

Paws2Rescue

Education Resource



Changing lives. Developing children's understanding and empathy with animals.

Best Friends



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Introduction

Welcome to Best Friends, one of a set of three resources which use a story and supporting activities to engage children aged between 6 and 12 years (approximately). Each story and activity can be adapted for use dependent on children's age and ability by the educator.

The resources aim to help develop children's understanding of animal welfare and develop their feelings of empathy, compassion, kindness, respect and understanding towards dogs.


Other resources available: Body Switch, A Dog Inspector Calls.

Using the stories

You could use the stories for:

- whole-class storytime
- independent or group reading
- developing reading comprehension.

Paws Points

Each story has several reflection points ('Paws Points') highlighted. These are marked with a  and can be used as a stopping point in the story to actively encourage children to think about what is happening and why. You can allow the discussion to develop naturally, or use the prompts provided with each story to get children talking about what is happening in the story.

Using the activities

Each story has three supporting activities broadly created to suit different age ranges.

They are designed for use following each story to further develop and consolidate children's understanding of the key messages.

Some of the activities can be used on their own and just for fun too! You can find all the activity templates at the end of this resource.

Best Friends

Leo woke up with a start. The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end, and his eyes were wide and focussed ready to escape if needed. 🐾¹ There was a bang followed by a now-familiar voice; it was only Tom, his best friend in the world.

Leo relaxed and slumped back down into his comfortable bed. He sighed happily. Some mornings when he woke, he forgot that this was his home and he was safe. Life hadn't always been so nice for Leo.

Leo remembered what it was like waking up on the streets. He never got used to being woken by a screeching car or a shouting shopkeeper. Often, he was woken by the bash of a broom or a kick to make him move on, and he'd run away scared and in pain.



Image Credit: Georgiana Eley

When he found somewhere else to hide, the noise and smells of the street would follow him. He never felt safe 🐾², and his days never got any better.

Thankfully, the noise that woke him this morning was a welcome one. 'Wake up sleepyhead', cried Tom laughing and smiling. 'Don't you want breakfast? I'm starving!'

Tom didn't have any brothers or sisters. He had friends, but not a 'best' friend. 🐾³ He'd never had someone he could talk to about anything until he met Leo.



Breakfast! Leo's mouth watered just thinking about it. Tom patted Leo and placed a bowl of food in front of him while shovelling his food into his mouth. Leo didn't need encouragement to wolf his food down either! It was hard to tell who had the worst table manners.

Despite getting fed twice (TWICE!) a day, Leo still didn't take food for granted. Filling his stomach with anything and everything that smelt even remotely edible had been a full-time job before he lived with Tom.

Finding food hadn't been hard. The smells of the shops, restaurants and street stalls were too strong to miss. Seeing (and smelling)



people walking with bags of tasty food would make Leo drool with hunger.

Leo had to take his chances and beg for food. He had mastered the right facial expression that would tug on some people's heartstrings. Unfortunately, those people were few and far between. Most days he would be kicked and punched several times before a kind-hearted person would take pity and give him some food. 🐾⁴

In his short life, Leo had received lots of injuries. From cuts and bruises to broken bones. His jaw had been broken once, and it still ached sometimes when it was freezing cold.

Someone had called him over offering food, but when he had got close, they had punched him in the face and screamed at him because he was begging on the street. It had been hard for him to eat for a long time after that. He lost so much weight that if he had stayed on the streets, he would have probably died.

'Come on, Leo; it's sunny outside, let's go out and play', shouted Tom cheerfully, opening the back door to the garden.

Leo shook his head, he didn't want to think about his old life, not when the sun was shining, and Tom wanted to play. He ran after Tom, catching him up and they laughed and barked happily.





They spent the morning chasing each other, playing hide and seek and ball games and then, tired out, crashed on the grass.

As he lay next to Tom, Leo realised that all the bad memories stopped when they were playing. Living with Tom was a million times better than running in fear from the men in uniform.

These men chased him, and when they finally caught him, they locked him in the back of a van, like it was his fault he had to live on the street. 🐾⁵ They hadn't been gentle or kind, the restraints they used had torn into his skin, and when he had struggled in fear, they had smacked and kicked him too.



Tom and Leo soon fell asleep in the warmth of the sun. All Leo could hear was the odd car drive past and the birds singing in the trees. Well, that and Tom's snoring! Uninterrupted, safe sleep was one of the things that Leo enjoyed most.

Thankfully, as he dozed, he didn't dream of the long frightening nights when he was locked up in a cage. The sounds of the other dogs crying or shouting all day and night meant getting any sleep was hard. 🐾⁶ He usually spent the night curled up in the corner of the cage, shivering and scared. Sometimes the uniformed men would drag one of the other inmates out of their cage, and Leo never saw



them again. He didn't like to think about what had happened to them.

One day Leo was taken from his cage. He wasn't dragged out like the others; instead, a woman had gently encouraged him to come out. She had talked to him softly and kindly, but he was still terrified, he knew how people could be kind one minute and cruel the next. Although something had felt different this time, and she had taken him to a car and given him some food and water before driving away with him.



He was unsure and scared 🐾⁷ of what was happening to him now, but when they arrived at a house, the woman introduced him to her family, and he met Tom, her son – they were going to look after him until they could find him a forever home! Soon he and Tom were the best of friends. In fact, they loved each other so much that Tom had convinced his mum to let Leo live with them forever.









