Audience Profile

# Demographic

While there are plenty of different dog owners, we wanted to focus on the specific audience of college-aged first-time dog owners. While our guides are useful to most any dog owners, we wanted to focus on this group because they have the least experience with dogs and the highest likelihood of running into issues. We interviewed three college-aged dog owners who have owned their dogs for various years:

* 22 year-old male, in college, large breed dog, owned for two years
* 23 year-old male, in college, small breed dog, owned for nine years
* 22 year-old female, recent graduate, large breed dog, owned for five months

Our guide also doesn’t claim to be comprehensive; it would require a massive guide to cover all the topics associated with raising a dog. Instead, it focuses on information potential dog owners would benefit most from knowing beforehand.

College-aged dog owners also face unique challenges that mean they need information tailored to them. For example, many college-aged dog owners don’t have parents to rely on to take care of the dog while they are away at classes or work. Therefore, we included information about how long a dog is safe to be left alone. Another example is that college-aged dog owners do not have significant extra money so we included a lot of information about preventative healthcare that will save the owners in the long run. One interviewee self-identified as “poor” multiple times throughout the interview and explained what she considered necessary costs of caring for her puppy. We focused on these necessary costs in our knowledge base.

# Focus of Audience

Because many college students, including those we interviewed, lack of prior knowledge about being a dog’s primary caregiver, our guide focuses on foundational dog ownership. We only mention three tricks, for example, because those are the only tricks necessary to keep a dog safe. While someone may be interested in how to teach other tricks this guide is only designed to offer new dog owners all the info they need to raise a happy and healthy dog.

Our audience also determined some of our stylistic choices throughout the document. For example we chose to use the word “puppy” to refer to the readers dog to emphasize the guide is designed for a first-time puppy owners since the interviews identified that the puppy stage is when most new dog owners look for information. Additionally, we included hedges when referring to health concerns to help prevent new owners from stressing out over small issues that turn out to be nothing.

# Methods for Better Articles

Our initial interviews revealed what dog owners need to know about their dog, but didn’t reveal specific questions to write our articles about. To determine more specific questions about what we should write we conducted a second interview with Kim Burlingham. She provided questions based around the topics we determined from the original interviews. These allow for much more specific understandings over the needs of dog owners as these questions are actually what our audience was wondering.