

So You Want to Be?

DOG TRAINER

OBJECTIVES

After viewing, students should be able to:

- characterize what a dog trainer does, and describe some activities which are involved in this career
- list school subjects which would be important to take, and why
- discuss how to go about being a dog trainer
- begin to consider what they would like to do in the future, and how to go about reaching their goals

NOTE TO EDUCATOR:

At this age it is not important to make a firm career decision and viewers should not be encouraged to do so. What is important is learning about possibilities, and expanding one's own view of oneself as a productive adult.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before viewing:

Ask students to describe their pets and what their pets can do. Are any of the pets trained or are they just doing what they know naturally? If some are trained, how were they trained? Indicate that a dog trainer does more than make a dog sit or stay. She trains dogs for important tasks.

After viewing:

- What does Angela Sumpter train dogs to do? (be service and hearing dogs)
- What does a service dog do? (turns on lights, retrieves things, opens doors, etc. for people who are in wheelchairs or otherwise physically restrained)
- How about a hearing dog? (recognizes phone, doorbell and fire alarm sounds, among others, and alerts the deaf person to the sound)
- Why are dogs used to do these things? (they're the most trainable of small animals and have a desire to please)
- Can all dogs be trained to be service dogs? (no, they need to be calm, intelligent, focused and the right size)
- Besides training the dog, what do trainers have to do? (choose the dog, be sure he stays healthy and groomed, match the dog with the recipient)
- What does Sumpter say is the best way to train a dog? (with positive reinforcement and praise, not discipline or scolding) Do most creatures, including people, respond better to praise than scolding? What are some examples of positive reinforcement people use? (compliments, good school grades, praise, smiles, etc)
- What does the recipient of the dog need to know? (how to groom and maintain a healthy dog, how to work with the dog)
- What education does a dog trainer need? (dog training courses, some background in psychology and animal behavior, assisting other trainers)
- For what purpose Sumpter use a computer? (primarily for email to keep in touch with recipients)
- What kind of person would make a good dog trainer? (someone with patience, love of animals, understanding of how they think, willing to work long hours and be physically active)

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Dogs have been trained to do many things for people. Have small groups research other kinds of service dogs such as seeing eye dogs, rescue dogs, search dogs, etc.
- The video notes that dogs, wolves, jackals, hyenas, foxes and coyotes are part of the canine family. Ask for volunteers to research the canid family, what all these species have in common, and why dogs, among all the members of the family, are the only ones who have become domesticated pets. How and when might dogs have become companions of humans?