



Dog Care

Scouts BSA · Nature

Name

Started

Completed

Dog Care is about being a responsible, caring companion to a dog. You'll learn how dogs think, how to keep them healthy, and how to train them, then put it into practice by caring for a dog over time.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/dog-care/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Dog history and breeds

Tips for this section: Look through a dog breed book at the library and pick one breed from each of the seven groups that interests you. Note what each was originally bred to do.

Example for this section: Your seven breeds, one from each group, can show how people shaped dogs for jobs: a Labrador Retriever for retrieving (sporting), a Beagle for tracking by scent (hound), a Siberian Husky for pulling sleds (working), a Cairn Terrier for chasing rats out of rock piles (terrier), a Border Collie for herding (herding), a Dalmatian for running beside carriages (non-sporting), and a Chihuahua as a lap companion (toy).

- ☐ **1a** Briefly discuss where dogs came from and how they were domesticated

- ☐ **1b** Describe common traits of the dogs in each of the seven major dog groups

- ☐ **1c** Describe specific traits of seven breeds (one per major group), OR tell the history of one breed in brief

- ☐ **2** On a dog or a drawing of one, point out and correctly name at least 10 body parts

Tip: Use a picture of a dog, or your own dog if it's calm, and practice pointing out each part.

3 Training and responsible ownership

Tips for this section: Talk with your family about what a dog needs every day. If you're choosing a dog someday, think about size, energy, and time.

Example for this section: Explain responsible ownership with real numbers from your family or a vet's office: food, vaccines, license, and grooming each year, plus daily walks. Then describe the right dog for a small apartment with a busy family versus a big yard with lots of time.

- ☐ **3a** Explain why house-training, obedience training, and socialization matter for your dog

- ☐ **3b** Explain what being a responsible pet owner means

- ☐ **3c** Explain what to consider, including temperament, when choosing a breed for a family pet

- ☐ **4** Take care of your dog for two months and keep a log of feeding schedule, food types and amounts, exercise, training schedule, weekly weight, grooming and bathing, any vet care, and costs; also briefly describe the dog's housing or shelter

Tip: Make a simple chart for feeding, walks, grooming, and health notes. Fill it in each day so the two months add up easily.

Example: A log entry might read: "Tuesday: fed 1 cup morning and night, 20-minute walk, brushed coat, noticed she's scratching her left ear, told Dad." After two months, look for patterns in her energy, appetite, and health.

- ☐ **5** Explain the right way to obedience train a dog and the equipment needed; show your dog following any three of these commands: sit, stay, come, down, heel, fetch, drop it, get it

Tip: Practice short, positive training sessions a few minutes at a time. Rewards and patience work much better than scolding.

Example: Teach sit, stay, and come in five-minute sessions with small treats. Say the command once, reward the moment the dog does it, and end each session on a success so the dog wants to try again.

6 Keeping your dog healthy

Tips for this section: Ask your vet to explain the vaccinations and parasite care your dog gets. Try brushing and checking teeth with an adult's help.

- ☐ **6a** Discuss the vaccinations a dog where you live should get, and when, from puppy to adult

- ☐ **6b** Discuss how to prevent fleas, ticks, heartworms, and intestinal worms in a dog in your area from puppy to adult

- ☐ **6c** Explain why dental care and brushing teeth matter for your dog's health

- ☐ **6d** Discuss why regular grooming of your dog's coat and nails is helpful

- ☐ **6e** Discuss with your counselor seasonal conditions where you live, like heat, cold, or high humidity, that affect your dog's care

- ☐ **6f** Discuss with your counselor the things to weigh and the benefits of spaying or neutering your dog

7 First aid for dogs

Tips for this section: Learn how to safely approach a hurt dog, since even friendly dogs may bite when in pain. Practice simple bandaging on a calm dog.

Example for this section: Practice on a calm dog with an adult: approach slowly from the side, speak softly, and know that a hurt dog may bite. Show how to make a soft muzzle from a strip of cloth and how to wrap a paw for a short trip to the vet.

- ☐ **7a** Explain safety precautions for handling an injured dog

- ☐ **7b** Show how to put an emergency muzzle on a dog

- ☐ **7c** Explain how to treat wounds and how to give first aid for a dog bite

- ☐ **7d** Show how to apply a simple dressing and bandage to your dog's foot, body, or head

- ☐ **7e** Explain what to do if a car hits a dog

- ☐ **7f** List what belongs in every dog owner's first-aid kit

- ☐ **7g** Explain the risks of treating a serious illness at home

- ☐ **7h** Briefly discuss rabies, parvovirus, distemper, and heartworms in dogs: their causes, how they spread, signs and symptoms, and prevention

- ☐ **8** Visit a vet hospital or animal shelter and report on your visit to your counselor

Tip: Call ahead to a vet clinic or animal shelter and ask if you can visit. Bring a few questions to ask the staff.

☐ **9** Know your community's laws and ordinances about dogs

Tip: Check your city or county website for leash, licensing, and cleanup rules, or ask at the animal control office.

10 Careers and hobbies: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Explore jobs like veterinarian, groomer, or trainer, or try a hobby like dog agility or volunteering at a shelter.

- ☐ **10a** Name three careers that use skills in working with dogs; research one's training, education, certification, experience, costs, job outlook, starting pay, and advancement; discuss with your counselor what you learned and whether it interests you

- ☐ **10b** Identify how dog skills could support a hobby or healthy lifestyle; research extra training, costs, and helpful organizations; discuss what you learned and possible short- and long-term goals with your counselor