

# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

LESSONS  
AND  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR AGES  
6-10

MODULE

1

learn their language

and earn their trust

JUNIOR DOG  
GUARDIANS

An Educational Program from My Barking Life

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Bonjour!

## Je m'appelle Bisou — pronounced Bee-zoo.

Did you know that dogs “talk” with their bodies? Their tails, ears, eyes, and posture all tell us how they feel.

When you learn to understand these signals, you help dogs feel safe, comfortable, and understood.

In this first module, you'll learn how dogs communicate using:

- Tails
- Ears
- Eyes
- Posture
- Movement

When you finish all the activities, you'll earn your official **Dog Body Language Badge** — your very first step toward becoming an official Junior Dog Guardian!



FUN FACT: BISOU IS FRENCH FOR “KISS.”

“I'M EXCITED TO START OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER — WE'RE GOING TO LEARN HOW DOGS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR BODIES!”



**Goal:** Build empathy and awareness.

**Objectives:** Identify cues, connect behavior to feelings

**Outcomes:** Correct identification of nervous cues.



# Bisou Meets a New Friend

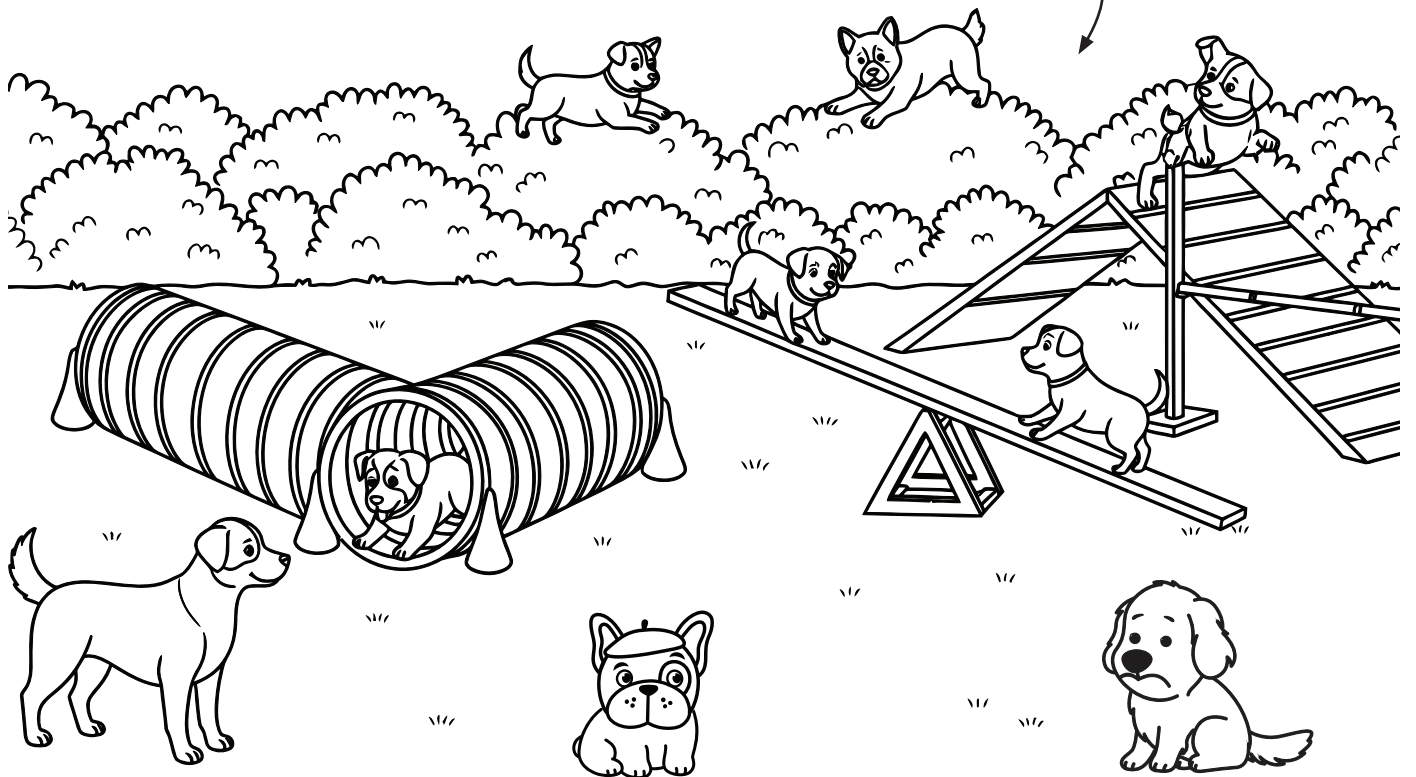
Bisou trotted into the park with her usual happy wiggle. She loved sniffing the grass, watching squirrels, and saying hello to other dogs.