For the first time in his life, Leo was safe, and more importantly, he was loved. People cared if he was happy and warm and fed and comfortable. It took him a while to get used to it, and there were some ups and downs as he got used to his new life, but this was the happiest time of his life.



Leo woke up, hearing Tom calling out his name. Lifting his head, he saw his best friend running towards him with his lead in his hands. 'Walkies' shouted Tom. As Tom attached the lead to his collar, Leo could barely hide his excitement; going for a walk was the best part of the day. Well, after dinner time, of course! 🐾⁸

Best Friends Paws Points

These reflection points are highlighted throughout the story and can be used to actively encourage children to empathise with the dog in the story. You can choose to do a handful or all of the 'Paws Points' depending on your audience.

-  **1** What could Leo be ready to escape from?
-  **2** Why did Leo never feel safe?
-  **3** What qualities do you think a best friend should have?
-  **4** Why did people treat Leo this way when he was just looking for food?
-  **5** Who are the men in uniform?
-  **6** Why do you think the dogs were crying and shouting all day and night?
-  **7** The woman had been kind, so why was Leo still unsure and scared?
-  **8** Why do you think going for a walk with his best friend is the best part of his day?

Activity 1 (5-7 years). What do dogs need to be happy and healthy?

Use our fun activity sheets on pages 20 and 21, to help children learn the things that a dog needs to be happy and healthy.

- Children join the dots, and colour in the pictures.
- Can they match the English word at the bottom of the page to the correct picture?
- Can they think of anything else that dogs need? They can draw them on the template provided.

Activity 1.2 Word game

1. Split children into two teams.
2. One team picks a word from the 'hat' (cut up the word sheet on page 22 in advance and fold in half).
3. The team then has to describe the word (without saying it) to the other team, who have to guess what it is.

Activity 2 (7-11 years). Best friends

Ask children whether they would like to have a dog of their own. What do they think it would be like to have a dog as a best friend?

Children draw their perfect dog friend on the template provided on page 23. Then:

- List all the things they would need to care for their doggy friend.
- Explain how having a dog as a best friend makes them feel.

Activity 3 (11+ years). Rescued

Children imagine they have seen a dog in the local shelter that they are hoping to adopt.

Can they write an email to a friend telling them about the dog, his/her background, and how they came to be in the shelter, and what will happen if nobody adopts them?

Activity 3.1 Rehoming

Children pretend that they are working for their local dog shelter where they have hundreds of dogs waiting to be rehomed. Can they help find these dogs loving families to take care of them? What ideas can they think of to encourage people to consider rescuing a dog?

They could:

- Create posters about some of the dogs – what information should be included (age, personality, good with other animals etc.)?
- Write an advertisement from a dog's perspective appealing for new owners. Include information about themselves (the dog) and what their new owners should be like and how they would like to be treated.

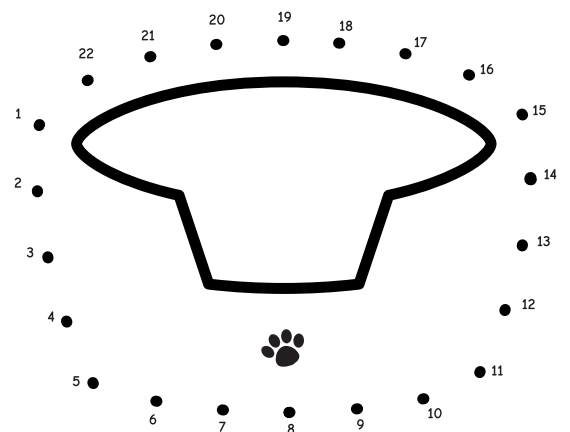
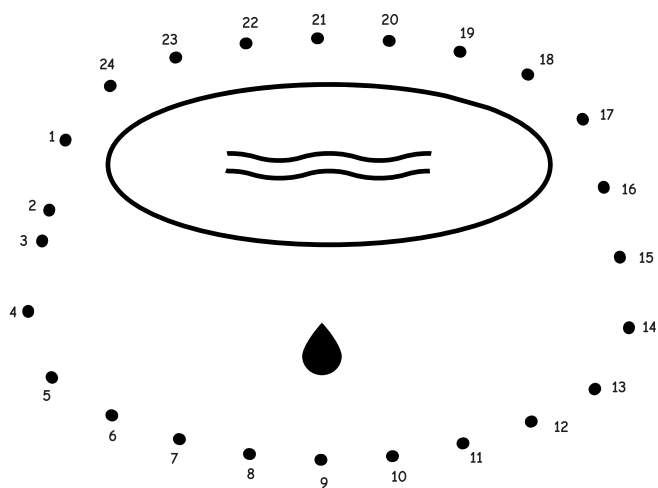
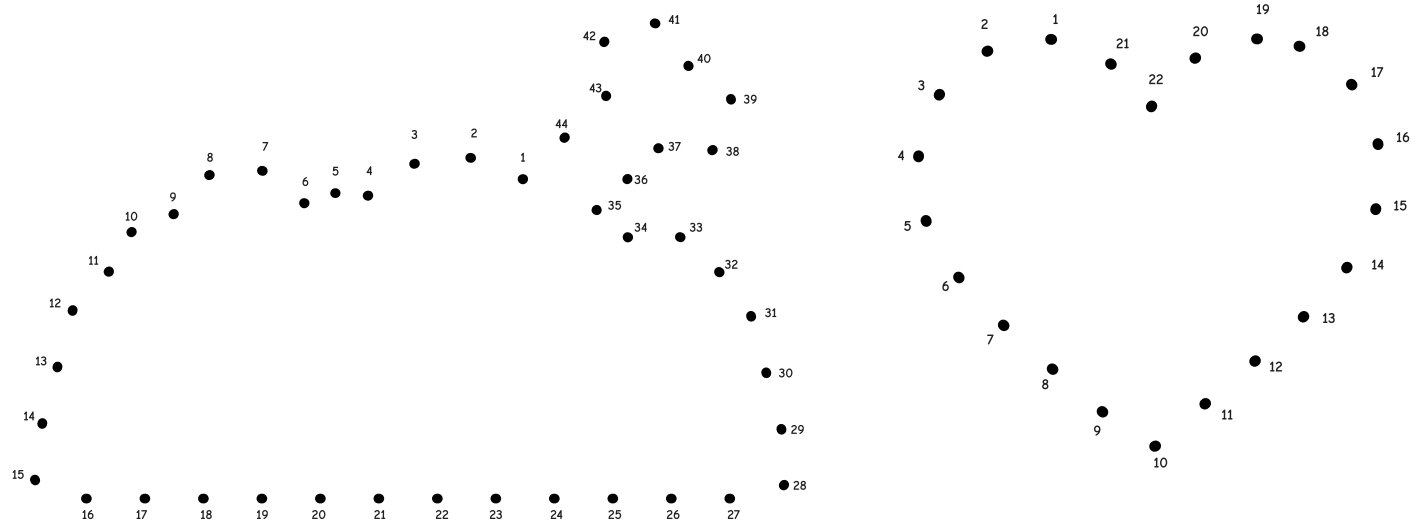
Children can use the template on page 24.

