In general, the term SERVICE dog in the United States means a dog specifically trained to aid or assist an individual with a DISABILITY. Many are trained by an assistance dog organization (for example: Good Dog! Autism Companions or Guide Dogs for the Blind) or by their HANDLER (the person who works with the trained dog), often with the help of a professional trainer. But did you know that the term “service dog” is actually just one CATEGORY among several types of working dogs? You betcha! There are service dogs, emotional support animals, facility dogs, companions and even therapy dogs. So many! Imagine how confusing it would be if the ASPIRING pup had to choose his own CAREER path? Well luckily for our furry friends that’s not how it works. Read on to learn more about the requirements for each that ultimately determine which paws fill which job.

A service dog in the U.S. means a dog trained to assist a person who has what?
A DISABILITY

What is the term given to the person who works with the trained dog?
HANDLER

Give me an example of an assistance dog organization I named.
GOOD DOG! AUTISM COMPANIONS, GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

Name one category of working dogs.
SERVICE, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, FACILITY, COMPANIONS, THERAPY

It would be very ___ for a dog to have to choose his own career path.
CONFUSING

Let’s count how many dogs are in the picture above. (12)
Let’s start with a short history on service dogs before there were so many subdivisions or CLASSES. Their story dates back to 1863 during the Civil War era. The oldest written record of a service dog goes to a puppy named SALLIE who spent time boosting the MORALE (mood, spirits) of the soldiers who fought the Battle of Gettysburg. Can’t you just picture the wounded men snuggling and cuddling a playful pup in order to cheer up? A few decades later in 1899 the first training school for law enforcement (POLICE) canines was established in Ghent, BELGIUM. But even prior to that school opening there were already dogs serving police in Germany as well as France. From then until now man’s best friend has shown the TENACITY (determination, persistence) and INNATE (inborn) intelligence to work alongside our community’s leaders in critical situations.

Spell:  CLASSES   POLICE   TENACITY
The oldest recorded mention of a service dog dates back to what war? CIVIL WAR
What was the puppy’s name who helped the soldiers at Gettysburg? SALLIE
What’s another word for morale? MOOD, SPIRITS
Use the word “morale” in a sentence.
In what country was the first school for police dogs started? BELGIUM
Name another country that was already using dogs in their police force then. 
FRANCE, GERMANY
Name a positive characteristic I said man’s best friend was recognized for having from the beginning.  TENACITY, INNATE INTELLIGENCE
What’s another word for innate?  INBORN
In your opinion, what else makes a dog a good choice to fill the job of a “working” animal?

In 1929 the first GUIDE dog organization opened, namely the Seeing Eye Dog Organization. Two years prior, Morris Frank (1908-1980) had read an ARTICLE about dogs being trained for blind veterans of World War I. He himself was blind and felt very frustrated at his own lack of AUTONOMY (self-government) in the community. So, he wrote a letter to DOROTHY HARRISON EUSTIS (1886-1946) an American who at the time was in Switzerland training GERMAN SHEPHERDS to be police dogs. When Dorothy received his letter, she agreed to help him, and he promised in return to spread the word back in the United States about these dogs. You can watch some archived footage of Morris Frank promoting the dogs here:  (https://youtu.be/gwYHXNItSks)
What was the name of the first guide dog organization?
SEEING EYE DOG ORGANIZATION

Who was the blind man who wrote Dorothy Harrison Eustis for help?
MORRIS FRANK

Where was Eustis training dogs at that time?
SWITZERLAND

What type of dogs was she training to be police dogs?
GERMAN SHEPHERDS

(After watching the video) Choose one of these two sentences that Mr. Frank said in the video. Which one impacted you the most and why:
“She (Buddy) was going to be my declaration of independence”
or
“She (Buddy) was going to be a pioneer for the blind men or women who neither wanted charity nor pity but wanted to live a normal life with normal people.”

In the mid 1970’s a MYRIAD (multitude, a large number) of things started happening all around the same time. BONITA (Bonnie) M. BERGIN, an American canine researcher, founded Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), the first U.S. based service dog training program. Bergin is considered the INVENTOR of the concept of “service” dogs. Simultaneously the Hearing Dog Program was established which promoted hearing dog training organizations. Then in 1976 Elaine Smith founded Therapy Dogs International (TDI) whose mission is to provide “qualified handlers and their therapy dogs for visitations to institutions, facilities and any other place
where therapy dogs are needed.”. Although it was so exciting that the popularity of service dogs, therapy dogs and facility dogs was multiplying, along with this explosion of dogs grew the need for some revised LEGISLATION. Laws were passed here helping to establish what the various types of animals could do and more specifically where they’d be allowed to work.

Spell: MYRIAD INVENTOR LEGISLATION
What does myriad mean? MULTITUDE, LARGE NUMBER
Who is credited as being the inventor of the US Service Dog? BONITA BERGIN
What service dog program was she the founder of? CANINE COMPANIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE
CCI was founded in 1975. How many years ago was that?
2020 - 1975 = 45 YEARS
What became needed as the popularity of working dogs increased so dramatically? LEGISLATION
What do you think might have happened if there weren’t laws to control what working dogs could or couldn’t do?

To understand these categories better let’s review them one-by-one as if they were posted on an imaginary “Canine CLASSIFIEDS” webpage. The first advertisement states: Super Dog

Question Type Key
KNOWN – SEMI-OPEN – PRIOR KNOWLEDGE – MATH – OPEN - VAKT

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Wanted - We are seeking a dog trained specifically to do tasks that help MITIGATE (lessen) a person’s disability. Desired traits include ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) public access training and obedience skills. This dog must be physically active yet calm and well-behaved in public since he’s legally allowed to go anywhere his person can go. Intelligence, good problem-solving skills, and high STAMINA (endurance) are all requirements. Once hired, the dog will receive free room & board with the person with a disability, along with extra cuddles and playtime when not “working.” So, what type of dog is this ad looking for? Well this describes the career of a true SERVICE dog.