Today, she spotted a dog she'd never met before. She started to approach him but noticed that his head and tail were low, and his ears were pulled back just a little. He leaned away when Bisou took a step closer.

Bisou paused.

The story continues on page 4

COLOR BISOU AND HER FRIENDS AT THE DOG PARK



"Dogs don't use words," she thought. "They use their bodies. I can read this!"

She looked again: soft eyes, slow wag, leaning back.

"Hmmm ... I think he's feeling a little unsure."

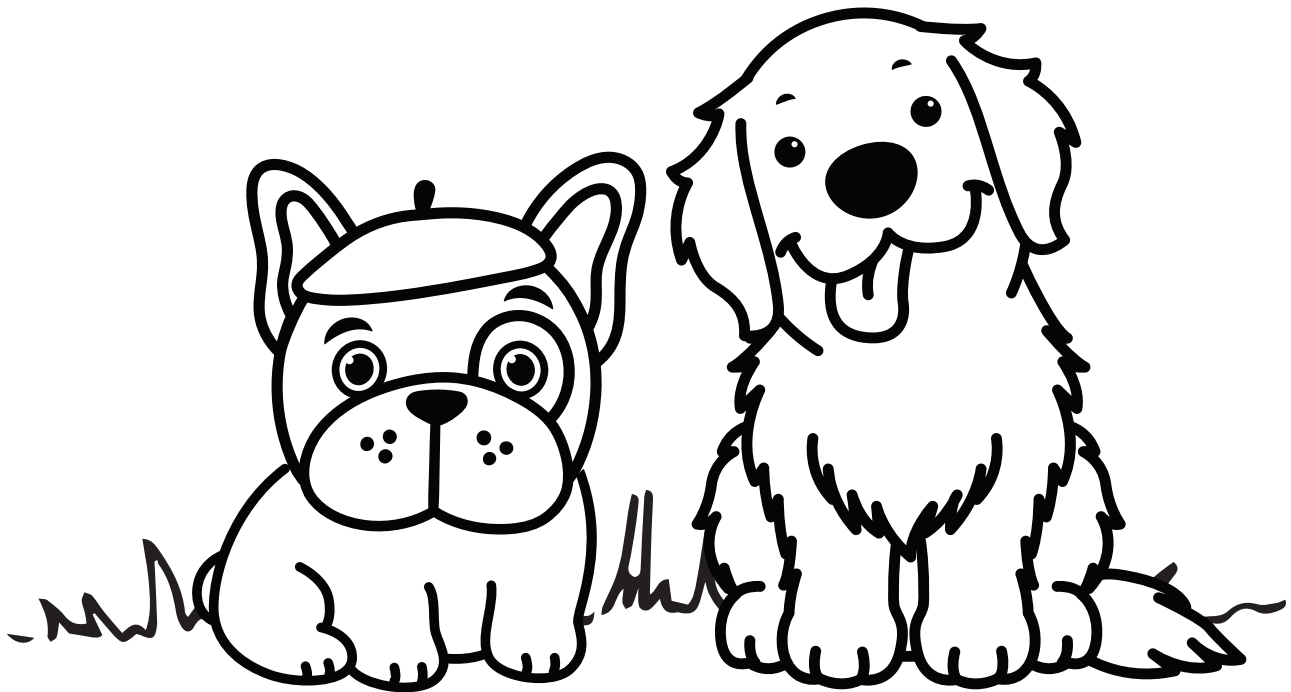
Bisou took a step back and gave him space. After a moment, the dog relaxed and wagged a little higher.

Bisou smiled. "When we listen to dogs' bodies, we help them feel safe."

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**YOU'RE  
LEARNING:**  
*How to notice  
nervous  
dog cues*

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THINK ABOUT IT:

HOW DO YOU THINK BISOU FELT WHEN SHE MET HER  
NEW FRIEND? COLOR THEM TO SHOW THEIR MOODS.

