

Teaching News Is Elementary

February 26, 2016

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times e-Edition, colored pencils (drawing materials) and paper, access to or print outs from The American Kennel Club website

Article: “Labrador retrievers top U.S. dog breed for 25 years”

Page: Main News, A12

Date: Friday, February 23, 2016

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

What makes a breed of dog “popular”? What kind of questions do you think will be answered in this article? For example, one question that the article might answer is “Why are Labrador retrievers the ‘top’ dog in the U.S.?” What do you already know about dogs or Labradors that might help us understand what this article is about?

Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it’s used in the sentence:

“Labrador retrievers still **reign** supreme after a quarter century as America’s most **prevalent purebred** dog.”

To reign: to rule or be in control

Prevalent: to be usual or widespread; common

Purebred: bred from members of a recognized breed, strain, or kind without cross-breeding over many generations

“French bulldogs moved from No. 9 to No. 6 last year and became the **predominant** purebred in Miami and San Francisco, having already conquered New York City.”

Predominant: greater in influence, strength, or authority; main or leading

“The droll little bat-eared bulldogs last peaked at No. 6 during the 1910s.”

Droll: funny; silly

“Popularity rises and falls on many factors, and trends can be self-perpetuating— the scarcer the breed the fewer the puppies and vice versa.”

Self-perpetuating: having the power to perpetuate (spread or continue) itself for infinite time

Scarce: lacking in number or quantity; rare; uncommon (opposite of prevalent)

Journal Writing Prompts:

“Americans ‘like easy-to-care-for, fun family dogs,’ whether that means big, strong animals that can protect their families or small pets with “big-dog personalities”

What are some things that go into selecting a dog for a family pet? Pretend you and your family are planning to buy a new dog, what are some things you might consider while selecting a breed? Did your ideas of how you would select a breed change after reading this article? How and why?

Discussion Questions:

Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:

“Popularity rises and falls on many factors, and trends can be self-perpetuating – the scarcer the breed, the fewer the puppies, and vice versa, DiNardo notes. She encourages would-be dog owners to consider both rare and familiar ones.”

What kind of things does the article say make some dogs more popular than others? Do you think there are any other reasons people might like certain dog breeds? What are some of the advantages to buying popular dog breed? What might be some disadvantages? Do you think that it is important to preserve rare breeds of dogs – why or why not? How might we convince people to buy some of the less popular breeds of dogs?

Small group discussion and activity:

“You may want to be one of those people who helps to protect and preserve a breed,” she said.”

What makes each dog breed special and unique? Why work to preserve uncommon breed? Use information provided the American Kennel Club to research a rare breed of dog (several are mentioned in the article such as the English Foxhound, the harrier, the Norwegian Lundehund, American foxhound or the otterhound) and draw a picture of your chosen breed. Share your drawing and any interesting information that you found about this breed. Pretend you are trying to convince people why it is important to buy and preserve this breed.

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