilities for herding, but is trained to follow the hand signals or whistles of the shepherd. There are about a dozen commands for controlling a flock. Included are: *lie down* (so the sheep aren't nervous, and continue to graze); *enough* (so the dog will return to the shepherd); *circle left - or right* (to catch any stragglers or keep the flock moving). The remarkable relationship between the herding dog and shepherd enables just the two of them to control a whole flock.



LOWLAND SHEEPDOG

When it comes to identifying the best breeds for herding, one of the major traits necessary is intelligence. Also, the dogs must be large enough for protection.

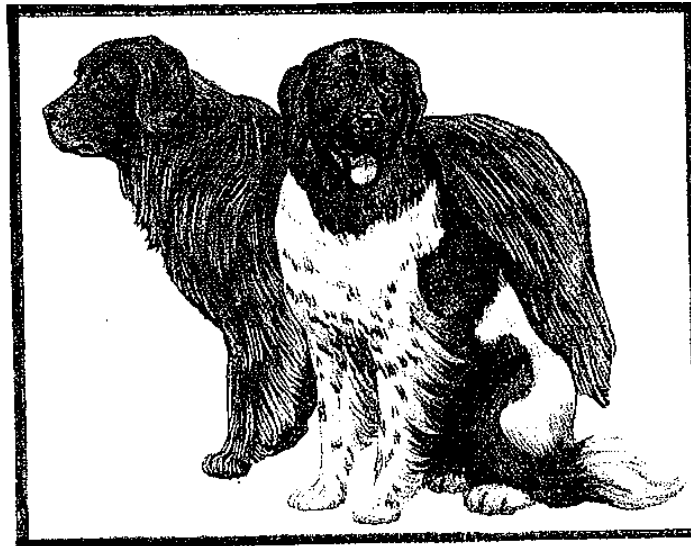
This does not apply for herders of horses. The dogs need to be relatively low to the ground so that when a horse tries to kick the annoying creature away from nipping at his legs, the hooves will pass right over the dog.

8. Why would herding dogs need to be extra intelligent (compared to other breeds)?
9. What is one specific characteristic necessary for a herder of:
 sheep?
 horses?
10. What would happen if there were three herding dogs on one farm?

PART 4 - HAULING

Back in Unit 1, dogs who pull sleds in the Iditarod race were mentioned. These breeds are known as haulers, and they include the Siberian Husky, Alaskan Malamute, Eskimo Dog, Greenland, and Samoyed. These dogs are still used in the frozen regions of North America. For Native Americans in the Arctic, dog teams are part of their life style.

Other breeds are known as "draft" animals, and they work in many parts of the world pulling wagons full of all kinds of wares (fish, vegetables, milk, cloth, etc.) Hauling dogs need to have strength and endurance to move heavy carts or loads over long distances.



NEWFOUNDLAND

Here is an interesting difference between herders and haulers: if you think of a dog's programming for pack behavior, imagine a single herding dog working with a shepherd. These dogs become one-dog teams with their shepherds. However, hauling dogs harnessed in a team are like a wolf pack. There is an "Alpha" dog - meaning that the pack (team) looks to the Alpha more than to the human driver.

11. What is another personality trait needed by a hauler?
12. What could a sled driver do to convince the team s/he is in control?
13. What happens when a dog sled's driver falls off the sled?

PART 5 - WAR

Dogs have been a major force in war even before the era of firearms. All the way back in the Roman era, they were part of armies. They could be effective against cavalry as well as infantry. It's easy to see how they might terrorize foot soldiers. They were also known to halt the advance of enemies on horseback by biting the noses of the horses.

Dogs as "soldiers" are in as much danger as the human soldiers. Here are some examples of their participation in wartime:

- sentry duty (guarding traits) or outlooks for aircraft, vehicles, tanks, etc. (acute hearing)
- detecting land mines (acute sense of smell)
- acting as messengers, crossing enemy lines (ability to move quickly and silently)

In World War II, dogs accompanied airborne troops (they were fitted with parachutes but had to be pushed out of the planes because they would not willingly jump!), and in the Japanese theater, they pulled carts containing bombs into enemy camps. Dogs have been used in tank and armored vehicle warfare. In Russia, they were trained to enter such vehicles to find food; when enemy tanks were sighted, the half-starved animals were released with mines strapped onto their backs. And of course in peace as well as war, dogs are used in all kinds of search and rescue.

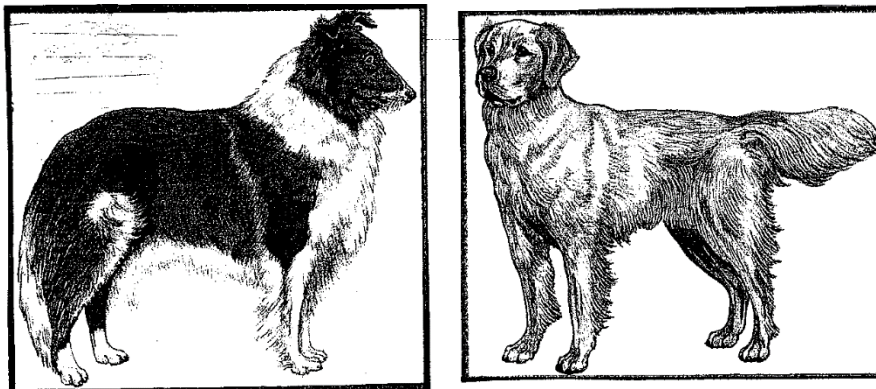
14. How would dogs be trained to sound the alarm when they heard the approach of a plane or an enemy soldier?

15. Think of another way a dog could help the military.

16. Should dogs be used as soldiers by a nation at war?

PART 6 - ENTERTAINMENT

Now to the work of human play. Dogs act in all kinds of movies, TV shows, and commercials. A dog can play a devoted pet, a comedian, a vicious enemy, a hero, etc. A well-known dog is the Collie named "Lassie." Originally a book written in 1940 by Eric M. Knight, "Lassie Come Home" was made into a movie and then a TV series. Similarly, the book "Old Yeller," written in 1957 by Fred G. Gipson, was made into a movie by Walt Disney. Old Yeller is a mixed breed that looks like a Golden Retriever. He is adopted by a family in the Southwest. Like Lassie, Old Yeller is a loving companion to the family and shares all kinds of adventures. Both of these dogs are considered heroes. At the other end of the spectrum is "Cujo," from the book of the same name by Stephen King. The once friendly St. Bernard becomes a killer after being bitten by a rabid bat.



LASSIE and OLD YELLER

17. What other canine TV or movie series do you remember? What was the story or plot?

18. Create your own movie.

What is the story or plot?

What role does the dog play?

Describe the dog, his personality, physical appearance, breed, etc.

19. Who works the hardest - a human actor, the dog actor, or the dog trainer? Explain.

20. Draw a picture of any working dog after a long day on the job.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

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