**Goal:** Help kids recognize the four major body-language categories dogs use to communicate.

**Objectives:** Connect each category to a dog's feelings

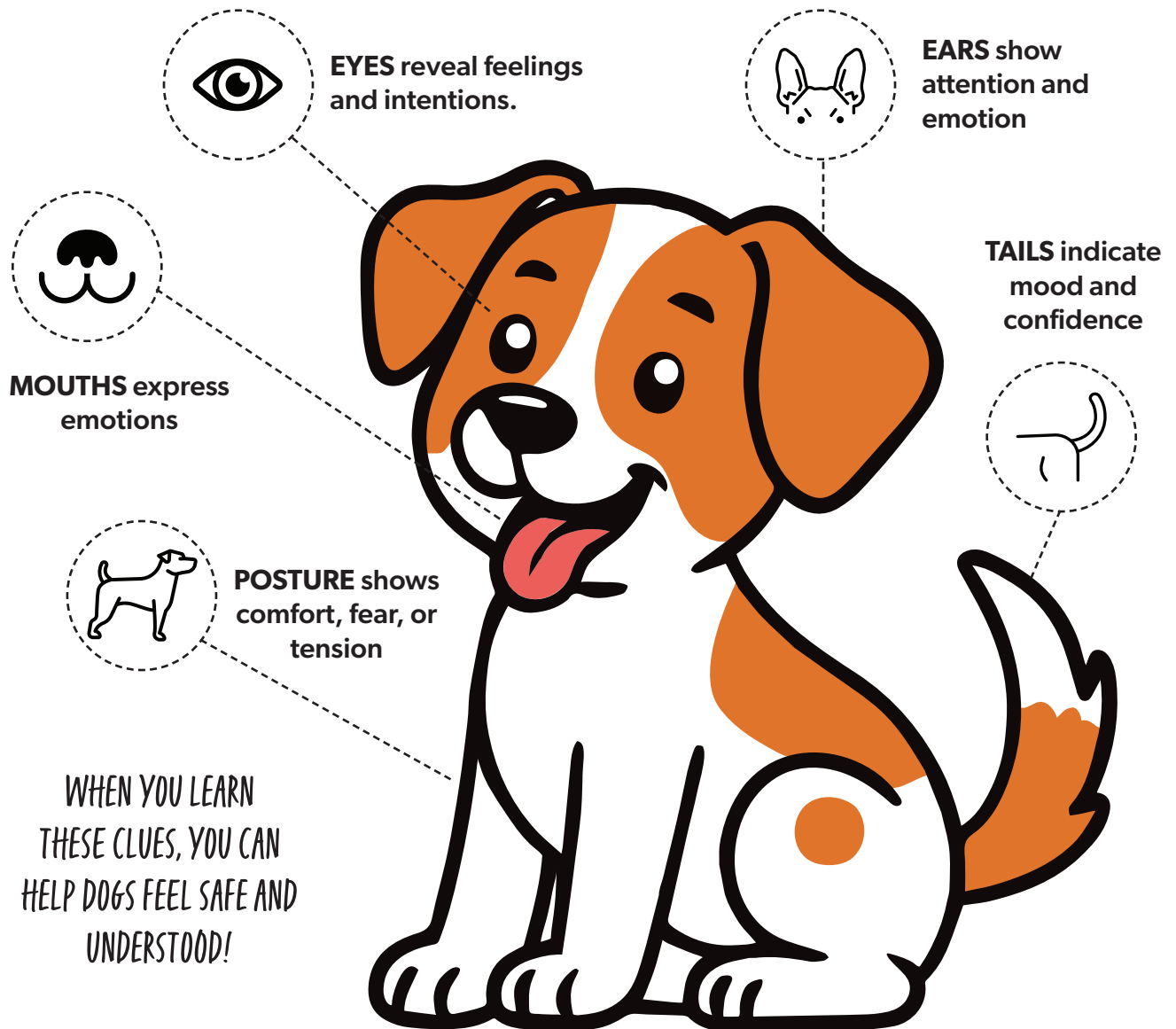
**Outcomes:** Students can name all four T.E.M.P. categories and describe at least one clue from each.



# Know Your Dog's T.E.M.P.

Dogs can't use words to talk to us, but they *can* use their bodies to communicate and show how they feel.

