



# Judge the Deed, Not the Breed

Imagine that a German Shepherd Dog recently bit a 2-year-old child in your community. The child's parents had taken their child to play at a park. Max, a German Shepherd Dog, was visiting the same park with his owner. Despite the city's leash law, Max's owner let him off of his leash to play. As Max frolicked around the park, he saw the child playing on the jungle gym. Excited, Max ran up to the child and knocked the small boy to the ground. In an effort to get the boy to play with him, Max accidentally bit the boy on the arm. Fortunately the bite was not severe and required no stitches. However, the parents are outraged by the situation and contacted the mayor. In an effort to prevent future incidences, the city council has now decided to restrict the ownership of all German Shepherd Dogs in the town.

Now pretend that you, too, own a German Shepherd Dog. The dog is your best friend and you love to take him for long walks around town on a leash. Your father has joined a local Search and Rescue dog organization and trained your dog to find missing people. Just last week he was called to duty to help find an 8-year-old child who was lost in the state park near your house. Thanks to your dog, the child was found and reunited with her parents.

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1. The law your city council passed requires that all German Shepherd Dog owners pay an extra licensing fee of \$500, securely fence in their yard and have a muzzle on their dogs at all times when out in public areas. *Why would you object to these restrictions?*
  
2. *Who is most responsible for the incident involving the dog biting the child:*
  - a. Max, because he is a German Shepherd Dog.
  - b. The child, because he should not have been playing in the park.
  - c. The owner, because she should have obeyed the law and kept her dog on a leash.
  
3. *Give two examples of how future situations, like the one described above, could be prevented.*
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  - ◆ \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. *Instead of punishing all German Shepherd Dogs in your community, what would be a better alternative? (Circle all that apply)*
  - a. Expand the law to include other breeds such as Rottweilers, "pit bulls," Doberman Pinschers, and Akitas.
  - b. Educate the community about ways to avoid dog bites.
  - c. Create a law that addresses the actions of the dog, not discriminating based on the dog's breed.