Understanding the Puppy Mill Pipeline

Grade Level / Audience: Middle School/High School/Community Education

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Learning Objectives

- Describe how the puppy mill pipeline operates.
- Identify ethical concerns associated with commercial dog breeding.
- Evaluate the impact of purchasing decisions on animal welfare.
- Propose actions individuals can take to prevent the proliferation of puppy mills.

Materials Needed

- Printed or digital copies of the 'Puppy Mill Pipeline' overview
- Access to the web on a screen
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- E-book of *A Dog Named 647*

Lesson Introduction

- Begin with a question: 'Where do most puppies in pet stores and sold online come from?'
- Show images or short video clips of commercial breeding facilities.
- Introduce the term 'puppy mill' and explain its meaning.

Core Content & Activities

Part 1: How the Pipeline Works

- Present the flow of mass-bred puppies from commercial dog breeders to buyers.
- Activity: Create a flowchart showing the journey of a puppy from breeder to buyer.

Part 2: Concerns About Commercial Breeding

- Discuss issues such as overbreeding, early separation, lack of socialization, health and genetic issues.
- Activity: Small group discussion—students list potential long-term effects on dogs raised in poor conditions.

Part 3: Licensing Misconceptions

- Explain why being 'licensed' doesn't guarantee humane treatment.
- Activity: Students read excerpts from inspection reports and highlight red flags.

Discussion & Reflection

- What does ethical dog ownership look like?
- How can consumers make informed choices?

- Why is transparency important in animal welfare?

Assessment / Wrap-Up

- Students write a short reflection or complete a quiz
- Name two ways the puppy mill pipeline operates
- List three concerns about commercially bred puppies
- Describe one action individuals can take to prevent unethical breeding

Extension / Homework

- Research a local shelter or rescue organization
- Interview someone who adopted a pet and share their experience
- Create a poster or digital campaign to raise awareness
- Read A Dog Named 647 and recap themes found in the book