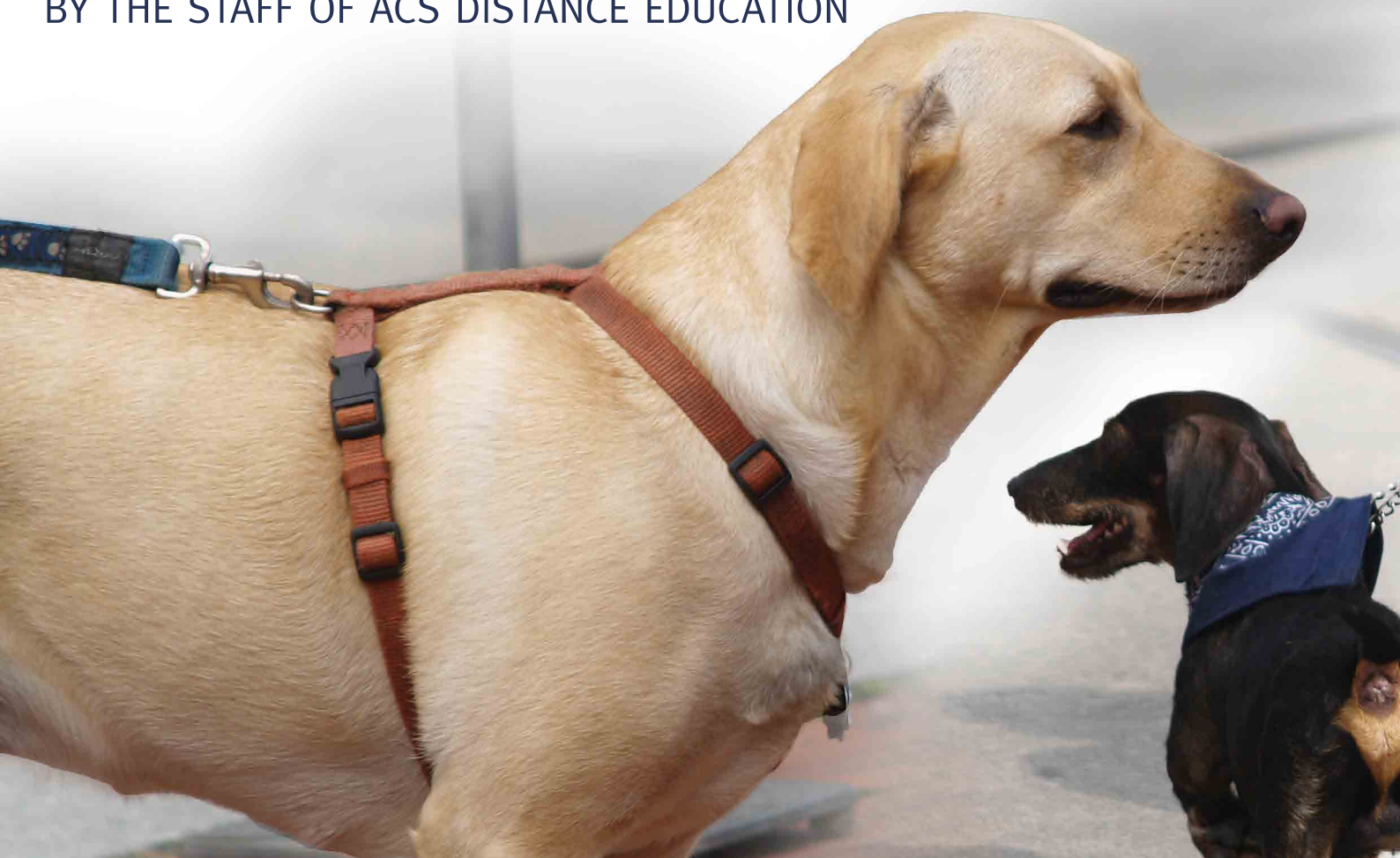




DOGS

CARING FOR DOGS

BY THE STAFF OF ACS DISTANCE EDUCATION



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INTRODUCTION

The friendship between humans and dogs is one of the oldest in history. From archeological findings, it is known that the first dog (*Canis familiaris*) domesticated by humans was in fact a wolf (*Canis lupus*). Dogs did not become domesticated through force, there was a friendship and mutual benefit of the relationship which enabled both to eat and therefore survive.

The evolution of the dog was rapid. All physical and psychological characters that we see in dogs did originate in the genetics of the wolf. So the wolf followed two paths – in one path the species remained the same; wild, untamed and fierce, but the

other pathway to evolution enabled the existence of dogs we see today.

In every component of life, dogs have accompanied humans. In war, in sport, in hunting, in scientific discoveries, in work, in wealth and in art, dogs have been cooperating with humans. Nowadays there are many dogs whose lives have meaning and purpose beyond companionship; however the majority of dogs over the world are pets living in homes as much loved family members. They offer companionship, love and loyalty; the dog remains deeply a part of human life and our best friend.



Dogs are humans' best friends

CHAPTER 1: DOGS AND HUMANS

HISTORY

We accept the wolf was domesticated by humans 25-30 million years ago. Throughout history, dogs have functioned successfully alongside humans and their role in social environments was frequently documented through paintings, ancient drawings and sculptures. Prehistoric paintings associate dogs as household companions, not an animal used for a food source (unlike bison, deer, boar etc). The first proof of dogs used as guards become evident from 4500BC when images of dogs wearing a collar appear.

Egyptian art shows some of the dog breeds we are most familiar with today including the hounds, dachshunds and mastiffs. In Egypt killing a dog was a crime often punishable by death, however the Hebrew culture was known for their dislike of the dog – they felt no positive outcomes were found in canine interactions and instead dogs were considered to be dirty animals which were left to fend for themselves. In many regions the dog was not originally a companion, dog meat was considered a delicacy, often served at meals of aristocracy. This view remains today in some cultures and countries, and sadly dog meat is still served as food.

During the roman to the medieval period, dogs played a hardy part in war. Their lives were taken as part of the military procedure in which they were first used to carry messages inside their stomachs. On arrival at their destination, the dog was then killed in order to quickly retrieve the message. The coming of the barbarians (considered by the Greeks as people who originated from the Persian Empire), after the fall of the Roman Empire throughout 400-500BC, saw dogs being left to fend for themselves again and many packs of wild and untamed dogs emerged during that era. Finally at the end of this period, dogs re-emerged as hunters during times of extreme famine.

Throughout the middle ages dogs often provided companionship and protection of monks living in monasteries. An example of this is the German Shepherd bred by German monks who required a strong, brave guarding animal to keep thieves from stealing the treasures of their monasteries.

There are innumerable other examples of dogs used throughout this time in war. As the need for the dog strengthened during this time, we can see the introduction of some basic dog care and veterinary health being introduced. This was very simple; suggestions included dogs should be kept warm, skin conditions could be eased with bathing and feeding should be regular from clean bowls.

Finally during the Renaissance dogs finally became a creature which had earned the respect of humans. Cruelty toward dogs became unacceptable during this time, and dogs became a symbol of wealth. Owning a dog for pleasure became common and upper-class women were known to want to groom and care for their dogs greatly, thus the idea of 'lap-dog' was created.