



All Dogs CAN Bite

(As well as other animals)

PA Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement

Prevention:

- ❖ Home care – pre information regarding dogs on premises
- ❖ Request dogs be confined when caregiver on premises
- ❖ PROBLEMS: Owners Older / Dementia / Physically challenged
- ❖ Upon arrival – where is dog – loose in yard – honk horn – loose in house – call out to get dog and owners attention – request confinement
- ❖ Don't rely on owner statements of "My dog won't bite"
- ❖ Look for posture of dog – growl – ears – eyes - hair on neck – tail tucked – circling

Protection:

- ❖ Never run from a dog – Stand your ground – You are the boss
- ❖ Use firm commands to the dog: NO, STAY, DOWN, GO HOME
- ❖ If attacked – Use any item in your hand – pocket book – equipment - to protect yourself; Protect your front, face and neck
- ❖ Do whatever necessary to protect yourself

If you are bitten:

- ❖ Leave premises – call supervisor – get medical treatment – call warden.
- ❖ Lehigh County Warden – Orlando Aguirre (484) 223-9107, oaguirre@pa.gov
- ❖ Listing of all Wardens Statewide can be found at www.licenseyourdogPA.com
- ❖ Warden Supervisor – Region 7 – Megan Horst (717) 418-0284, mhorst@pa.gov

IF YOU are bitten

- If your own dog bit you, confine it immediately and call your veterinarian to check your dog's vaccination records. Consult with your veterinarian about your dog's aggressive action. Your veterinarian can examine your dog to make sure it is healthy, and can help you with information or training that may prevent more bites.
- If someone else's dog bit you, first seek medical treatment for your wound. Next, contact authorities and tell them everything you can about the dog: the owner's name, if you know it; the color and size of the dog; where you encountered the dog; and if, where, and when you've seen it before. These details may help animal-control officers locate the dog. In addition, consider asking your physician if post-exposure rabies prophylaxis is necessary.

Dogs are wonderful companions. By acting responsibly, owners not only reduce dog bite injuries, but also enhance the relationship they have with their dog.

For more information, visit:

American Veterinary Medical Association	www.avma.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov/injury
American Academy of Pediatrics	www.aap.org
United States Postal Services	www.usps.com

Dog Bite Prevention



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Schaumburg, Illinois 60173 - 4360
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www.avma.org • AVMAinfo@avma.org

*Brought to you by your veterinarian and the
American Veterinary Medical Association*

Any dog can bite

Even the cuddliest, fuzziest, sweetest pup can bite if provoked. Most people are bitten by their own dog or one they know. Some owners actually promote aggression in their dogs or allow aggression to go unchecked.

Although media reports and rumors often give the impression that certain breeds of dog are more likely to bite, there is little scientific evidence to support those claims.

From nips to bites to actual attacks, dog bites are a serious problem. Dog bite victims requiring medical attention in the United States number approximately 800,000 annually. Countless more bite injuries go untreated. On average, about a dozen people die each year from dog bite injuries. Fortunately, there are steps we can take to address this problem.

Who's being bitten?

The number of recorded dog bite injuries is significantly higher in children than adults. The elderly and home service providers such as mail carriers and meter readers are also high on the list of frequent dog bite victims.

CAUTION: Never leave a baby or child alone with a dog.



What's a dog owner to do?

Carefully select your pet. Don't get a puppy on impulse. Before and after selection, your veterinarian is your best source for information about behavior, health and suitability.

Make sure your pet is socialized as a young puppy so it feels at ease around people and other animals. Gradually expose your puppy to a variety of situations under controlled circumstances; continue that exposure on a regular basis as your dog gets older. Don't put your dog in a position where it feels threatened or teased.

Wait until your child is older. Because so many dog bite injuries happen to young children, it is suggested that parents wait to get a dog until children are older than 4 years of age.

Train your dog. The basic commands "sit," "stay," "no," and "come" can be incorporated into fun activities that build a bond of obedience and trust between pets and people. Avoid highly excitable games like wrestling or tug-of-war. Use a leash in public to ensure you are able to control your dog.

Keep your dog healthy. Have your dog vaccinated against rabies and preventable infectious diseases. Parasite control and overall health care are important because how your dog feels directly affects how it behaves.

Neuter your pet. The available science suggests neutered dogs may be less likely to bite.

Be a responsible pet owner. License your dog with your community as required. Obey leash laws. If you have a fenced yard, make sure the gates are secure. Dogs are social animals; spending time with your pet is important. Dogs that are frequently left alone have a greater chance of developing behavioral problems. Walk and exercise your dog regularly to keep it healthy and provide mental stimulation.