Their **tails (T)**, **ears/eyes (E)**, **mouth (M)**, and **posture (P)** all give clues to their mood.



WHEN YOU LEARN  
THESE CLUES, YOU CAN  
HELP DOGS FEEL SAFE AND  
UNDERSTOOD!

# What Your Dog's Tail Is Telling You

**Goal:** Help kids recognize and interpret common tail positions so they can understand how dogs feel and respond safely.

**Objectives:** Strengthen observation skills by noticing how tail height, movement, and speed change with mood

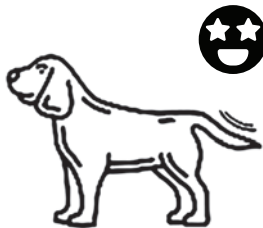
**Outcomes:** Students can correctly name at least four tail positions and explain what each one might mean about a dog's feelings.



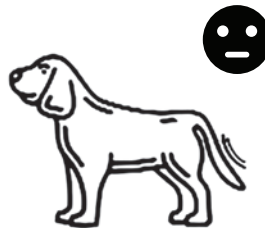
Dogs use their tails to show how they feel. A tail can tell you if a dog is happy, curious, unsure, or asking for space.

By paying attention to tail positions, you can better understand a dog's mood and help them feel safe and comfortable.

This lesson introduces six common tail positions and what each one means.



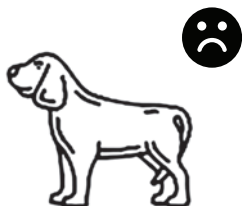
**BIG, WIDE WAG**  
Happy/excited



**TAIL DOWN,  
LITTLE WAGS**  
Unsure/nervous



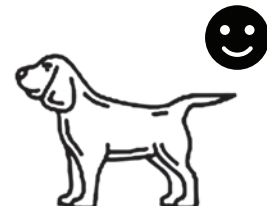
**STRAIGHT UP**  
Alert/cautious



**TUCKED OR  
LYING LOW**  
Scared/nervous



**STIFF TAIL  
QUICK WAGS**  
Unhappy/defensive



**STRAIGHT  
AND LOOSE**  
Relaxed/exploring

# What Your Dog's Eyes Are Saying

**Goal:** Help kids recognize and interpret common eye signals so they can understand how dogs feel and respond safely and kindly.

**Objectives:** Connect each eye cue to the dog's likely emotion

**Outcomes:** Students can correctly name at least four eye cues and explain what each one might mean about a dog's feelings.

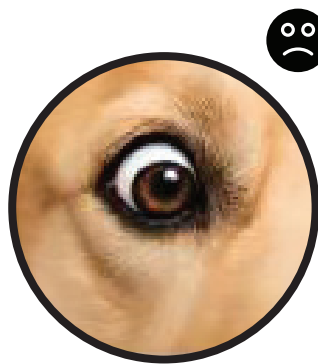


Understanding your dog's eyes helps build trust, strengthen your bond, and keep them comfortable.



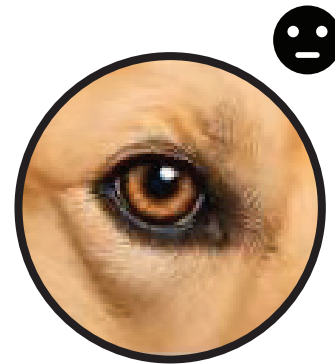
## **SOFT EYES**

Relaxed and trusting



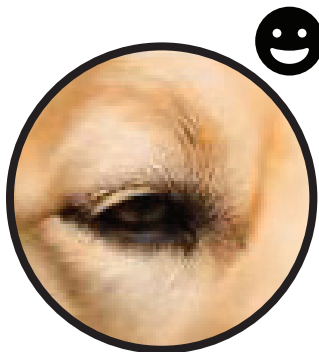
## **WIDE EYES**

Scared, stressed, or startled



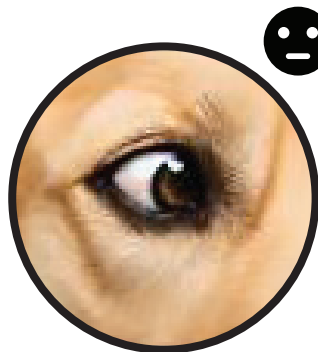
## **DIRECT STARE**

May be feeling challenged



## **SLOW BLINK**

Feels safe and comfortable with you



## **SIDE GLANCE**

May feel unsure or uncomfortable



## **AVOIDING EYE CONTACT**

Can signal submission, stress, or caution

**Goal:** Help kids recognize and interpret common ear positions so they can understand how dogs feel and respond safely.

