

# The Amazing History of Dogs

How did dogs become our best friends?

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 950L (combined)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

## Learning Objective:

to synthesize information from two nonfiction texts about the relationship between dogs and humans

## Key Skills:

text structure, vocabulary in context, key ideas and supporting details, summarizing, text features, synthesis

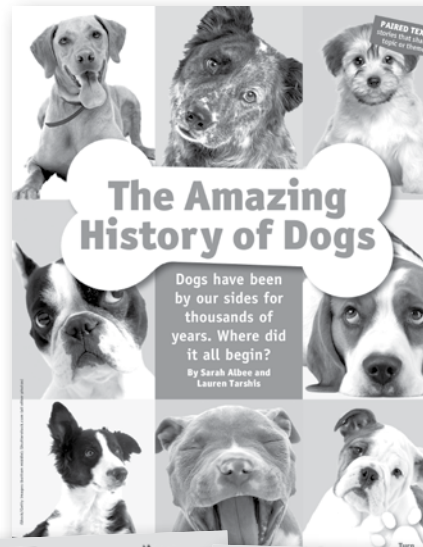
## Essential Questions:

- Why should we study the human-dog relationship?
- Why do we have pets?
- What role should pets play in our lives?

## Standards:

This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:

**R.1, R.2, R.4, R.7, R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at  
[scope.scholastic.com](http://scope.scholastic.com).

**Video:** “Beyond the Story: Into the World of Military Working Dogs”

### Audio:

- The articles
- Vocabulary words

### Research:

- A curated collection of texts from the Scope archive about our relationship with dogs (printable)

**Literature Connections:** ideas for connecting to curricular texts

### Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Video Discussion Questions
- Synthesis
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- **Core Skills Workout:** Text Features, Text Structures
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1 Preparing to Read

### Preview vocabulary.

(3 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Review as a class. Highlighted words: *ancestor, game, generation, millennia, scientific basis, unconditional, utilized, venturing, vital, wary*

## 2 Reading and Discussing

### “How the Wolf Became the Dog”

(20 minutes, activity sheet online)

Read the article as a class. Then discuss the following.

#### Close-Reading Questions

▶ **How does the information about the Ice Age in the introduction contribute to the article?**

(text structure) *The information explains the conditions under which the relationship between humans and wolves developed. Understanding how dangerous it was to live during the Ice Age helps the reader understand why humans came to rely on wolves for protection.*

▶ **In your own words, explain what a domesticated animal is.** (vocabulary in context) *A domesticated animal is one that is bred and cared for by humans. Domesticated animals serve a purpose for humans; for example, cows provide milk and cats are pets.*

▶ **What is the purpose of the section “Hunters and Warriors”?** (text structure) *The section explains the purpose dogs served in society before they became popular as pets.*

▶ **On page 25, Lauren Tarshis writes, “They sleep in our beds, lick our faces, and join us on family vacations.” What key idea do these**

**details support?** (key ideas and supporting details) *These details support the idea that today humans are close to their dogs and treat them like members of the family.*

### “How the Dog Became Part of the Family”

(20 minutes, activity sheet online)

Read the article as a class. Then discuss the following questions, some of which draw on both texts.

#### Close-Reading Questions

▶ **On page 27, Tarshis explains that in the late 1800s, dogs transitioned from being mainly workers to being mainly pets. What factors led to this change?** (key ideas, summarizing) *Several factors contributed to the change in dogs’ roles. Americans became wealthier, which meant more people could afford to care for a pet. Also, the creation of pet-care products like dog food and special soap made it easier to care for dogs and keep them indoors. The opening of veterinary offices for dogs also made it easier to properly care for a dog.*

▶ **Why might the author have included the statistics in the paw prints on pages 26 and 27? What point does this information help make?** (text features) *The author may have included these statistics to help make the point that dogs are extremely popular in the U.S. and that owners spend a lot of money on their dogs.*

▶ **Compare the main image on page 24 with the main image on page 26. Together, what story do these photos tell about the history of dogs?** (text features) *Together, the photos tell the story of how dogs evolved from fierce predators (illustrated by the photo of the wolf) into friendly companions for humans (illustrated by the photo of a boy cuddling with a happy-looking dog).*

▶ **According to both articles, what is the biggest difference between why people own dogs today and why people owned dogs in the past?** (key ideas, synthesis) *Today, most people keep dogs for companionship, whereas in the past, most people kept dogs to do work.*

### **Critical-Thinking Questions**

▶ **In “How the Dog Became Part of the Family,” Tarshis refers to research about the biological connection between dogs and humans. Is this information important to the article? Explain.** *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that the information is important because the idea that a biological basis exists for the connection between dogs and humans helps explain why humans feel so attached to their pet dogs. This is a key idea of the article. Understanding that there is a scientific reason behind humans’ affection for dogs also helps the reader understand why dogs are popular pets.*

▶ **How does reading both “How the Wolf Became the Dog” and “How the Dog Became Part of the Family” give you a better understanding of dogs?** *By reading both texts,*

*readers learn not only about how dogs developed from wolves but also about why humans developed a relationship with dogs, and how that relationship has changed over time.*

▶ **Do you think it is fair to still use dogs as workers now that they have become such beloved pets?** *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that it is fine to use dogs as workers as long as the job they are performing is not cruel and the dogs are treated well while they are working.*

## **3 Skill Building**

### **Featured Skill: Synthesis**

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Preview the **Video Discussion Questions**.
- Watch the **video about military working dogs**. Invite students to share what they found interesting or surprising.
  - Answer the video discussion questions as a class.
- Distribute the **Synthesis activity** for students to complete independently. It will prepare them to respond to the prompt on page 27. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

# **Differentiate and Customize**

### **For Struggling Readers**

In a well-organized paragraph, explain how the relationship between dogs and humans has changed over time. Use text evidence from both articles in “The Amazing History of Dogs” to support your ideas.

### **For Advanced Readers**

Research the relationship between humans and another pet of your choosing. In a well-organized essay, compare this relationship with the relationship between humans and dogs. Use text evidence from your research as well as from “The Amazing History of Dogs.”

### **For Debaters**

Do you think dog owners go too far? Answer this question in a class debate or an argument essay. Use text evidence from “The Amazing History of Dogs” as well as the additional texts provided at Scope Online.

### **For Creative Writers**

What do you think the relationship between humans and dogs will be like in the distant future? Answer in the form of a short video, drawing, or essay. Use information from “The Amazing History of Dogs” as well as from the additional texts provided at Scope Online.