Be alert. Know your dog. Be alert to signs of illness. Also watch for signs your dog is uncomfortable or behaving aggressively.

How can my family and I avoid being bitten?

Be cautious around strange dogs and treat your own pet with respect. Because children are the most common victims of dog bites, parents and caregivers should:

- NEVER leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.
- Be alert for potentially dangerous situations.
- Teach children — including toddlers — to be careful around pets.



Children must be taught NOT to approach strange dogs or try to pet dogs by reaching through fences. Teach your children to ask permission from the dog's owner before petting the dog.

Other tips that may prevent or stop a dog attack

Don't run past a dog.

Dogs naturally love to chase and catch things. Don't give them a reason to become excited or aggressive.

Never disturb a dog that's caring for puppies, sleeping or eating.

Never reach through or over a fence to pet a dog.

Dogs can be protective of their territory, and may interpret your action as a threat.

If a dog approaches to sniff you, stay still.

In most cases, the dog will go away when it determines you are not a threat.

If you are threatened by a dog, remain calm.

Don't scream or yell. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Avoid eye contact. Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight. Don't turn and run.

If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face.

What should I do if my dog bites someone?

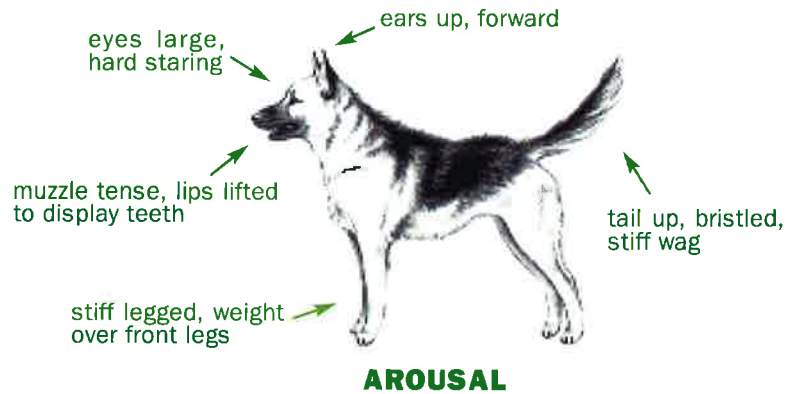
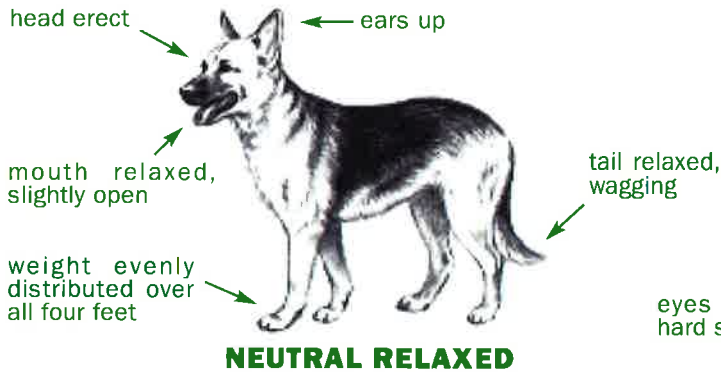
Even if the bite can be explained (e.g., someone stepped on your dog's tail), it's important to take responsibility for your dog's actions by taking these steps:

- **Restrain the dog immediately.** Separate it from the scene of the attack. Confine it.
- **Check on the victim's condition.** Wash wounds with soap and water. Unseen damage can occur with bites, and can lead to complications. Professional medical advice should be sought to evaluate bite wounds and the risk of rabies or other infections. Call 911 if a response by paramedics is required.
- **Provide important information** including your name, address and information about your dog's most recent rabies vaccination. If your dog does not have a current rabies vaccination, it may be necessary to quarantine it or even euthanize it for rabies testing. The person bitten may need to undergo post-exposure prophylaxis.
- **Comply with local ordinances** regarding reporting of dog bites.
- **Consult your veterinarian** for advice about dog behavior that will help prevent similar problems in the future.



