

HOOVER-JUNIOR- OFF-SITE LEARNING PACKET DAY 3

Instructor: Meredith Hoover

Date _____

Program/Class: Animal Science Class-Juniors-OFF-SITE LEARNING PACKET DAY 3

Period 1, 2

State Indicator/Competency:

1.3.1 Identify, classify, evaluate and select animal species and/or breeds.

1.3.8 Identify, evaluate and perform general animal care and welfare procedures based on the animal's use, species and life stage (e.g., weaning, dehorning, castrating, trimming hooves, milking, weighing, grooming, dental cleaning, dental floating, nail trimming).

1.6.1 Describe the adaptations and special senses (e.g., sight, hearing, smell, touch) of animals and how they contribute to animal behavior.

1.6.2 Describe and identify innate animal behavioral traits (e.g., protection, ingestion, homing, sleeping, grooming, elimination, sexual, care-giving, combative, evasive, breed differences).

1.6.3 Manipulate an animal's behavioral and natural tendencies through appropriate management practices.

Instructional Objective(s):

Students will be able to answer the worksheet questions about German Shepherds with 100% accuracy

Method of Instruction:

Direct Instruction and Discovery

Activities:

Students will read two articles

Students will complete the blizzard bag Worksheet and turn in the worksheet.

Article One:

Okay, kid, here's the scene. "You're the fallen hero—you were everybody's favorite guy, decorated for bravery in every war since WWI, police and rescue work, assistant to the blind, protector of the family, rugged, athletic, handsome, good breeding, a movie and TV star—the whole nine yards.

"But that was yesterday's news.

"Now you're down—really down. Your success attracted the wrong kind of people and they took you under. You lost your health, your temper, your reputation. There were rumors of people hurt, even killed. Stories that you were so crippled you couldn't walk. You got bad press. You got people crossing the street to avoid meeting you. Things don't look bright.

"But lucky for you, you still got good people in your corner— people who stood by you all these years. You got a chance to get back on top and you're determined to take it. "Now: lights, camera—action!"

The story of the German Shepherd Dog (GSD) has all the makings of a blockbuster film: a meteoric rise from obscurity to dizzying heights of achievement and fame, a tragic slide into misfortune and notoriety, and a courageous fight for redemption.

Sadly, this is no script and the true tale's conclusion has yet to be written: by real people and real dogs who are still working toward a happy ending.

The story opens in late 19th-century Germany with the man who is credited with molding the original GSD, Max von Stephanitz. Taking the best dogs of several shepherd types, Stephanitz focused on creating the breed that is now described in the American Kennel Club (AKC) Standard as "a working animal with an incorruptible character combined with body and gait suitable for the arduous work that constitutes its primary purpose." By breeding to strict standards of character, trainability, and physical ability, Stephanitz and his followers changed the humble sheep herding dogs into the Deutsche Schäferhunde (literally, German Sheepdog), a multi-talented working breed that proved itself in almost every field of endeavour open to dogs.

At the same time, the breed's appearance became standardized to the German Shepherd we know today: a large, rugged dog with a wolfish head and erect ears and a thick double coat of medium length. The colour is usually reddish-brown with black markings, including a black mask and "saddle," or sable, where the hairs are a lighter colour such as grey or gold, tipped in black. Solid black is also acceptable, but pale, washed-out colours are generally frowned upon.

In 1925, the GSD became the most popular breed in the US, due partly, no doubt, to the heroic exploits of the movie stars Rin Tin Tin and Strongheart, both classic GSDs in looks and onscreen personas (and both of whom have stars on Hollywood's Walk of Fame). Since the 1920s, when the GSD began to dominate the popularity polls, the breed has only dropped out of the AKC Top Ten for a few years surrounding the Second World War, a time when anything "German" was unpatriotic. For the past fifty years, the GSD has been in the top four breeds, a standing unmatched by other breeds. German Shepherds have been the treasured companions of presidents (Franklin D. Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, JFK), performers (Jake Gyllenhaal, Shania Twain), writers (Robert Ludlum, Maurice Sendak), and other celebrities (Gene Roddenberry, Picasso).

Unfortunately, demand for the GSD made it an obvious target for people who wanted to make an easy dollar by breeding and selling the popular pups and who had no knowledge of or interest in genetics,

health, or temperament. Dogs poorly bred and raised began to give the breed a reputation for being hyperactive, vicious, and unhealthy. The stigma of hip dysplasia (an inherited condition where the hip joint fails and the dog becomes crippled) has become firmly affixed to the GSD's reputation in the minds of the general public, although the disease actually occurs in many breeds, not just the German Shepherd.