**Objectives:** Connect each ear position to a dog's likely emotion

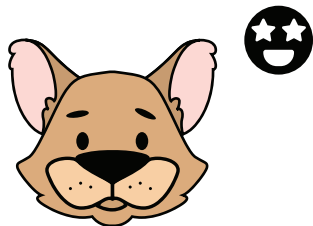
**Outcomes:** Students can correctly name at least four ear positions and explain what each one might mean about a dog's feelings.



# Ear Clues: How Dogs Show Their Feelings

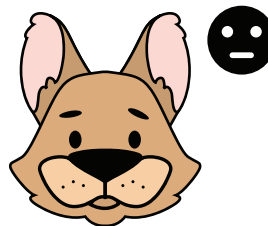
Understanding ear positions helps you notice when a dog is relaxed, curious, unsure, or asking for space.

By paying attention to ear clues, you can help dogs feel safe, comfortable, and understood.



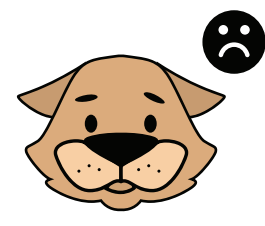
## **RELAXED AND NEUTRAL**

Relaxed, calm, friendly.



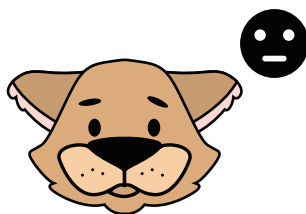
## **FORWARD AND UP**

Alert, attentive, curious. Watch to see if the body is tense.



## **FLATTENED AND PINNED TIGHT**

Fearful, aggressive, stressed.



## **BACK AND DROOPING**

Submissive, possibly nervous.



## **ROTATED**

Listening. Head may also be tilted in the same direction.

# What Posture Tells Us

These six common postures show important clues that help you understand how a dog feels.

**Goal:** Teach kids how to recognize common dog moods by observing posture clues.

**Objectives:** Understand how posture, movement, and facial expression change with emotion

**Outcomes:** Students correctly identify at least four of the six moods and explain one clue for each.



## **HAPPY TAIL WAG**

Loose body wiggles

Relaxed mouth

Whole body wiggles

Whole body movement

**Translation:**

**Ready to play**



## **PLAY BOW**

Front end lowered

Rear in the air

Excited expression

Dynamic movement

**Translation:**


**Invitation to play**



**RELAXED CALM POSE**

- Lying comfortably
- Soft eyes & gaze
- Calm breathing
- Relaxed muscles

**Translation:**  
**Peaceful and content**


 **TIP:** Dogs need quiet, safe rest just like people do. If you surprise a sleeping dog, it might wake up scared — and scared dogs sometimes bite before they understand what’s happening.



**AGGRESSION STANCE**

- Stiff posture
- Forward lean
- Staring eyes
- Tense muscles
- Growling/bark

**Translation:**  
**Defensive warning**


 **TIP:** When a dog’s body looks stiff or serious, it’s not being mean — it’s saying, “Stop. I need space right now.” Giving space keeps everyone safe.

