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Name _____

Pets 4 Life

Americans love their furry friends. More than 140 million cats and dogs live in homes across the U.S. Sadly, millions of others roam the streets or wait in shelters for someone to adopt them.

Why does a country so fond of pets have so many unwanted cats and dogs? Two main reasons: (1) Not all people have their pets spayed or neutered. Without these operations, cats and dogs have kittens and puppies. And there just aren't enough good homes for all of them. (2) Some people treat getting a pet like

getting a toy. If they get bored or end up not liking it, they bring it back. They give it to someone else. They stop playing with it. Or they put it outside.

People forget that pets have feelings. Pets need us the way that children need their parents—not just for a month or a year, but for life. So what are the four steps to keeping the bond between pets and people strong? **Think. Train. Neuter. Check.** Translate the **rebus** (picture puzzle) below to learn more. It's tricky! Your teacher has the answers.

1. **Think!** Can you afford a pet? Do you have to play with her every day? Will you be just as interested in your pet from now as you are today? Will you still th+ she's cute? Do your + want a pet? Will you be A+ to + if you move? These are just a few of the you + + + ly + 4 you get a pet. 2. **Train!** "She won't use the litter . + much." "He bites." "She jumps on people." If any of this sounds familiar, don't get mad—get training! A pet who's + t + d and taught to be calm and friendly is a + t to have . But pets don't learn if no+ + them. t+ your pets early. Be and expect mistakes. Ask your animal + ter or **O+B+D+N+NN** trainer for help. Remember the times in your life w+ you goofed up? Isn't it **GR+R+8** th+ y+ family and + never gave up on you? 3. **Neuter!** You love your —but do you r+ + **E** want **6** more? Have your cats and dogs spayed or neutered. 4. **Check!** Take your pet for a + at l+ **E** once a year. Your veterinarian will help you keep your pet healthy and + **R** **N+E** q+ + you m+ + t $\frac{1}{2}$.