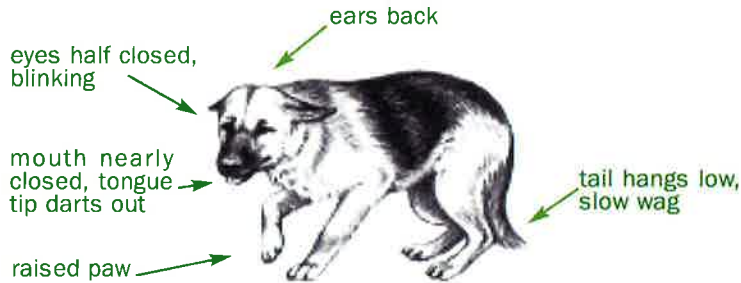
Reading Canine Body Postures

While dogs cannot speak, they do display their state of mind via their body language. By taking careful note of ear position, pupil dilation, facial tension (particularly around the muzzle and forehead), tail carriage and body weight distribution, an observer can detect whether a dog is relaxed or fearful, or acting in a submissive or dominant manner toward the observer.



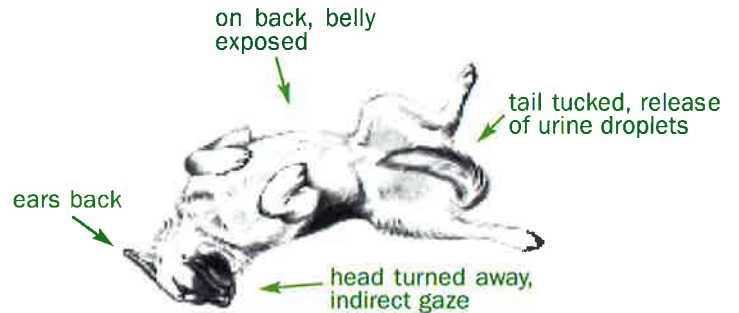
This threatening posture is used to chase another away or, if need be, to attack in order to protect possessions, pack or self.

The dog has been stimulated by something in his environment. When the dog is excited by something pleasurable, the hackles will be down and the tail will be carried a little lower and will loosely wag. The muzzle will be relaxed and the tongue may be seen. This posture may be displayed to subordinates in order to express higher ranking pack position.



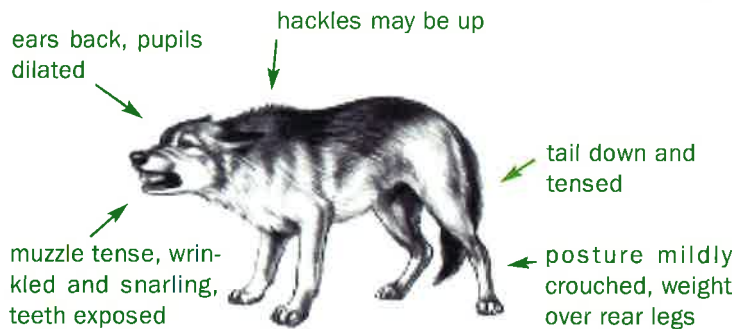
ACTIVE SUBMISSION

This pacifying posture is used when a dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher social ranking, or to inhibit another's aggression.



PASSIVE SUBMISSION

Bellying up indicates surrender, a pacifying gesture offered to a more dominant or aggressive individual.



DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION

When fearful, a dog will give warning signals to indicate he does not wish to be approached. If, unheeded, he will bite to protect himself.



Dog-to-Dog Communication

When dog meets dog, they signal their status in relation to each other. Actions like raising a forepaw, looking away, licking or nudging at the other's muzzle or bowing with the forelegs are submissive gestures. Mounting, raising up stiffly on one's toes, or placing one's head over another's withers (the place where the neck meets the back) indicate the more dominate individual of that interaction.

mother quickly snarls and places mouth around muzzle or head of puppy

puppy submits by flattening to the ground and whimpering

tail tucked

paw raised



MATERNAL CORRECTION

A mother dog will discipline a pup with a quick muzzle grasp. The pup learns to offer submissive body postures.