Activity sheets and templates

What do dogs need to be happy and healthy?

Can you match the words and pictures?

Draw a line from the picture to the word that describes it.



Bed

Water

Food

Love

What dogs need

A dog needs a bed, food, water and love.

What else do you think they need to be happy and healthy?

Draw your ideas here.



Word game

Bed

Food

Water

Love

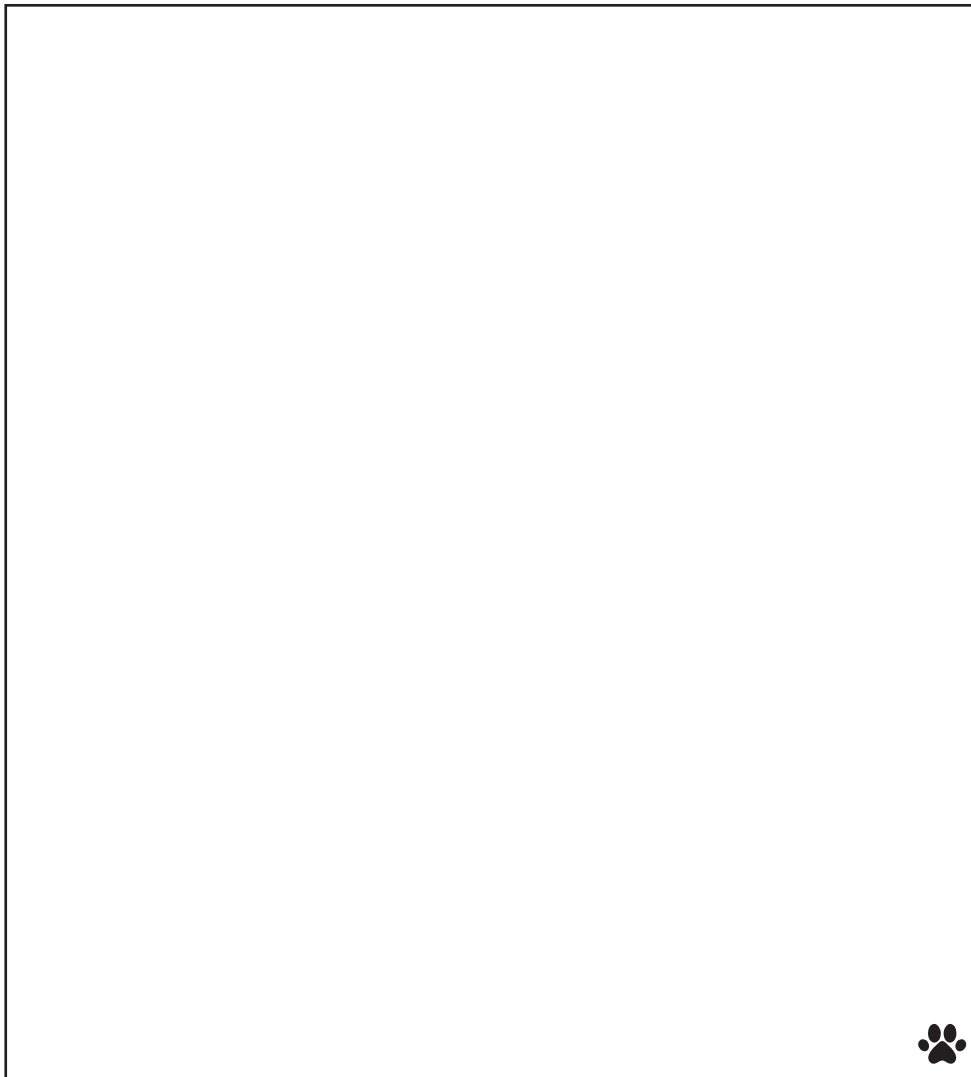
Family

Friends

Best friends

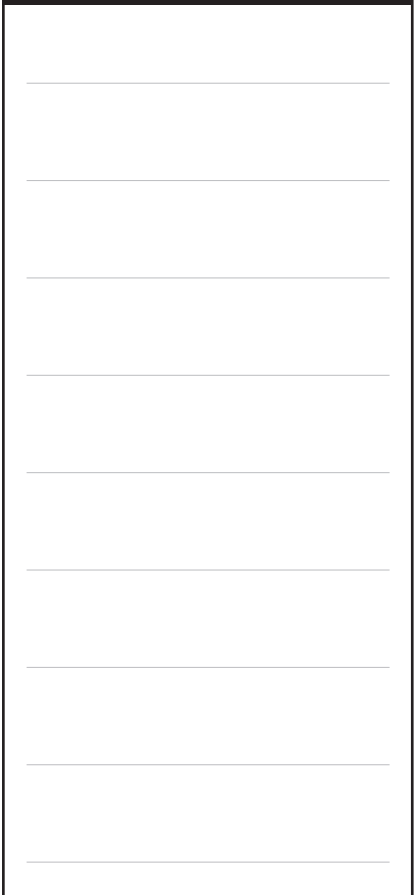
Draw your perfect dog, don't forget to give it a name!

