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## How to Greet a Dog

Dogs can make great friends. Remember, however, to treat them with respect and kindness. Some dogs are very social, while others can be cautious or even scared. It is important to respect the boundaries of every dog you meet, and listen to their owner, who knows them best. **This is why there are a few steps to remember whenever you meet a new dog that's on a leash:**

1. Walk slowly towards the dog's owner to ask if you can pet the dog
2. It's important to ask permission before petting a new dog. If the owner says "no," politely accept the answer and do not pet the dog.
3. If the owner says "yes," curl your hand into a loose fist with the back of your hand facing out. Extend your hand slowly towards the dog.
4. Allow the dog to sniff the back of your hand. We recognize people by sight, dogs recognize people by scent. Dogs sniff people to learn their scent.
5. After the dog has sniffed your hand, and stays near you or approaches you with a loose body and wagging tail, you may pet them gently under the chin or on the chest. This is where dogs like to be petted most.
6. If, after smelling you, the dog backs away, that's okay! This is the dog's way of telling you that they are not in the mood to be petted. Politely accept this answer, thank the owner anyway, and try again another day starting from Step 1. Never chase or follow a new dog that walks away from you...they might think you are trying to hurt them, and get scared!

If you ever meet a loose dog (unleashed) without an owner, do not try to pet them! This includes dogs that you may have pet before, even if you are friends with their owner. This is because, without the owner present, you do not know if the dog is safe, if they want to be petted, or if they are scared.

# How to Greet a Dog (page 2)

## Instead, do the following:

1. Stand like a tree. Be very still and quiet, with your hands at your sides. The dog may come up to sniff you, which is okay. If you keep standing still and being quiet, they will think you are boring and non-threatening, and eventually go away. Once they have gone, slowly walk away, and immediately tell an adult that you saw a loose dog.
2. Lie like a rock. If the dog does not go away, but instead starts barking at you, or trying to nip or bite at you, don't panic! Stay calm, keep quiet, and slowly move to the ground. Keep your chin tucked, put your arms over your head and neck, and curl your body into a ball to protect yourself. Wait until the dog is gone before you get up, then slowly walk away and immediately tell an adult what happened.

