Name: _____ Date: _____

Looking After a Dog

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 453 words

Theo has a dog named Rufus. Rufus is brown and fast and loud, and Mom and Dad chose him at a rescue. Dad says that a grown-up always decides about getting a dog. Every morning Rufus jumps on Theo's bed and licks his nose. A dog is a big job, so Theo has a list.

Job one is water. Rufus slurps noisily from his big bowl and spills half of it on the floor. A dog needs clean, fresh water all day. Theo pours out the old water, washes the bowl, and fills it up again.

Job two is breakfast. Dad weighs the food on a small scale. Theo wants to give Rufus extra, but Dad says too much food makes a dog too heavy. Treats are fine now and then, but then Rufus gets a little less dinner.

Job three is the walk. Theo and Dad clip the leash to Rufus's collar, which has an ID tag on it. Rufus sniffs every post and every bush. His nose is much better than ours, so every smell tells him something.

Rufus needs to run and play, too. Exercise keeps a dog healthy, and play keeps him from getting bored. In the fenced yard Theo throws a ball. Rufus chases it, drops it, and wants it thrown again. A bored dog can chew up a shoe!

Then Rufus is tired, so he goes to his bed in a quiet corner, away from the drafts. Theo leaves him alone there, and so does everyone in the family. Nobody likes to be woken up when they are trying to sleep, and dogs are no different.

Job four is a brush. Rufus has short fur, so Theo brushes him once a week. Dad looks at his ears and his nails, and if the nails click on the floor, it is time for a trim. A grown-up does the trimming.

Some food is not safe for dogs. Chocolate, grapes, raisins, and onions can make a dog very sick. Theo never shares his snack without asking. If Rufus ever eats something he should not, Theo tells Dad right away. A vet knows what to do.

Rufus cannot say when he feels sick, so if he seems very sleepy or sad, Theo tells a grown-up. A vet knows how to help, and Dad never gives Rufus any medicine that the vet has not chosen. The vet also gives Rufus his shots to keep him healthy.

At the end of the day Theo washes his hands with soap and water. Dogs carry germs, and soap washes them away. Rufus flops onto Theo's feet and sighs. Ask a grown-up to look at Peabody Pets with you. You will find it at pet.peabody.kids.

Questions

1. Why does Dad weigh Rufus's food?

A. Too much food makes a dog too heavy
B. Rufus does not like food
C. The bowl is too small

2. What is a tag on a dog's collar for?

A. To make a jingle
B. To help find his home
C. To keep the dog warm

3. In this book, what does exercise mean?

A. Sleeping in a bed
B. Eating a treat
C. Running and playing

4. What does Theo do if Rufus eats something he should not?

A. He tells Dad right away
B. He waits until tomorrow
C. He gives Rufus a treat

5. Why does Theo wash his hands at the end of the day?

A. His hands are cold
B. Dogs carry germs
C. Rufus asked him to

Words to know

leash: walking strap
exercise: active play
vet: animal doctor
germs: tiny bad bugs

Answer key: Looking After a Dog

1. A. Too much food makes a dog too heavy
2. B. To help find his home
3. C. Running and playing
4. A. He tells Dad right away
5. B. Dogs carry germs