Can you write a list of what you will need to care for your dog, and how it makes you feel to have a dog as your best friend.



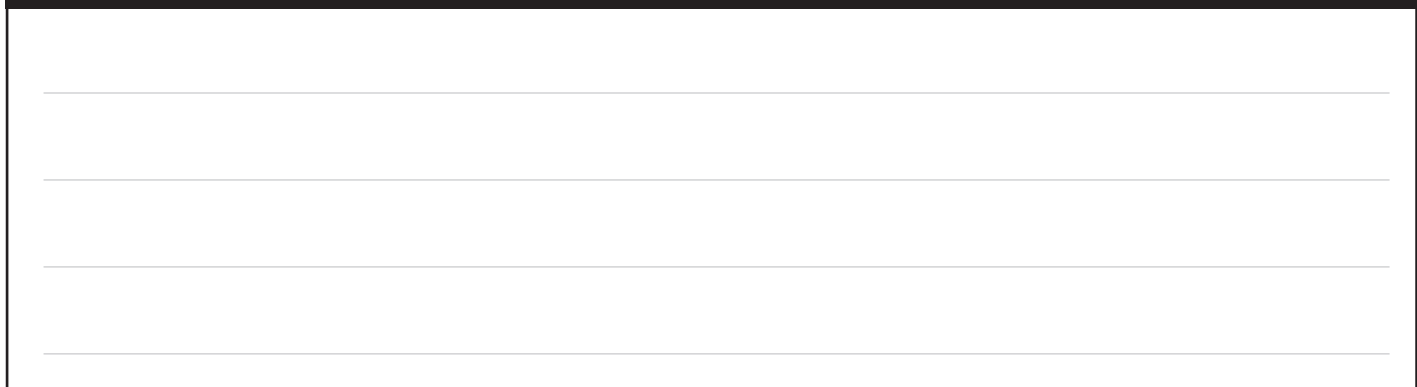
A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a dog. In the bottom right corner of this box, there is a small black paw print icon.

What I need to care
for my dog



A vertical column of ten horizontal lines, intended for writing a list of items needed to care for a dog.

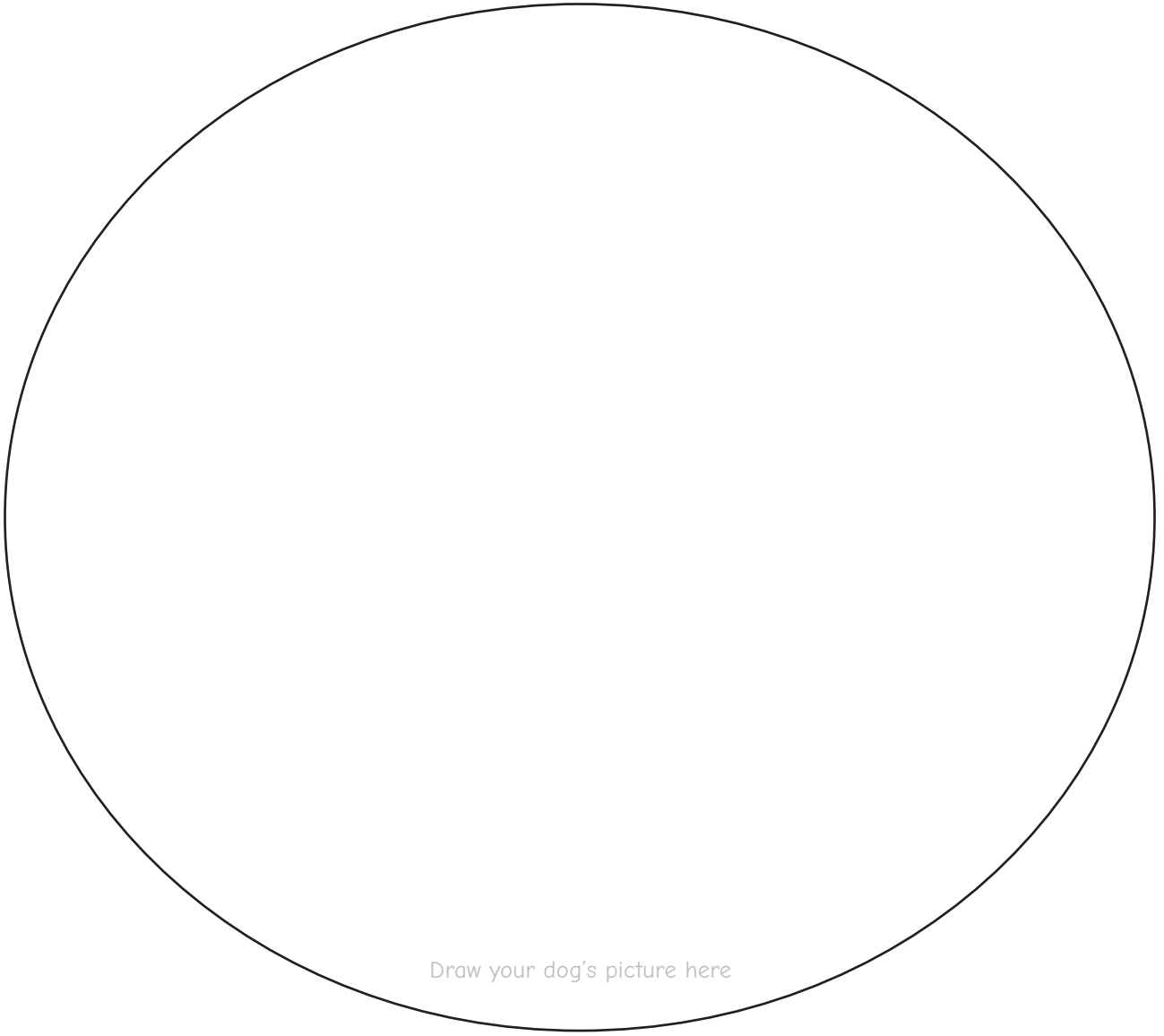
Having a dog as a best friend would make me feel...



