## Dog ownership case study
*Student copy*

Lee was the only one without a dog. Well that wasn't quite true as Kenny and Ben didn't have a dog either but they said they were going to get one soon. So Lee met a man who said he had several different pups to choose from. He went to a lock-up garage and picked a dark brown Staffordshire bull terrier cross from a cage containing others. The man said she was a strong pup and would do well. She cost him all his savings and he called her Coco.

He had never had a puppy before and his mum was always nagging him to take her out as she was making a mess in the flat. His mum didn't understand that he had other things to do. As she grew it was costing too much to feed her so he mixed her dog food with bread to make it go further.

When he took her out with his friends she was very lively. Coco would bark at other dogs and jump up at people. When he walked her, she pulled ahead of him. This was annoying so he bought a chain which tightened around her throat when she pulled. However, instead of walking by his side, she pulled even harder.  His friends joked that he couldn't control his dog.

One day he was so frustrated with the pulling that when he was in the park he let her off the lead to run around. This was good for a while as Coco dashed around and burned off lots of energy. Then she saw another dog and ran off to play. Lee called her but she darted around while he chased her. When he caught her he pushed her hard on to the ground and shouted at her. No dog was going to make him look stupid. Coco looked wide eyed and sorry.

The next week he let her off again but this time in the play area that had a fence all around it. His friend joined him and they played with Coco. A mother and child entered the play area and Coco ran up to them and jumped up at the child excitedly. Lee shouted at Coco and she ran off. The playground gate wasn't shut and she ran out onto the street. She ran into the road and was struck by a passing van.



Coco lay on the road breathing but not moving. The driver of the van got out and yelled at Lee: the damage for the van would have to be paid for; he should keep the dog under control. Lee panicked and sprinted off leaving Coco and the driver behind him….

### Discussion questions

Identify where Lee made the wrong choices in this story.

In what ways could Lee have raised his dog to give both of them a better opportunity of living happily together?

How can Lee respond to this situation to bring a positive outcome for him and Coco.

Where can you find out about caring for a dog?

**Teacher's notes – Dog ownership case study**

The case study is meant to act as a discussion topic for your class. You may find the following information useful to reinforce some of the points raised by your students.

Choosing a puppy
Buy a puppy from a breeder where you can see the mother who should be healthy and good natured with people. The puppies should be in a clean area and are born into a home environment. Puppies learn about the world from their mother and by meeting new experiences in the first few months of life. Pups that have been kept away from the world will be fearful and grow into nervous adults.

People selling puppies should be able to give you good advice on feeding, worming, vaccination and house training. It is best to obtain puppies from an accredited breeder or a trusted rescue centre.

Before getting any pet make sure that the responsibilities to the pet are fully understood and that everyone in the household is happy for the pet to live there. You have to be over 16 to legally own a dog.

Giving a puppy the wrong diet can effect bone growth and immunity to disease and well as general development. Deficiencies and excesses during this period can give problems for life.

Training and exercise
Dog training is essential to establish good manners and control over your dog. Teaching a few basic commands such as sit, leave and come will really make a difference. A good dog trainer will show you how to train your dog using positive methods. These methods reward good behaviour and ignore bad. Avoid methods that hurt, frighten or punish the animal.

Choke chains can damage the neck of the dog and hinder breathing. They are old fashioned, cruel and unnecessary. Dogs try to escape the pain by pulling forwards. Instead use a head collar or training harness on a dog that pulls. Use treats to keep you dog by your side and encourage your dog with your voice. The dog will then learn that it is much nicer to walk with you than pull ahead. A good dog trainer will soon show you how to train your dog to walk nicely without hurting it.

Teacher's notes continued

By using treats you can train your dog to sit when it meets people. This will also keep the dog calm and avoid it jumping up.

Exercising your dog – there are some areas where you are not allowed to exercise dogs. These include playgrounds and some green spaces where there are notices displayed. Do not let your dog off lead when there is traffic around.

Never let you dog off the lead unless you have trained it to come back. Whenever you catch your dog, however long it has taken for you to get it back, always praise the dog for returning and give it a treat too. If you punish your dog when it returns it will be much less likely comeback to you next time.

When we think that dogs look guilty or sorry what we are seeing is the dog's reaction to our emotion. The dog is telling us that it doesn't like our angry voice or gestures and wants you to stop. It does not feel sorry or guilty.

<u>Dangerous Dogs Act</u>, 1991 (amended 1997)

The owner of any dog that is dangerously out of control in a public place can be prosecuted. This includes dogs that jump up or lunge as well as those that bite or threaten. There are also four breeds of dog that are banned from being bred, sold or exchanged in the UK:  Pit Bull Terrier type, Japanese Tosa type, Dogo Argentino type, Fila Brasiliero type. It is illegal to own these dogs without an exemption from court. These dogs can be seized by the police and put to sleep and the owner may be prosecuted.