tail up, loosely wagging

ears up

eyes soft

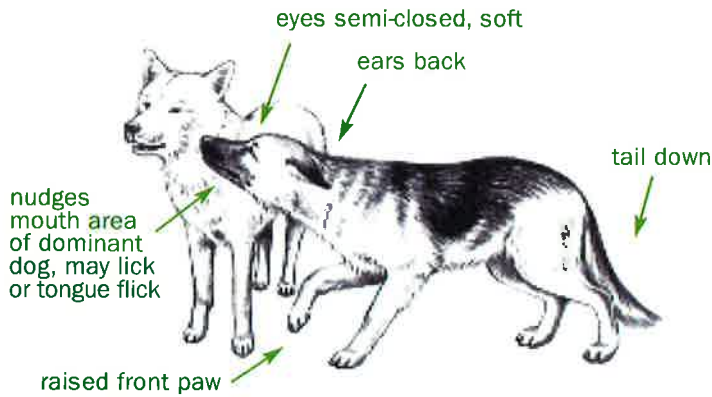
mouth open and relaxed, tongue exposed

front end lowered, ready to leap forward



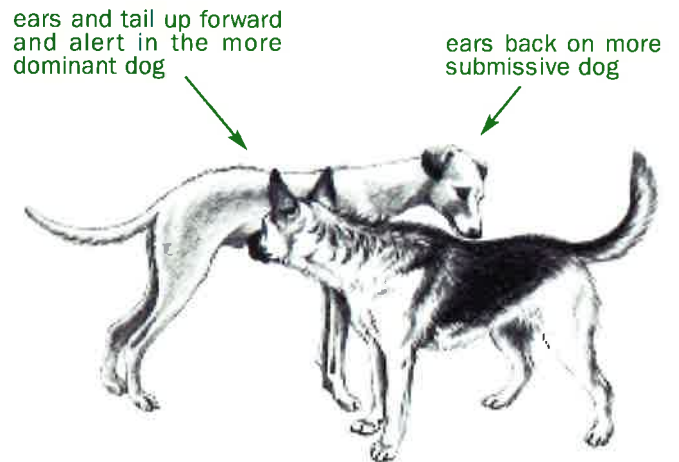
PLAY SOLICITATION

The play bow is a combination of dominant and submissive gestures. It is offered to invite another to play or as part of courtship behavior.



GREETING BEHAVIOR

A submissive dog may greet a more dominant dog with a muzzle nudge as an appeasement (pacifying) gesture.



GREETING POSTURE

Dogs sniff each other's genital region when greeting to gather information on sexual status.

Dog Bite Safety Tips

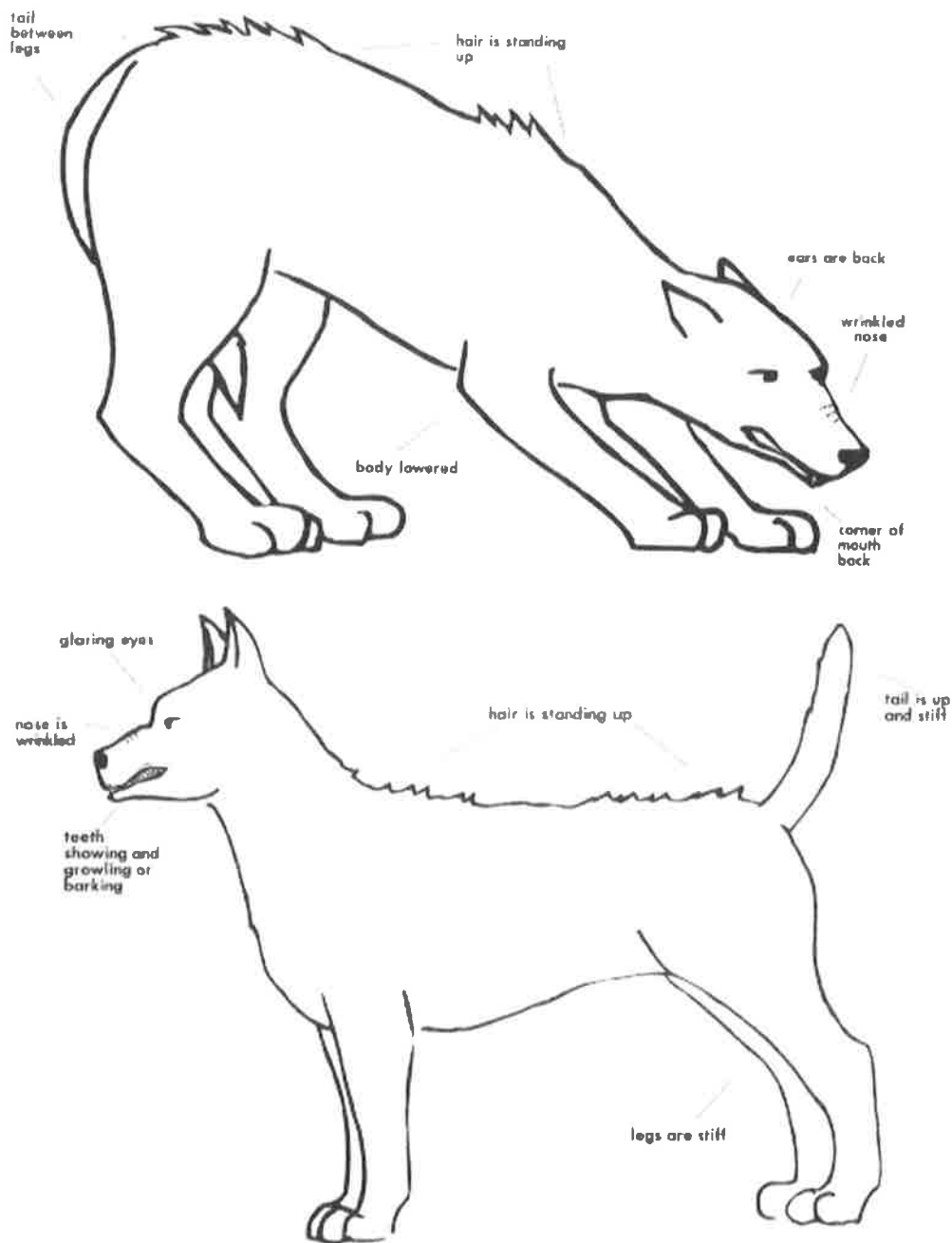
Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement

www.licenseyourdogPA.com

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Dogs talk with their bodies and many times bites can be avoided if the dog is understood. These dogs are saying:

Stay away, I might bite



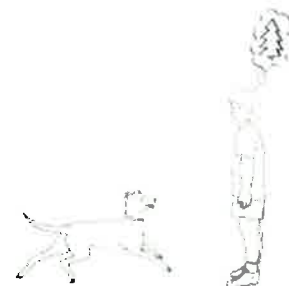
How to prevent dog bites

- 🐾 Never approach a dog you do not know
- 🐾 Always ask the dog owner for permission before petting a dog
- 🐾 Always leave animals alone when they are eating, drinking or have babies
- 🐾 Never tease or scare animals - they protect their territory, toys and owners
- 🐾 Never try to stop animals that are fighting
- 🐾 Never put your face close to a dog - dogs may allow you to hug them BUT they probably don't really like it.
- 🐾 Always tell an adult if you see a sick or injured dog

What to do if threatened

- 🐾 Stay calm and still - **Stand Like A Tree**
- 🐾 DO NOT run or scream
- 🐾 Speak firmly (don't yell) - say: **NO, SIT, STAY DOWN or GO HOME**
- 🐾 Back away slowly - always watching the dog, but **NOT** staring at the dog
- 🐾 Shield yourself - use a backpack, book, bike or whatever you have - put something between the dog and you
- 🐾 If knocked down - cover your neck and head with your arms - **Lie Like A Log**

Stand Like A Tree



Lie Like A Log



What to do if you are bitten

- 🐾 Tell an adult
- 🐾 Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and running water
- 🐾 Tell an adult
- 🐾 Get the name, address and phone number of the dog owner
- 🐾 Ask for proof of rabies vaccination
- 🐾 Report the bite to your local Dog Warden : (717) 787-3062 or www.licenseyourdogPA.com
- 🐾 Report the bite to your local PA Department of Health Office : 1-877-PAHEALTH

May I pet the dog?

1. Yes or No?



2. Yes or No?



5. Yes or No?



3. Yes or No?



4. Yes or No?



1. No. The dog is loose and not with his or her owner.
 Remember to stand like a tree, look away like the boy in the picture and the dog moves away, and then tell an adult. Yes, if you've asked permission of the owner and the dog.

Answers to "May I Pet the Dog?"
 1. No. The dog is on a chain and there is no owner around.
 2. No. The dog is sleeping.
 3. No. The dog is eating.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering



More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brow Furrowed, Ears to Side



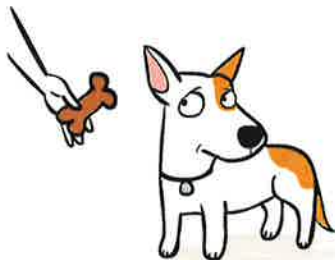
Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



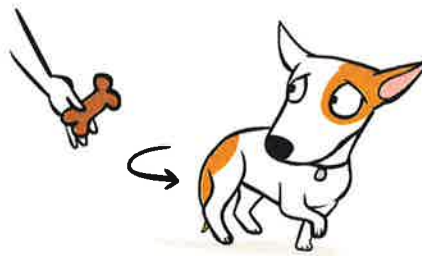
Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