A vertical column of four horizontal lines, intended for writing how having a dog as a best friend would make one feel.

Rehoming

Use a title to get peoples' attention



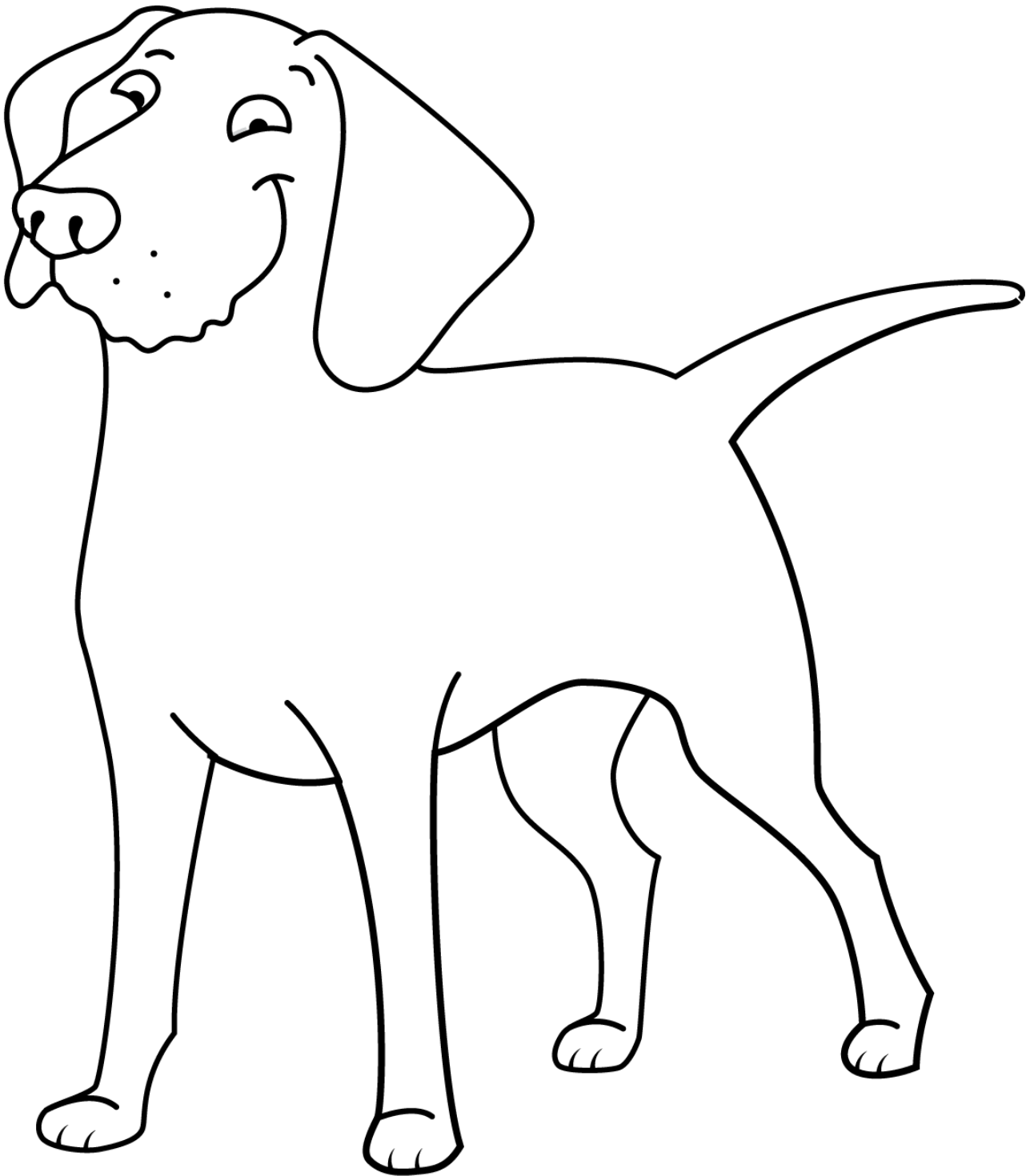
Draw your dog's picture here

Remember to include lots of information about the dog to encourage someone to give it a home.

