



Man's Best Friend

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best concluding statement for each paragraph.

_____ 1. The dog was the first animal to be domesticated. Experts believe that the first dogs were probably wolves that were domesticated in order to help hunters kill their prey. Wolves were fast and fierce, and for a human being, partnership with a wolf must have been like acquiring a new weapon. Wolves also benefited from a relationship with humans by being able to count on their next meal. At some point, people began to use dogs to herd their other animals, and also as guards at night. People learned how to breed their animals for certain characteristics, and in this way, human beings have changed their animal companions over many, many centuries.

_____ 2. How did dogs come to be domesticated? People naturally tend to nurture any stray or abandoned young animal, and it is likely that this is how man's relationship with wolves first began. Wolves live in hierarchical societies, and individuals will naturally fall into their place within a group. In a human society its place would naturally be low, making for a mutually beneficial partnership in which man gains a loyal servant and the wolf (dog) gains room and board.

_____ 3. Early domesticated dogs are not quite the same as wolves. They were bred to have smaller jaws and teeth. When early humans first began breeding their dogs, it is likely that they selected particular puppies from each litter based on their coat, their bark, their temperament, or their size. Choosing certain characteristics and breeding animals based on the likelihood of replicating those traits in the animals' offspring is called selective breeding. Selective breeding can have quick results, and was probably discovered by man by accident.

Concluding Statements

- A. When man keeps a particular dog which in its turn has puppies, the dog's desirable traits are perpetuated and in only a few generations it can hardly resemble a wolf at all.
- B. Today, it's hard to believe that all dogs are descended from wolves.
- C. Man and dog have been living together for 12,000 years, and their relationship ushered in an era of partnership between men and animals.