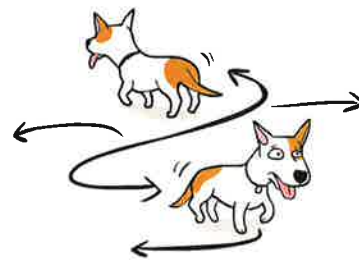
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier

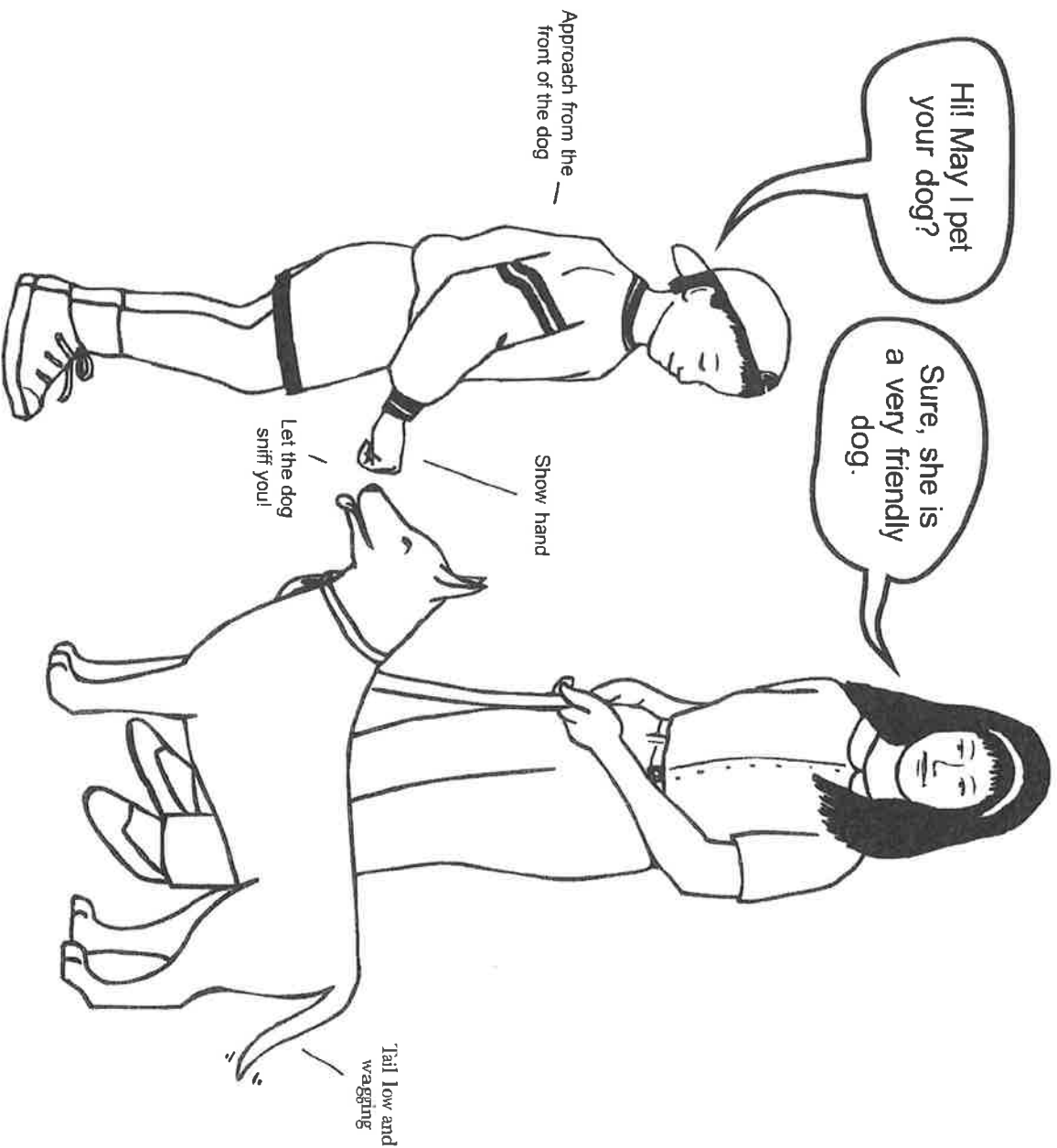


Moving Away



Pacing

How to Safely Approach a Dog



- Do not move quickly, pull the Dog's tail, or reach over the dog's head to pet it.
- Lift your hand slowly to greet the dog.