



Dogs and the law

Area of focus

This lesson looks at different laws relating to dogs and other pets, as well as how our attitude and behaviour affects dogs. Explore the nature of rules and laws and the justice system, including the role of the police and the operation of courts and tribunals. Learn about the roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities.

This lesson only applies to legislation in England.

? Did you know?

- Although there is no statutory definition of a 'stray' dog, the RSPCA defines this as: "one that is in a public place and not under the charge of a keeper".
- An injunction or Criminal Behaviour Order can be given to anyone over 10 years old where there are concerns regarding their behaviour with their dog. For example: if they are using their dog to threaten or harass someone.
- Some public areas in England and Wales are covered by Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), previously called Dog Control Orders (DCOs). In public areas with PSPOs, find out more here: gov.uk/control-dog-public
- As a result of section 68 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2007, local authorities in England are now solely responsible for dealing with stray dogs, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
- Find more information about the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#)

1 Starter activity

- Complete the [Pets and the law quiz](#).
- Using the supporting presentation, look at the images of stray dogs. Ask the students to discuss what they see and what the issues may be.
- Place the picture of the dog in the centre of the board and add the students' issues or questions around it to create a large mind map.
- Students complete the worksheet [Our attitudes to dogs](#) worksheet and discuss their answers.

2 Main activity

What are the issues?

- Display the factsheet [Mind map: dogs](#) on an interactive whiteboard. It lists some of the issues that affect dogs and that may or may not be covered by law. Ask the class to discuss anything surprising or any issues they would like to know more about.
- In groups, ask the students to use [The news about dogs](#) worksheets to match the articles to the relevant law cards and then to prepare a mini-presentation. For further information use the factsheet [Other laws about dogs](#) and the [Defra Dangerous Dogs Act legislation guidance](#).

KEY STAGE: 3



Worksheets:

- [Pets and the law quiz](#)
- [Pets and the law quiz: answers](#)
- [Our attitude to dogs](#)
- [The dog on the football field](#)
- [Dogs in the news](#)
- [Dogs in the news: answers](#)

Supporting materials:

- Presentation – visual prompts (see downloads)
- [Mind map: dogs](#)
- [Other laws about dogs](#)
- [Do YOU know the law about dogs?](#)
- [Do YOU know the law about dogs?: answers](#)

- Groups present one law to the class and discuss the issues raised. Ask the students to consider what they can do if these issues are a problem in their local area.
- Read the story [The dog on the football field](#) and identify the relevant laws.

Plenary activities

What do you know?

- Students complete the [Do YOU know the law about dogs?](#) worksheet.

What next?

Extension activities

- Ask each student or small group of students to do further research about an issue such as puppy farming and trading, overweight pets, microchipping or neutering, and decide how they can make people aware of it.

We have a range of other lesson plans, designed to help your students explore the topic of pets and animal welfare laws further:

- [Rights and responsibilities](#)
Explore the role of agencies in encouraging people to become responsible pet owners, with a focus on 'exotic' animals kept as pets. This lesson is a good follow on from [Dogs and the law](#).
- [Debating animal welfare](#)
Students take part in a debating motion regarding animals and the law.
- [Campaigning for better animal welfare](#)
Explore what makes a campaign and then plan and/or carry out a campaign on an animal welfare issue.