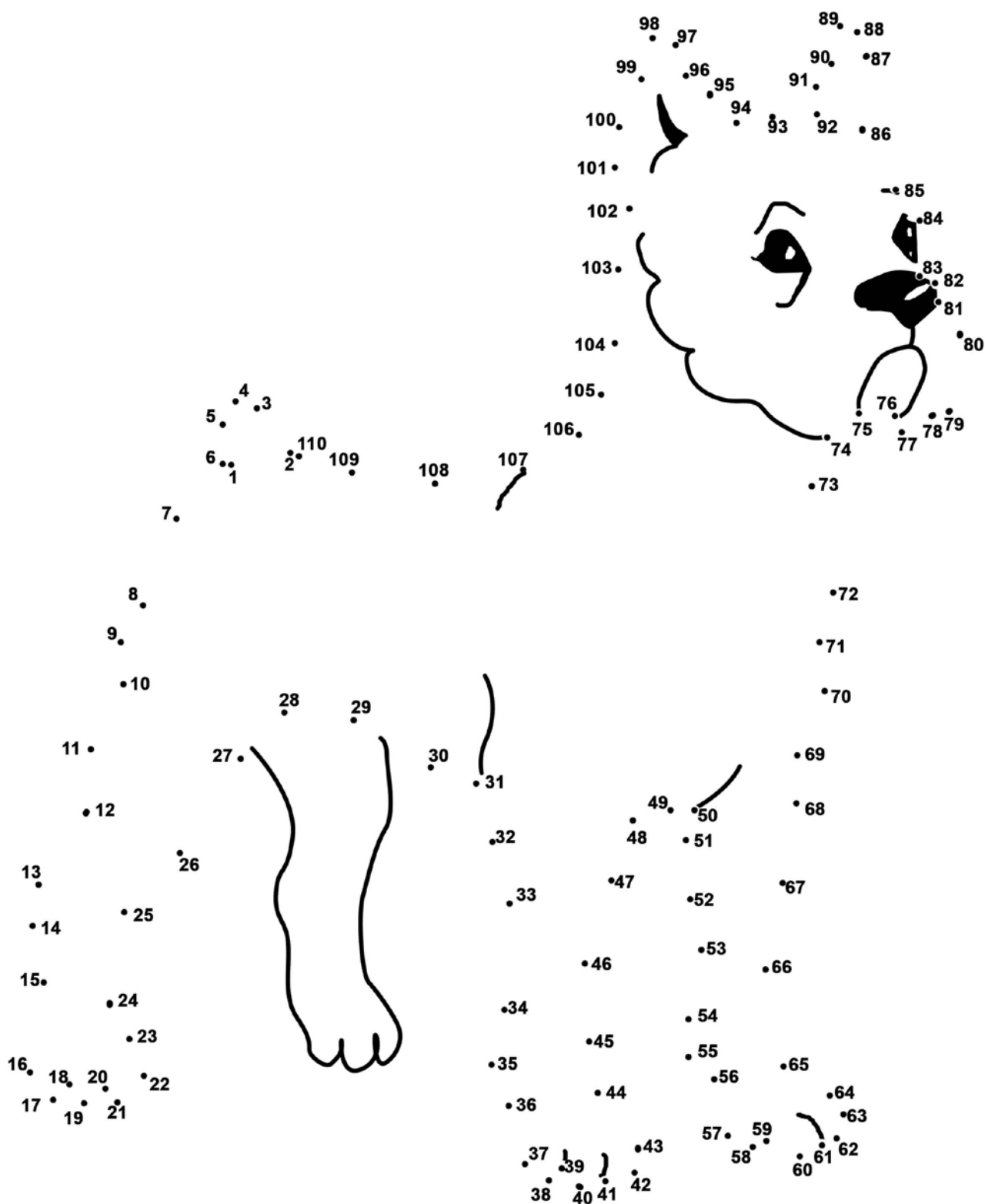
More fun things to do!



