DogsTrust

Be Dog Smart

Science / PSHE / Citizenship

HOW HAVE DOGS CHANGED OVER TIME?

FOR 7-11 YEAR OLDS

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Teacher's Notes

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

This activity can be used as part of a Science topic about selective breeding within 'animals' and 'evolution'. It could also be linked to a PSHE/Citizenship activity exploring rights and responsibilities.

It explores the differences between four dog breeds in the past and the same breeds as we know them today and encourages pupils to consider whether selective breeding is always a good thing.

Age range: 7-11 years
Subjects: Science / PSHE / Citizenship

You will need:

- Pupil worksheets 1 and 2;
- Copies for each pupil or pair/group.

Teacher's Notes

HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

Pupils compare two images of a dog breed; one from the past and one from the present and identify differences in the dog's appearance.

Then they are asked to answer three questions about the impact of selective breeding on these dogs to encourage them to consider the negative implications.

Answers

Pupil worksheet 1

- The Sharpei today has more wrinkles and skin folds, especially around the face. The ears are smaller, and the dog is heavier and thicker set.
- The Bassett Hound today has a droopier face with more wrinkles and folds of skin. Their bellies are much lower to the ground, and their rear legs are shorter. They have excessive skin and large floppy ears.
- The English Bull Terrier has a dome-shaped head and triangle eyes. (The only registered breed to do so). They are also heavier and more thickset.
- The Pug has a much shorter, flatter face. They also have more wrinkles, skin folds and a double curved tail.

Pupil worksheet 2

Children's answers may vary. For example, both the Bassett Hound and the Pug could have problems walking. Share and discuss the different answers as a class.

How have dogs changed over time?

Selective breeding is when you choose the parents (mother and father) to breed together in the hope that they will produce offspring (puppies) with the features that you want.

Over thousands of years, we have created dogs to suit our human needs and preferences, by selectively choosing the parents.

Dogs continue to evolve all the time. We are likely to see more changes in the appearance, size and health of dogs for as long as humans keep breeding them selectively.

TASK: Look at the pictures below of each dog. The first picture is the breed of dog in the past, and the second is how that breed looks today.

List the differences you see in each of the dogs' appearance.

Sharpei

PAST

PRESENT

Bassett Hound

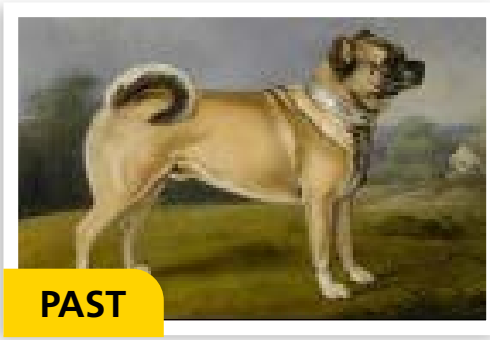
PAST

PRESENT

How have dogs changed over time?

English Bull Terrier

Pug



- Many of these negative changes have happened due to humans breeding dogs in a rapid and sometimes irresponsible way.
- Dogs with a "cute" appearance are very appealing, but it is irresponsible to breed them without considering how their health and happiness might be affected.

TASK:

Looking at the pictures of the dogs today and your notes about the differences, answer these questions:

1. **Which of the dogs do you think is more likely to have problems with their health? Why?**

2. **Which of the dogs may struggle more when they are walking? Why?**

3. **Which of these dogs may have problems with their skin and eyesight? Why?**

4. **Humans breed dogs to look a certain way for lots of reasons. Why do you think some dogs are bred to have:**

   More wrinkles?

   Shorter legs?

   Bigger ears?