

E | Fur and Feather

The Hotel

Right in the middle of one of the world's largest cities, New York, in a busy street on Lower Manhattan, there is a hotel. Neatly dressed men and women enter this hotel in the morning, often as early as seven o'clock, to check in. But this hotel is not quite like most other hotels in the city. There is no room service and the beds are so small that no people can sleep in them. Are you a bit puzzled? This is a hotel for dogs!

There are lots of dogs in New York. Just take a walk in Central Park in the morning before people go to work and you can see for yourself. Small dogs, big dogs, curly haired dogs, longhaired dogs, shorthaired dogs or dogs with no coat at all – you will meet them all, in all shapes and colours in the park.

Often the dog owners need to be away from early morning to late evening, and many of them leave their dogs at the hotel, where they are well taken care of.

Maria is one of the staff:

Hi. This dog boarding facility offers several services including boarding which is an overnight stay, day care and grooming. Day care is from seven a.m. to ten p.m. Grooming is by appointment only and it's done by a licensed groomer. Our capacity is about a hundred to a hundred and twenty dogs, though usually we only fill up to capacity over holidays like Christmas, New Year and Thanksgiving.

We always offer day care except for Christmas Day and Thanksgiving Day, because we are full. We take all breeds based on temperament and how well they go together with other dogs. Dogs do get to play together here, so they have to be friendly.

There are several different kinds of dog aggression. There is dog aggressiveness towards dogs. That can be dealt with by keeping dogs separate. There is dog aggressiveness out of fear, and if they are too afraid they can't stay here. If dogs have an aggressive nature we usually don't take them, and if they are aggressive towards people we never take them.

Sometimes dogs can be aggressive only in a special situation. Leash aggression means that the dogs are aggressive only when they are on their leashes. Dogs with cage aggression are only aggressive when they are in a cage. When you open up the cage they are no longer aggressive.

The dogs have to be put away individually for meals, because food breeds aggression. So they are put away in runs, which are open on the top. They are three and a half to four feet wide, six feet long and another six and a half feet tall with a gate on the front. That way they don't feel as caged in. It helps to keep them from getting cage aggression.

Dogs should also sleep separately because they are not used to sleeping together with other dogs. This keeps them healthier and happier because they can get almost as much sleep as they are used to. Dogs usually sleep the majority of the day when they are not here. Here they play most of the day so their sleep at night is very important.

We try to keep the environment as close to their home environment as we can in order to maintain their health. All of our surfaces are hard because they need to be sterilized at any given point, and they need to be cleaned. We clean our runs and floors at least three times a day.

Training

Dogs still maintain a pack mentality even though they are domesticated. If you aren't the leader of the pack, the dog will be the leader of the pack and will run the house. They may destroy things and they may go to the bathroom at places they are not supposed to. When they misbehave, what they are really doing is challenging you to find out who is the boss. If you don't show them that you are the boss and the leader, they will end up training you instead of you training them.

It is therefore important to train a dog, and many people seem to think that the most intelligent dogs are the easiest to train. But intelligence and training do not really go hand in hand. You can get a not so smart dog to do as many tricks as you want. On the other hand, you can get an intelligent dog that will not do tricks. Affection and training is more of a hand in hand relationship. If your dog has more affection for you and wants to please you, your training will probably go better.

Owning a dog is like having a six month to 1-year-old that will never grow up. Yes, it's true, this is a child that will never grow up, that will never go to college or be able to support itself in any way, shape or form. You must always make sure that you know when it needs food, medical care and attention. Dog ownership is a much bigger responsibility than most people believe it to be.

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- 1 Explain the term "cage aggression".
 - 2 Why is it important for the dogs to sleep separately?
 - 3 Explain these words in English:
 - a) domesticate
 - b) pack
 - c) mentality
 - d) affection
 - 4 Many people have busy jobs and hardly any time to be with their dogs. Do you think it is OK that they keep a dog? Discuss.
 - 5 Write down six words from the text and ask your partner to explain them for you in English.
 - 6 A little girl got a cute little puppy for her birthday. Write a story about how the dog became the leader of the pack and did lots of bad things because nobody gave it proper training.
 - 7 True or false?
 - a) Day care is from seven in the morning till ten at night.
 - b) Dogs with cage aggression are normally aggressive most of the time.
 - c) A dog should always be the leader of the pack.
 - d) At the dog hotel, the dogs sleep most of the day.
 - e) An intelligent dog always wants to do lots of tricks.
 - f) Owning a dog is like having a baby.
 - g) Most people know what it takes to have a dog.
 - 8 You are a dog owner who shows up at a dog boarding facility with your dog. You need to go away for a few days and you want the dog to be taken care of. As you are a new customer the person in the reception will ask you a lot of questions about the dog.