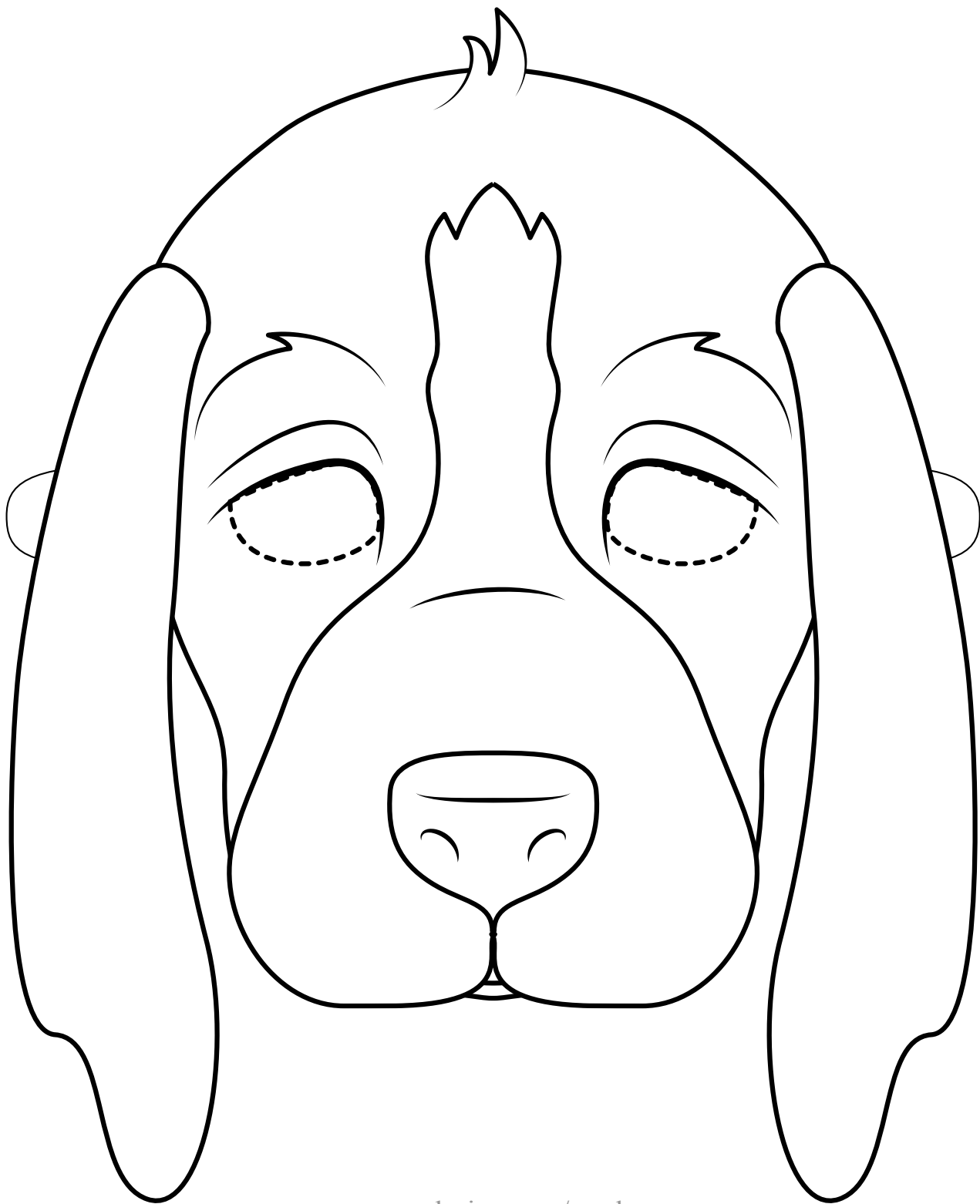
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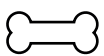
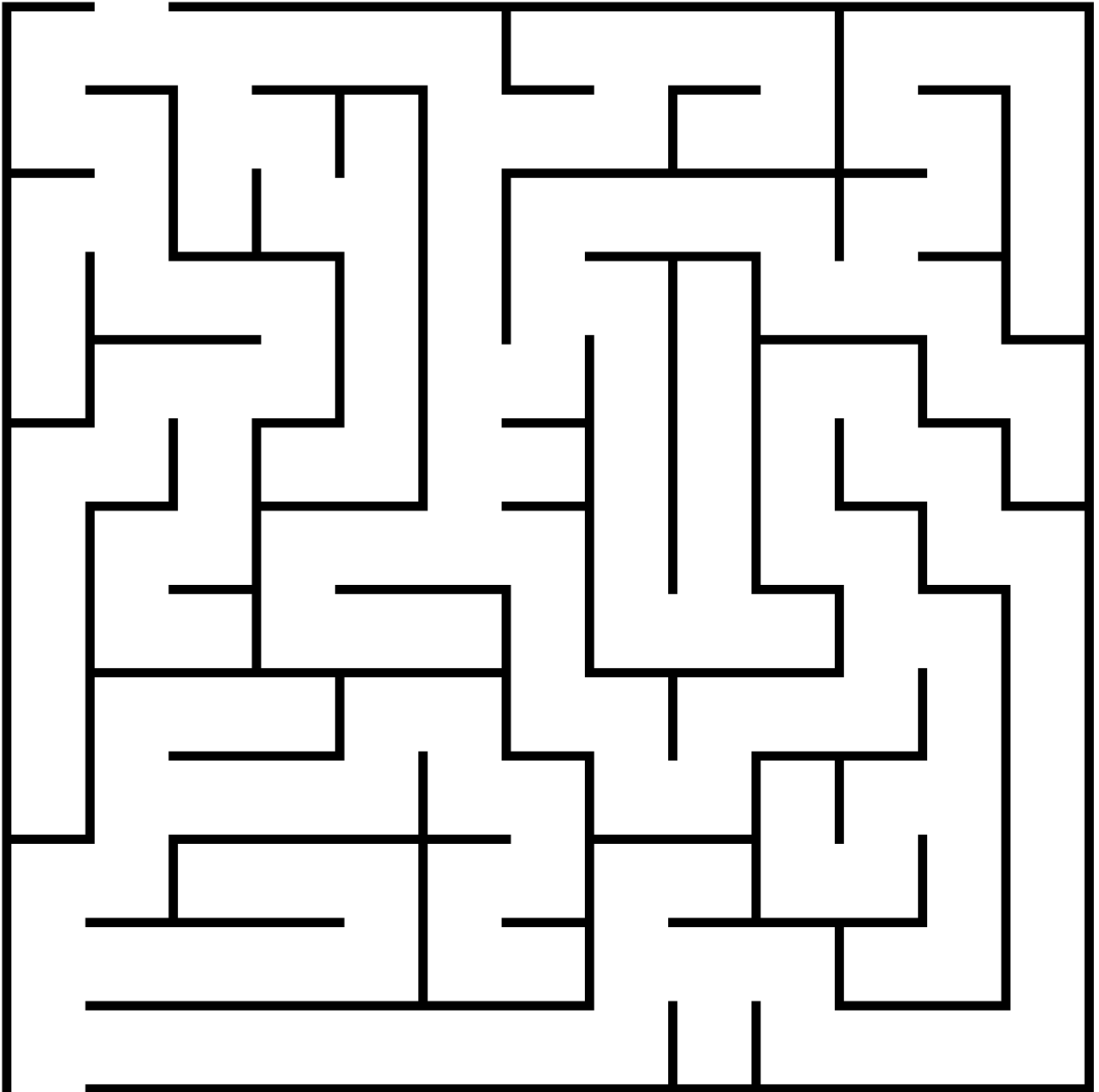
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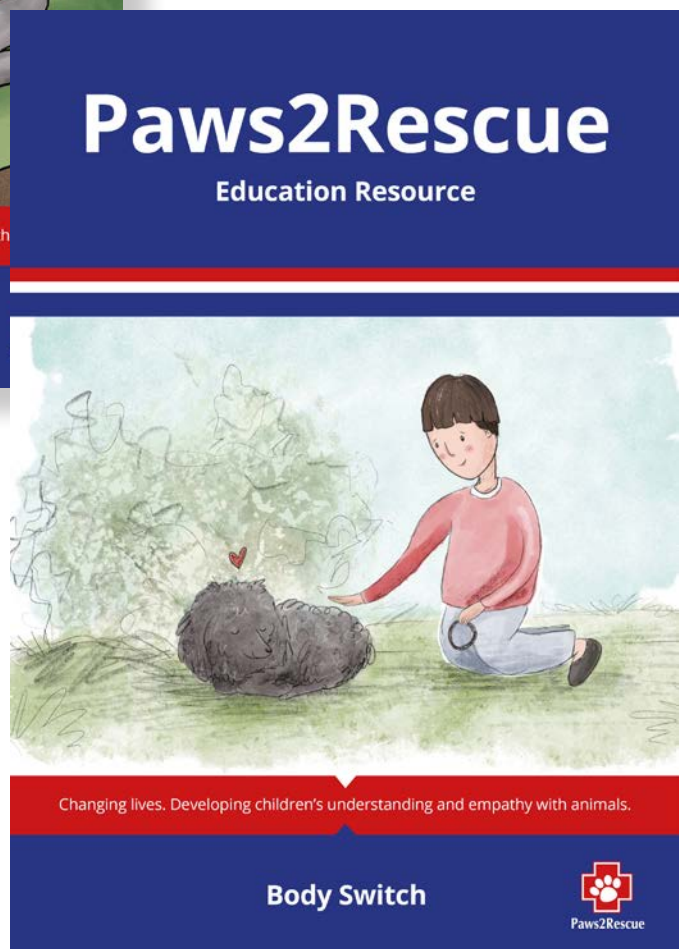
