

Name:
Class:
Date:

“Therapy Dogs”

from *A Dog’s Gotta Do What a Dog’s Gotta Do: Dogs at Work*

by Marilyn Singer

- 1. In fifteenth-century Europe, royal folk kept tiny furry dogs to treat illnesses. They were known as “comfort dogs,” and they soon became popular pets. King Charles II of England was said to spend more time playing with his spaniels than ruling the country. King Henri III of France appeared at council meetings with baskets of little papillons around his neck. These small or toy breeds usually slept with their masters. Today you don’t have to be a king or queen to have a toy dog. And toy dogs aren’t the only kinds that keep us warm in our beds. Big pooches sometimes sleep next to their owners, too.**
- 2. A dog’s body heat may be good medicine, but to some folks a dog’s tongue is even better. From ancient Rome to modern Asia, people have believed that dogs can heal by licking. In ancient Rome, dogs worked in the temple of Asklepios, the god of healing. Sick people came to the temple. The dogs walked or lay down among them and licked their hurt or diseased body parts. Many people claimed that they were cured by this treatment. They left written testimonies in the temple. One testimony said, “Thuson of Hermione, a blind boy, had his eyes licked in the daytime by one of the dogs about the temple, and departed cured.” The dogs were rewarded with treats for their work.**
- 3. Did the dogs really cure these patients? Perhaps. A dog’s saliva may be somewhat antibiotic—may kill germs—so licking might have helped heal wounds. The dogs may also have discovered diseases by sniffing, the way cancer detection dogs do today. Then the temple priests might have treated these diseases. The dogs certainly made some patients feel better—just by being calm, friendly dogs.**
- 4. Today calm, friendly canines still help people—as therapy dogs. The famous psychiatrist Sigmund Freud understood the value of a therapy dog. When he treated people for mental problems, his chow chow Jo-Fi sat in on the sessions. The dog helped soothe the doctor’s patients, especially children. Jo-Fi also told Freud how a patient was feeling. He sat close to relaxed patients and across the room from nervous ones. When it was time for the patient to leave, the dog got up and went to the office door.**
- 5. Unlike Jo-Fi, most therapy dogs make house calls. They visit people in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and other places. They let people pet and talk to them. Studies show that stroking a dog can lower a person’s blood pressure and tension. Petting, brushing, or throwing a ball for a dog can also help people with physical difficulties. Through these movements, patients learn to use their hands, arms, and shoulders again. Therapy dogs have also helped people with speech and communication problems. Stutterers don’t stutter when they speak to dogs. Patients who refuse to speak will often talk to a dog. One wheelchair-bound man hadn’t spoken for months until he met Bo, a golden retriever. First the man talked to the dog. Soon he began to talk to people about the dog and then about other things. Bo made him a new person.**
- 6. Therapy dogs—and other working pooches—sometimes seem to perform miracles. But dogs don’t think they’re doing anything special. They just enjoy being held or petted or fed or praised. That’s the highest pay a canine therapist can get!**



Copyright © Marilyn Singer, from "Dr. Dog Makes House Calls" from *A Dog's Gotta Do What A Dog's Gotta Do* (Henry Holt, 2000).

Question #1

Which choice is the *best* summary of the passage?

- A Dogs have been used throughout history to help with many medical conditions, and dogs are still trained today to assist those in need.
- B People have recently begun using dogs to help people with disabilities, and many therapy dogs are used in homes and hospitals.
- C Some people depend on therapy dogs to help them solve their medical problems, and many are amazed at how well dogs can heal people.
- D Dogs were originally used hundreds of years ago to cure illnesses in sick people, but now they are mainly kept as pets.

Question #2**How did Sigmund Freud's dog, Jo-Fi, help him determine how people were feeling?**

- A Jo-Fi walked the relaxed people to the door and stayed away from those who were nervous.
- B Jo-Fi licked the people who were relaxed and sniffed those who were nervous.
- C Jo-Fi sat nearby the people who were relaxed and kept his distance from nervous people.
- D Jo-Fi jumped on the relaxed people and walked quickly to the nervous people.

Question #3**Based on the passage, which choice can be the result of someone interacting with a therapy dog?**

- A A person falls asleep more quickly when a dog sleeps in the bed at night.
- B A person becomes calmer and more comfortable after petting the dog.
- C A person becomes more confident by giving the dog treats for doing tricks.
- D A person develops a close friendship with the dog by talking to it.

Question #4

Read the excerpt from paragraph 6.

But dogs don't think they're doing anything special. They just enjoy being held or petted or fed or praised. That's the highest pay a canine therapist can get!

What is meant by the sentence "That's the highest pay a canine therapist can get!"?

- A Therapy dogs appreciate the attention they receive for their hard work.
- B Therapy dogs know how important and valuable their jobs are.
- C Therapy dogs would rather play than help people with their problems.
- D Therapy dogs charge very little for their services.

Question #5

What text structure does the author use in paragraph 5?

- A The author uses cause and effect to explain how therapy dogs can help patients improve in areas of need.
- B The author uses chronological order to explain how the use of therapy dogs has changed throughout history.
- C The author uses compare and contrast to show the different types of therapy dogs and how they help people.
- D The author uses problem and solution to show why more therapy dogs are needed in hospitals.

Question #6

Which statement best explains why the quote included by the author in paragraph 2 is a firsthand account?

- A The quote is a firsthand account because it was from a newspaper article someone found about people getting healed by dogs licking them.
- B The quote is a firsthand account because it was written by someone who believed he or she saw a boy's blindness get healed by a dog licking his eyes.
- C The quote is a firsthand account because it was written by someone who researched people getting healed by dogs licking them.
- D The quote is a firsthand account because it was from a story someone wrote about a boy whose blindness was healed by a dog licking his eyes.

Question #7

Which quote from the passage supports the idea that therapy dogs can help people communicate better?

- A "The dog helped soothe the doctor's patients, especially children."
- B "They visit people in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and other places."
- C "Through these movements, patients learn to use their hands, arms, and shoulders again."
- D "Patients who refuse to speak will often talk to a dog."

Question #8

What is the meaning of the word *treatment* in paragraph 2?

- A care
- B discovery
- C idea
- D support