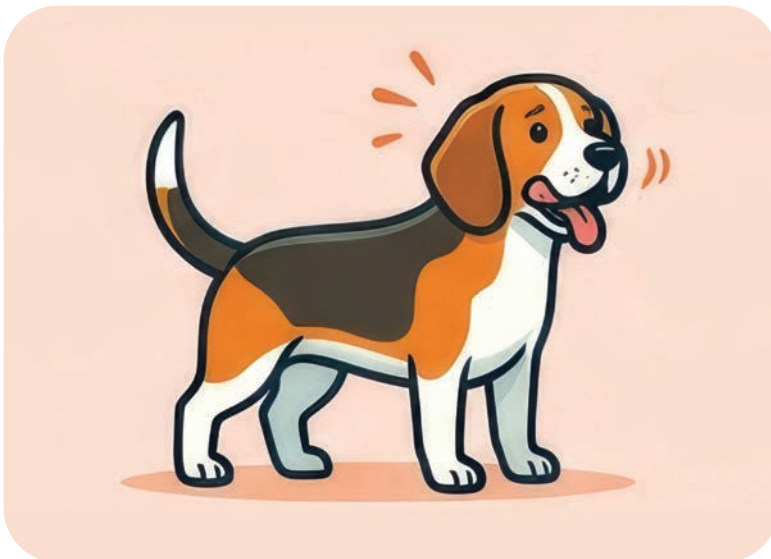


**FEAR POSTURE**

- Tail tucked
- Body held low
- Avoiding contact
- Trembling

**Translation:**  
Scared and submissive


 **TIP:** When a dog's body is low and their tail is tucked, they're feeling scared — give them space and let a grown-up handle the situation.



**ANXIETY SIGNS**

- Lip licking
- Heavy panting
- Yawning
- Pacing or fidgeting
- Dilated pupils

**Translation:**  
Stressed and uncertain

 **TIP:** If a dog is licking their lips, yawning, or pacing, they're feeling stressed — stay calm, move slowly, and don't try to pet them.

**Goal:** Strengthen recognition of safe vs. unsure dog body language using full-body cues.

**Objectives:** Practice sorting dogs into "Safe to Approach" and "Needs Space"

**Outcomes:** Students correctly sort at least 4 out of 6 dogs into the right category.



# Sort the Dogs

Look at each dog's body language. Sort each dog into Safe to Approach or Needs Space based on what their whole body is showing.

## Safe to Approach

(These dogs look relaxed, friendly, or playful).

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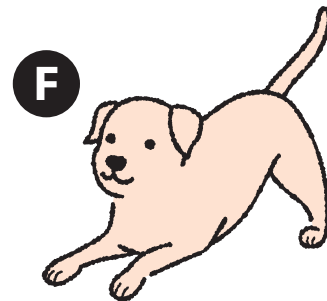
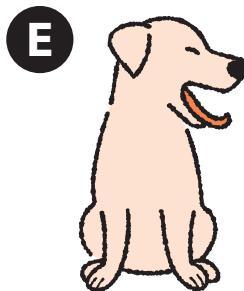
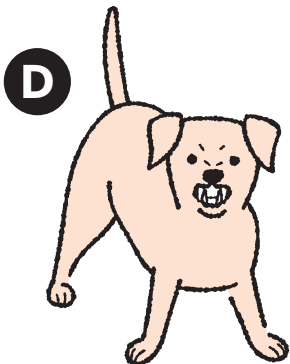
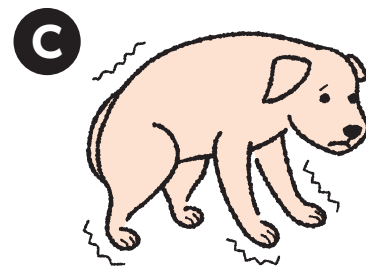
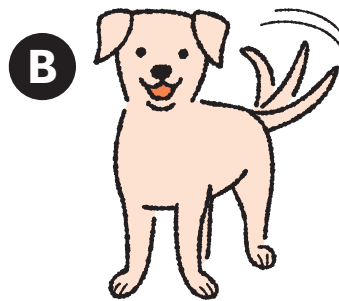
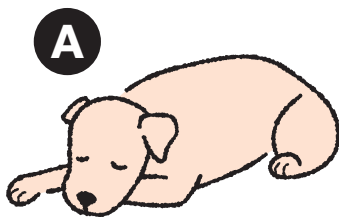
## Needs Space

(These dogs look nervous, scared, overwhelmed, or serious).

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ANSWERS: Safe to approach: A, B, F, Needs Space: C, D, E.

**Goal:** Apply knowledge creatively.

**Objectives:** Draw and label emotion

**Outcomes:** Identify two cues.



# Create Your Own Dog Expression

Draw a dog showing a clear feeling. Use eyes, ears, tail, and posture to show the mood.

Label the feeling your dog is showing.

My dog is feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

Goal: Build observation skills.

Objectives: Identify clues

Outcomes: Three clues identified.



# Spot the Clue 1

Look at the two dogs. Circle the dog that is **safe to approach** based on its body language.

Then list the clues that show the dog is feeling comfortable or friendly.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED: PENCIL

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Goal: Build observation skills.

Objectives: Identify clues

Outcomes: Three clues identified.