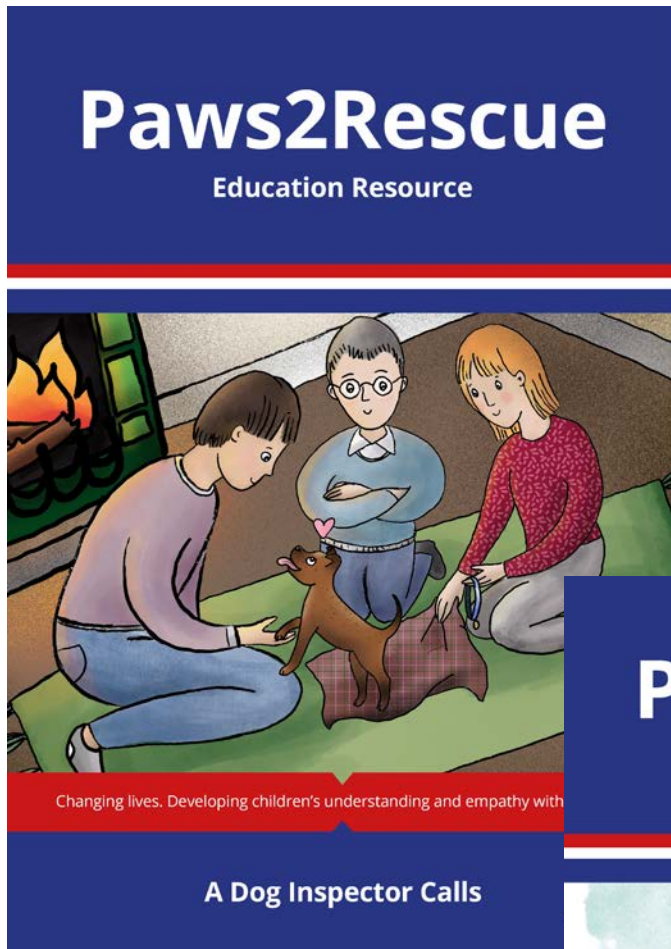


START



FINISH!

Other resources available:



Contact us

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www.paws2rescue.com



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