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College Writing I

### The Impact of Breeding Purebred

Dogs can be found in households all around the world. For many years, dogs have been bred with the intention of keeping dog breeds pure. The more dogs are bred to be pure, the more defects dogs have today. Many people believe that dogs should be kept pure while others believe cross-breeding is the way to go. From my research, I believe that breeding dogs to keep bloodlines pure is wrong. According to many academic resources on this current issue, when people choose to breed purebred dogs it can affect genetics, cause disease, and increase their aggression while decreasing life expectancy.

There are two sides to how people feel about the breeding of dogs. One side believes it is right because of many factors that purebred dogs bring. An online journal, *The Effects of Dog Breed Development on Genetic Diversity and the Relative Influences of Performance and Conformation Breeding* states, “all modern dog breeds can trace their origins to performance of some type, whether it be pointing, retrieving, coursing, guarding, racing, the hunting of unique types of game or activities as obscure as bull-baiting” (Pedersen, Liu, Theilen, & Sacks). Some purebred dog breeds have a purpose. For example, German Shepherds are known to be used as police dogs, and beagles are known to be hunting dogs. An article from *The American Kennel Club* states, “Humans figured out early on that if you bred dogs that were good at these things, you would get offspring that were also good at doing them” (Cooper). Many people who would agree with this statement also agree with the idea of pure breeding dogs. This also depends on if you need a dog for a specific job. Purebred breeders can breed for specific factors like fitness or ability levels.

The other side discusses that it is wrong and people should focus on rescuing or adopting from a shelter. There are more decreased health factors that come along with purebreds. For example, increasing health issues with their body structure, German Shepherds and Saint Bernards are prone to hip dysplasia or constant dislocation in their kneecaps (Maldarelle & Scienceline). Also, the online article, *Although Purebred Dogs Can Be Best in Show, Are They Worst in Health* describes how bulldogs have developed severe breathing problems because of their facial structure changing over time (Maldarelle & Scienceline). People should be more focused on their dog's health and how their genetics can play a role in their health. Many of these dogs can be affected physically from generation to generation by constant overbreeding. From this, their health will decrease. Every dog deserves a place to be happy, healthy, and out of harm's way.

When breeders decide to breed dogs to keep them pure, the genetics of the dogs are changed which can impact the dog negatively. People who are against it would also bring up that there are backyard breeders. Backyard breeders are people with little experience in how to breed properly and who may be looking to make some money. When breeders are not experienced enough or are not careful enough, the puppies can be traced with genetic diseases. If the puppies are bred correctly then they will be free of genetic diseases. An online article from *The Institute of Canine Biology* states, "Breeding related animals increase the expression of genetic disorders caused by recessive mutations, and it also increases the probability of producing offspring that will inherit the assortment of genes responsible for a polygenic disorder" (Beuchat). Carol Beuchat PhD from *The Institute of Canine Biology* also explains that purebreds are at a greater risk of developing hereditary disorders. Based on her research, mixed-

breed dogs are not always healthier than purebreds and purebreds are not as healthy as mixed dogs (Beuchat).

Many types of dogs have been known to have increased aggression; this is because these breeds are bred to be pure. Aggression in a dog is typically not a trait dog owners want, especially if there are kids around. There are ways to train a dog to be protective. For example, using commands such as sit and stay, using a reward system, giving your dog a treat, and sometimes obedience training. No one wants to fear having people over because of a dog that gets aggressive and tries to bite. I want to have a protective dog but not one that is going to be aggressive towards people for no reason at all. All aggressive behavior depends on the specific breed of the dog, what that dog has been through in their lifetime, and the environment around them; but it can all start with genetics. Some dog breeds, like Golden Retrievers or Labrador Retrievers, are known to be good family dogs and very rarely aggressive around people. This also depends on if something has triggered the dog to be aggressive. Not all breeds are aggressive, the article *Aggressive Behavior is Affected by Demographic, Environmental and Behavioral Factors in Purebred Dogs* by Scientific Reports concludes that aggressive behavior includes explanatory variables like age, sex, fearfulness, breed, dogs in the family, body size, and owner's dog experience (Mikkola, Salonen, Hakanen, Sulkama, Araujo, & Lohi). Many traits can cause aggressive behavior.

Purebred dogs today have a higher chance of having diseases. Both purebred and mixed dogs can develop specific medical issues such as cancer, skeletal issues, bowel problems, etc., but there is a higher chance for purebreds, "Lymphoma is one of the most common cancers seen in dogs, accounting for 20% of all canine cancers. Dogs are two- to five-times more likely than people to develop lymphoma, which can affect any breed at any age" (AAHA). As stated before,

people may want a specific breed for the looks of the dog but it can cause some of those breeds to suffer. The article from *RSPCA* describes issues that can be caused by purebreds in the body. Dogs that are larger and heavier are more likely to suffer from heart, digestion, muscle, and joint problems along with living shorter lives. When owners choose to have a purebred dog, they may be spending more money to only have a short amount of time with their dog, "The average lifespan of purebreds are on the decline, despite advances in veterinary care. This causes suffering for both dogs and their owners and also costs their owners billions in vet bills" (Templeton & Regan). It affects the dog's health and decreases their lifespan. Many dogs only live to be about twelve years old. For purebred dogs, this number can be much smaller. This all leads back to the genetic mutation in the dogs from the first initial breeding.

I believe that purebred dogs can be less healthy than mixed-breed dogs. Many people want a specific dog breed for many different reasons. It could be anything from the way they look or if a particular breed does not shed due to an owner's allergies. The purpose of this essay is to show that many bad factors come along with purebreds. These bad factors can be genetic disorders, a rise in aggression, a higher risk for disease, and a decrease in life expectancy. People bring dogs into their lives for many reasons but the most common is to have a pet for your family. It is important to ensure that the dog lives a long, happy, and healthy life.

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