

DOGS vs. HUMANS

A SHOWDOWN OF THE SENSES

Discussion and Activity Guide

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About the Book

In a showdown of the senses, who would come out as top dog: canines or humans? This junior nonfiction book for ages 6 to 9 creates a fierce but fun competition, comparing the ways dogs and humans perceive the world through each of the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.

As dogs and humans are playfully pitted against each other, with one round for each sense, young readers will discover the scientific and evolutionary explanations behind our differences. It's a close race! Humans win for sight, with better depth perception, distance, and color vision. But dogs are stronger sniffers—with their noses, some can even locate people buried in an avalanche or detect an illness before a doctor has diagnosed it. And the winner is ... Well, in the end, it's a tie!

With lively, cartoon-style illustrations, this book is an engaging and informative introduction to dog behavior that can help kids better understand and appreciate their canine companions.

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READING LEVELS

Grade level 2-4

Before Reading

- Can you guess what this book is about? Does the title give you a hint?
- What do you think are some differences between the way humans and dogs see, hear, taste, feel, or smell the world?

After Reading

- Did you see different types of dogs in the illustrations? Did you recognize some of them?
- What are some of the ways dogs and humans are the same?
- What are some ways dogs and humans are different?
- What do you think the author means when she says, "dogs are great at being dogs, and humans are great at being humans."





What Did You Learn Activity

While reading *Dogs vs. Humans* aloud to the class, pause at each spread and ask the class:

- What Have We Learned?
- What Questions Do We Have?

Make two columns on the board for the two questions above and write down the students' answers after each spread. Once the book is complete, see how many of the questions in the questions column ended up being answered further along in the book. For those questions that weren't answered, discuss as a class how those answers might be found through research. Then assign specific questions from the questions column and ask the students to do some research in books or the internet to find the answers. Record those answers in a third column on the board labeled Answers We Found.



Letter Writing Activity

Dogs don't experience the world the way humans do. Ask the students to imagine they are a dog and have them write a letter in that dog's voice. What might the dog notice about the classroom or the schoolyard? How might the dog behave in those places? What would the dog's favourite things be and why?



Fun Facts

There are more than five senses. For example, proprioception (pro-pree-oh-SEP-shun) is the sense of where your body is in space. Some scientists think there may be over 30 senses!

Did you know there are over 350 breeds of dog? From the tiny chihuahua to the giant Irish wolfhound, they are all the same species of animal.

Dogs' eyes glow at night when they're caught by a beam of light. That's because the mirror-like layer at the back of their eyes reflects the light back out at you.

It's a myth that only certain parts of your tongue can taste certain tastes. In fact, your entire tongue can sense all the different tastes. But the sides and the tip of your tongue are more sensitive than the middle.

Your house and yard smell different in the morning compared to the afternoon or evening. This rhythm of daily scents helps dogs tell time with their noses.

Senses Scavenger Hunt

The world around us is full of sensory experiences. Sometimes we don't notice them because we've seen, heard, or felt them so many times. Discuss how our senses help us to meet our needs and explore our environment. Do a dog's senses help them in the same way?

Go on a 5 senses scavenger hunt to get the students thinking about what they can notice about their classroom and school. Also, think about what a dog might or might not notice.

SMELL

Find something that smells really strong. What does it smell like to you? What would it smell like to a dog?

Find something with no smell. Would a dog be able to sense an odour coming from that item?

TASTE

Find something you might eat. What would it taste like to you? What would it taste like to a dog?

Find something a dog might eat. Would you eat it too?

SIGHT

Find something red. Would a dog be able to see that? If so, what would it look like?

Find something moving. Could a dog see that better or worse than you?

TOUCH

Find something rough. Does it feel the same if you touch it with your fingertip instead of your elbow? What part of a dog would best feel the roughness?

Find something warm. Can you feel the warmth without touching it? Would a dog be able to do that?

SOUND

Find something that makes a super low sound. Would a dog hear it better or worse than you?

Find something that makes a high-pitched sound. How would that sound to a dog? Loud or quiet?

