

We All Have a Purpose

OBJECTIVE

To understand that just like people, animals have jobs too, and their contributions are important.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will compare jobs that people have with jobs that animals have. They will receive visits from several different working animals and their "people."

MATERIALS

🐾 Books:

Dogs on Duty, by Catherine O'Neill, National Geographic Society
by Charles and Linda George

Search and Rescue Dogs,

🐾 Two large pieces of poster paper

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 What jobs do the students have?
- 🐾 What jobs do their parents have?
- 🐾 What other jobs are you aware of or interested in?
- 🐾 What jobs do animals have?
- 🐾 What contributions have animals made to our society?

Procedure

Write one category on each piece of poster paper: "People Jobs and Skills" and "Animal Jobs and Skills." Have the students brainstorm ideas for both categories. After both have been completed, look at the similarities in both categories. Discuss what types of jobs their own pets may have. The jobs various animals have are not necessarily just the ones that are the most obvious (like seeing-eye dogs). A pet may have the job of being someone's special friend, making people smile and feel good or comforting us in times of need. Similarly, people have the same kinds of jobs.

Line up several visits from working animals and their masters, if possible. It would be advisable to hold these sessions in a large room, like an auditorium, so the animals can perform examples of their jobs.

Suggestions:

- 🐾 A herding dog that "works" on a ranch
- 🐾 A Police dog (K-9 unit)
- 🐾 A drug-sniffing dog that "works" for the DEA
- 🐾 A dog or cat that visits nursing homes or hospitals
- 🐾 A seeing-eye dog
- 🐾 A dog that helps with disaster rescue
- 🐾 A llama that assists mountain climbers
- 🐾 A dog that "works" with disabled people
- 🐾 A domesticated animal (i.e. dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig) that visits classrooms to help educate students about animal welfare

- 🐾 An animal that has saved his/her master from a disaster (i.e. a dog that alerted its family to a fire; a pet that could tell its owner was having a heart attack and did something about it)

Each student should come up with five questions for the speaker. Assign each student to a different speaker so the questions are spread out.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 What was the most interesting or unique fact you learned about these animals?
- 🐾 Why do these animals deserve our respect and appreciation?
- 🐾 What can we learn from these animals?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Discuss working animals that aren't necessarily treated humanely, like circus animals, greyhound racers, horse racers, guard dogs, and ponies used for pony rides. Explore what types of harmful or neglectful treatment these animals sometimes receive and what we can do to prevent it.