Under siege from rampant overbreeding and image problems, the world of GSDs became riddled with controversy and various groups separated themselves from the mainstream to pursue their own ideas of the perfect dog. The Shiloh Shepherd was developed from the GSD in the past few decades as a "larger, sounder, and more traditional" dog, as was the King Shepherd. Allwhite German Shepherds, disqualified from AKC shows, maintain a staunch following and have their own registries and rescue associations. Breeders of working dogs often scorn show dogs and dogs of German bloodlines may be touted as the only "true" GSDs. Meanwhile, AKC and CKC breeders cling to their position as defenders of the "official" German Shepherd Dog in North America.

A lesser dog would have gone down under this assault, but the GSD has earned the love and loyalty of legions of passionate fans who will not abandon their breed, one which they are convinced is still the noblest all-around working dog in existence. Today, dedicated breeders continue with the task of eliminating genetic health problems and unstable temperaments to ensure that one of the most popular breeds in the world can still claim to be one of the finest.

At 110 years old, the German Shepherd—star, hero, legend— is fighting for a comeback. Go for it, kid; we're all rooting for you.

Article Two:

Von Stephanitz might have been lost to history as just another German soldier messing around with dogs in his backyard, except that he managed to start breeding wonderful puppies. Even so, German shepherds might have ended up as a niche breed, alongside Nova Scotia duck tolling retrievers and Entlebucher mountain dogs, except that von Stephanitz began giving the best of his litters to local police forces, where the dogs triumphed: they were athletic, attentive and intelligent, everything von Stephanitz had promised.

A breed club soon formed and, in just a few years, it had 60,000 members in Germany. After American G.I.s returned home from World War I raving about this extraordinary new breed, German shepherds became the most sought-after dog in this country, too.

The best and the worst thing happened next. Rin Tin Tin, a German shepherd puppy brought home from the war by a lonesome American soldier named Lee Duncan, became an international movie star. Now German shepherds weren't only admired for their intelligence and Olympian athleticism. They acquired the aura of magic, the glittering charisma of a celebrity.

But dogs are not brands. Unlike Prada backpacks or Jimmy Choo shoes, demand for a certain breed can't be relieved by merely ramping up production. Unscrupulous kennel owners and pet shops start producing puppies as fast as they can, even when the genetic mixes they're creating aren't healthy. Responsible American breeders soon noticed the dogs were showing an alarming rate of hip and eye problems, and they asked experts from Germany to tour kennels here and make recommendations for sorting out the genetic mess.

That intervention set things right, but the popularity of the breed remained. If there was a slight lull for German shepherds in the '30s, it passed quickly when they were named the Army's official mascots in World War II, with Rin Tin Tin as the spokesdog for the War Dog program; this, coupled with the hit '50s television show "The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin," made German shepherds the ultimate American dog.

Demand for the breed, and the cruel practices that drove its supply, continued in the postwar years. "Success, like a chicken bone, is bad for dogs," began a story in Life magazine called "Sad Degeneration of Our Dogs," which ran in 1958. "The higher a dog rises in public favor, the more devastating its downfall. None has soared higher or fallen harder than the German shepherd."

Who is to blame? Is it von Stephanitz, for developing a breed of dog that turned out to be simply too well-liked? Is it Rin Tin Tin, for stirring up so much German shepherd passion? Or is it really just human nature?

We seem incapable of resisting the pull of popularity; what's more, people are especially crazy — and often illogical and emotional — when it comes to dogs. And it's not just German shepherds, either. You can always tell when "101 Dalmatians" has just been rereleased, or a funny talking Chihuahua is featured in a national advertising campaign; suddenly, every dog park is overrun with Dalmatians or Chihuahuas.

Sometimes these dogs have owners who have come to realize they were more in love with the dog when it was an image on screen than as a real, live member of the household. Or, in the case with German shepherds, they love them so much that they want to produce more of them, without much idea of how to do that well.

Bad breeding is bad for everyone, and in recent years the American Kennel Club, among other organizations, has done its best to discourage it, and to encourage adoption from shelters, which have, unfortunately, an oversupply of abandoned purebred dogs. It's been a success, but it will never completely override our very human tendency to want those things — and animals — that have the shine of popularity.

The decision of the North Rhine-Westphalia police only looks like a failure for the breed. A little less popularity is the best thing that can happen to it. Perhaps, if other law enforcement agencies follow this lead, German shepherds will recede a bit from public view. They will make fewer appearances as stern search-and-rescue workers and soldier dogs and guide dogs. And we, the impressionable creatures we are, will be a little less determined to have a wonder dog of our own.

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Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

ANIMAL: _____

1. What was the animal originally bred for?

1. What are some key physical traits of this animal?

2. What are some health concerns with this animal?

3. What are the grooming requirements needs of the animal?

4. What kind of family would this animal be best suited for?

Closure:

Worksheet completed

Assessment:

Worksheet