# Spot the Clue 2

Look at the two dogs. Circle the dog that is **unsafe to approach** based on its body language.

Then list the clues that show the dog is nervous, scared, or asking for space.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED: PENCIL

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This conversation helps reinforce empathy and observation skills.



# Ask Your Grown-up

“Can you tell me about a time you saw a dog feeling nervous or excited? What clues did you notice?” Write down what they tell you in the space below.

A large, rounded rectangular box with a pointer at the top center is designed for writing. It contains ten horizontal lines spaced evenly down its height.

**Goal:** Demonstrate mastery

**Objectives:** Teach a grown up, explain a cue

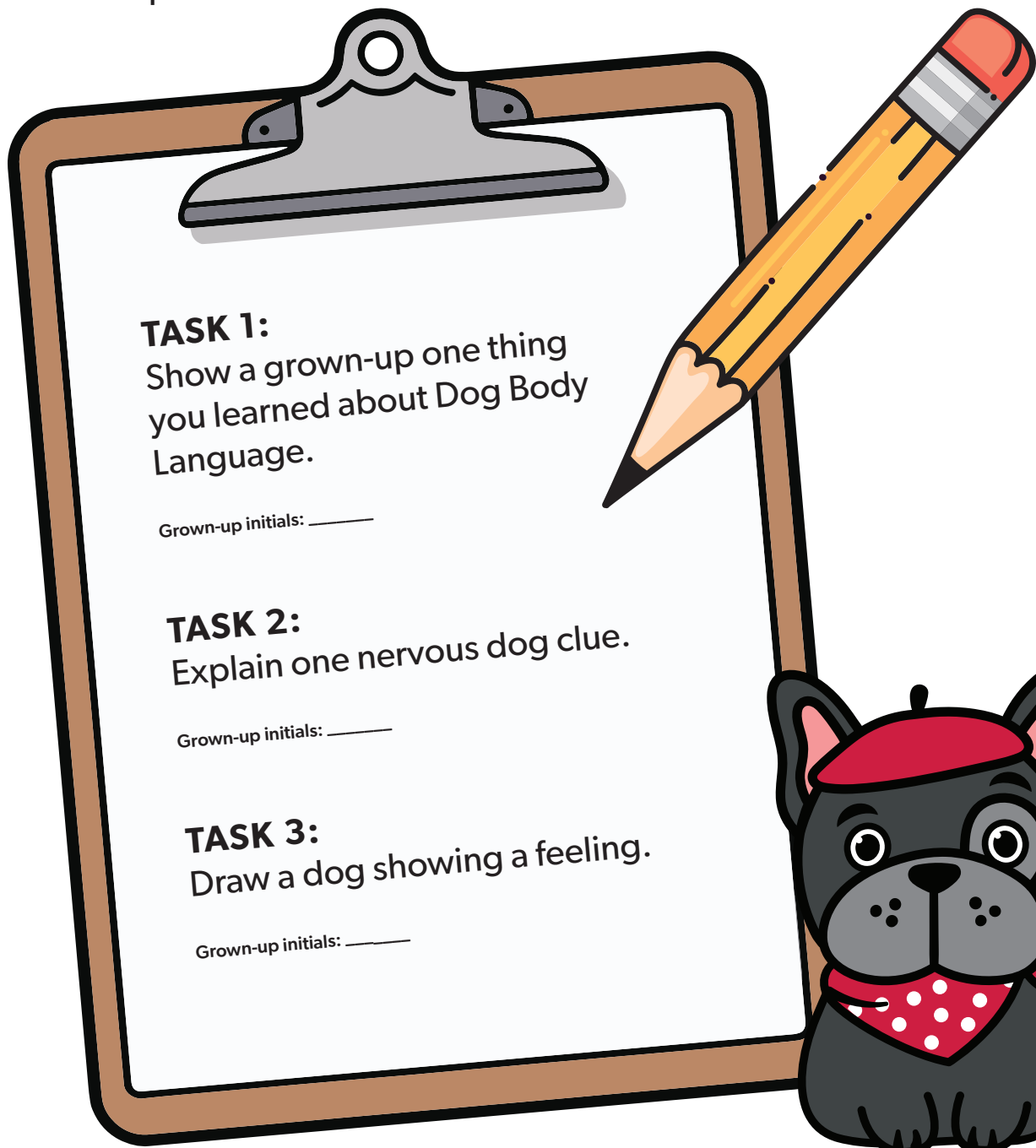
**Outcomes:** All tasks completed.



