The Main Idea Strategy: Student Practice Lessons

Name

Passage #10

Date

**How to Treat Pets**

Have you ever tried to pick up your pet cat or dog, only to have it bite or scratch at you when you touched it? If so, you might have thought at the time that your pet was angry or even mean. But, maybe there are other reasons that the pet bit you. Even if you have a very nice pet, you might have bothered it. Or, maybe your pet felt scared by something you did.

Think about the way you’ve treated your pet in the past. If you rub your dog’s head, feed it, and play with it, your dog would probably like to play with you. Also, think of your pet like a person. When someone upsets you or makes you mad, don’t you remember it? Pets remember things too. If people hit their dogs a lot and are mean to them, then the dogs probably are going to avoid the person that’s causing the stress.

Also, consider what would happen if you allow your pet to run in the road or bite you. The pet will likely continue to do those activities, unless you make it stop. Generally, you would have a hard time training a pet if it has spent most of its life with little or no rules. It’s like the saying goes, “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

Finally, pretend that someone reached into your dinner plate while you were eating. That might startle you. Now, if a dog is in the middle of eating, and you put your hand in the way, your hand might get bitten. Does that mean the dog was mad, or that you shouldn’t do that? Pets cannot talk, so they react in other ways, which could include a bite or scratch.

Have you ever heard of the golden rule? It is “Treat others as you would like to be treated.” If you get a pet and it bites you or does not play with you, try to think about the golden rule. Think about other reasons for the pet’s behavior before saying that the animal is mean.

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