



Think *before* You Shop

I LOVE A CERTAIN BREED. THEY'RE SO CUTE!

Cute wears off when your dog chews up your shoes at five in the morning because he or she wants a walk. Consider a breed's temperament and physical requirements before committing your heart and time. What activities would you like to do with your dog? How much time do you plan to dedicated to him or her? Are you able to take him or her for regular grooming, or would you prefer a short-haired dog? Check out online resources like Animal Planet's Dogs101 (<http://animal.discovery.com/tv/dogs-101/>) to learn more about which breeds will work best for your family.

I WANT A PUPPY. AN ADULT DOG WILL COME WITH TOO MUCH "BAGGAGE."

The idea that a puppy will be easier to train than an adult dog is a common misconception, as is the concept that an adult dog won't bond with you. Puppies are equally cute and difficult: they chew things, potty in the house, and whine and cry. Adult dogs, especially those who come from difficult situations, are generally grateful for your love and attention. They tend to catch on to new names, commands, and potty training (if necessary) quickly, and they rarely leave their human companions wanting for love.

Consider adopting an adult dog from a rescue organization that houses their available dogs in foster homes. That way, you can talk with the foster parents to find out exactly what the dog is like. All dogs, be they young or old, usually need an adjustment period when moving to a new home, but with your patience and the help of a good trainer, the adjustment period for any dog can be rewarding and even fun.

I FOUND A USDA-CERTIFIED BREEDER ONLINE WITH AKC-CERTIFIED PUPPIES.

Certifications by the USDA and AKC do not guarantee healthy puppies. If you decide to buy a puppy from a reputable breeder, check in with local shelters, rescues, or breed clubs to find out who services your area. Personally *visit* breeders you are considering, and ask them questions about their contracts and practices, such as those outlined at <http://upforpups.org/breeders/>. Don't ever buy a puppy from a pet shop; they are clearinghouses for disreputable breeders.

I'M THINKING ABOUT ADOPTING, BUT I WANT A PUREBRED DOG.

It is estimated that more than 25% of dogs who end up in shelters are purebred. Additionally, thousands of purebred rescue organizations serve different parts of the country, rescuing dogs of specific breeds and re-homing them with appropriate families. Check <http://petfinder.com> to find purebred or mixed-breed dogs that interest you. From there, you can easily contact the listing organization to learn more.