# Checklist

You're almost finished learning about Dog Body Language.

Complete the tasks below to earn your badge and certificate of completion.



**TASK 1:**  
Show a grown-up one thing  
you learned about Dog Body  
Language.

Grown-up initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**TASK 2:**  
Explain one nervous dog clue.

Grown-up initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**TASK 3:**  
Draw a dog showing a feeling.

Grown-up initials: \_\_\_\_\_

# Congratulations!

You did it! You earned your **Dog Body Language** badge!

This badge shows that you've learned something important that helps dogs feel safe and understood. Cut it out and display it somewhere special — on your wall, your backpack, your binder, or your Junior Dog Guardians badge board.

It's a big achievement, and Bisou is proud of you!

But your journey isn't over — it's just beginning. When you're ready, continue on to **Module 2: Safe and Kind Handling** and earn your next badge on the path to becoming an Official Junior Dog Guardian.



ASK A GROWN-UP  
TO VISIT  
[MYBARKINGLIFE.COM](https://mybarkinglife.com)  
TO DOWNLOAD YOUR  
CERTIFICATE OF  
COMPLETION.



Ask a grown-up to help you cut along the dotted lines.

# Dog Body Language Glossary

## A–C

**Aggression Stance** — A stiff, serious posture that means a dog needs space.

**Anxiety Signs** — Clues like lip licking, yawning, pacing, or heavy panting that show a dog is stressed.

**Avoiding Eye Contact** — When a dog looks away to show caution, nervousness, or submission.

**Back and Drooping Ears** — Ears held back that can mean a dog feels unsure or submissive.

**Big, Wide Wag** — A loose, happy tail wag that shows excitement.

**Body Held Low** — A posture that shows fear or uncertainty.

**Calm Breathing** — Slow, relaxed breaths that show a dog feels safe.

**Comfortable Posture** — A loose, relaxed body that shows a dog is at ease.

## D–F

**Direct Stare** — A hard, focused look that can mean a dog feels challenged or serious.

**Dilated Pupils** — Big pupils that can show fear, stress, or excitement.

**Drooped Ears** — Soft, low ears that often mean calm or relaxed.

**Fear Posture** — Tail tucked, body low, avoiding contact — signs a dog is scared.

# Dog Body Language Glossary

**Flattened or Pinned Ears** — Ears held tight against the head that show fear, stress, or defensiveness. **Forward and Up Ears** — Alert ears that show curiosity or attention.

## G-L

**Growling** — A warning sound that means a dog needs space.

**Happy Tail Wag** — A loose, wiggly wag that shows joy or friendliness.

**Heavy Panting** — Fast breathing that can mean stress or overheating.

**Leaning Back** — A sign a dog feels unsure or wants more space.

**Lip Licking** — A stress signal that shows nervousness or discomfort.

**Loose Body** — Relaxed muscles that show a dog feels safe.

## M-P

**Neutral Tail** — A tail held in a natural, relaxed position.

**Play Bow** — Front down, rear up — a clear invitation to play.

**Pacing** — Moving back and forth when a dog feels anxious or unsure.

**Pinned Ears** — Ears tight against the head that show fear or stress.

**Posture** — How a dog holds their body to show feelings.

# Dog Body Language Glossary

## R-S

**Relaxed Calm Pose** — Soft eyes, loose muscles, comfortable breathing.

**Rotated Ears** — Ears turned to listen closely to a sound.

**Scared Posture** — Tail tucked, body low, trembling — signs of fear.

**Side Glance** — A sideways look that can show discomfort or uncertainty.

**Slow Blink** — A soft blink that shows trust and comfort.

**Soft Eyes** — Gentle, relaxed eyes that show calmness.

**Stiff Tail** — A tight, rigid tail that can signal defensiveness.

**Straight Up Tail** — A high tail that shows alertness or caution.

## T-W

**Tail Down** — A low tail that can show nervousness or uncertainty.

**Tucked Tail** — A tail held tightly under the body — a sign of fear.

**Unsure Body Language** — Mixed signals that show a dog needs space.

**Wide Eyes** — Big, round eyes that show fear or surprise.

**Wiggly Body** — Loose, happy movement that shows excitement.