Spell: CLASSIFIEDS STAMINA SERVICE
What is this dog reading in the photo above? NEWSPAPER
What does the word mitigate mean? LESSEN
Name 1-2 of the desired personality traits for a service dog as mentioned in this ad. PHYSICALLY ACTIVE, CALM, WELL-BEHAVED IN PUBLIC, INTELLIGENCE, HIGH STAMINA, GOOD PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.
  <or> A service dog must behave how in public? WELL
  What type of problem-solving skills must he have? GOOD
  What type of stamina is required? HIGH
What does “free room & board” mean?
What else does a service dog get in return for his work? CUDDLES, PLAYTIME
Write a caption for the picture above.
Let’s take a closer look at what service dogs might be trained to do for different disabilities... An AUTISM service dog can lie their full weight on top of their person, the same way Temple Grandin’s “SQUEEZE” machine gives pressure OR they can help their person sleep through the night by accompanying them in bed OR they can help them feel confident and REGULATED so they can experience new things out in the community. A SEEING EYE dog can stop their person who is blind from walking out into the street if a car is coming. A guide dog for the DEAF can tell its owner when someone is knocking at the door or the phone is ringing. A MOBILITY service dog can help open the refrigerator, get out a soda or water bottle and bring it to its person. Service dogs are AMAZING assets (a valuable thing, a help).

Spell:  SQUEEZE    REGULATED    AMAZING

What type of service dog might put their full weight on top of someone like Temple Grandin’s squeeze machine? AUTISM SERVICE DOG
What type of service dog can stop their person from walking into traffic? SEEING EYE DOG
A guide dog for someone who is ___ can tell its owner if the phone is ringing.
DEAF
Name something a mobility service dog can do for their person.
What is an asset? A VALUABLE THING, A HELP
If you had a service dog, what specific task would you want it to be able to do for you?

Ok are you ready for the next dog ad in the newspaper? It reads: “Are you a people-puppy?”
Do you like working for/with many different individuals with disabilities rather than just one? Then this might be the job for you! A DESIGNATED (specific) facility is seeking a dog trained to assist several of the clients it serves daily. This dog will be able to perform different tasks in a variety of situations. Intelligence, flexibility and a calm DEMEANOR (behavior, attitude) are necessities for optimal job performance. The chosen dog, when not at work, will live with a professional, perhaps a teacher or therapist, and who has been trained by the service dog organization to be the dog’s handler. This dog will not have public access rights (i.e.
he won’t be able to go into restaurants, stores, etc.) under ADA, but will be allowed to go into
designated facilities with permission. Interested pups can probably guess by now… this ad is
looking for a FACILITY dog.

Spell: DESIGNATED DEMEANOR FACILITY
What’s another word for designated? SPECIFIC
A facility dog can perform many different what? TASKS
A facility dog does not have ADA rights to what? PUBLIC ACCESS
Name one personality trait that is key for a successful facility dog? INTELLIGENCE,
FLEXIBILITY, CALM DEMEANOR
What’s another word for demeanor? BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDE
Summarize in your own words what a facility dog does for work and what qualities make
a good facility dog.

“Suddenly Seeking Soulmate!” ← Well this next ad sure jumps off the page! Let’s read more:
Family looking for a highly trained dog who can help with specific tasks mostly at home or
anywhere that dogs are allowed in public. Technically considered a pet, this dog does not have
to pass a formal CERTIFICATION exam, but he will utilize his intelligence, training and skills to
support his person’s emotional & physical REGULATION. This can occur any number of ways
such as dedicated companionship, modeling a calm nature, providing opportunities for SOCIAL
interaction and performing your specially trained commands to help. The extra special dog will
live with the person with a disability and his/her family and is what’s known as a Companion
Dog. If you recall I-ASC’s very own guest blogger, Good Dog! RILEY, that’s the gig he’s crushing
these days.

Spell: CERTIFICATION REGULATION RILEY
Technically a companion dog is considered a what? PET
Name one type of regulation a companion dog can help support.
EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL
This type of dog can help by providing opportunities for _____ interaction?
SOCIAL
A companion dog can perform any specialty trained _____ you desire.
COMMANDS
If you had a companion dog, what specialty trained command would you want it to do
for you?
There are just a couple jobs left to fill. This next ad is looking for a TEMPERAMENT (disposition, nature) tested dog to work in a dedicated facility providing comfort to *lots* of people. This job requires basic obedience skills and an official CERTIFICATION. From working with a child who is learning to read to visiting a senior in assisted living, this type of dog and its owner work together as a team to improve the lives of other people in countless ways. This dog may work in a variety of settings but unlike the previous categories he’s a bit more of a “part-time” employee than say a facility dog. This job is what’s known as a THERAPY dog. Therapy dogs can access public spaces but only with permission. Lots of really good natured dogs who’d like to be of service might enjoy this position. If so, they should seek certification from a therapy dog organization in order to QUALIFY (be eligible).

**Spell:** TEMPERAMENT THERAPY QUALIFY

What’s another word for temperament? DISPOSITION, NATURE

If you were to describe your basic temperament, what word would you use?

This job requires basic ___ skills and an official ____.

OBEDIENCE, CERTIFICATION

Unlike a facility dog, a therapy dog is more of a ____ employee. PART-TIME

If a dog seems like a good fit to become a therapy dog, what should its owner do to get started? SEEK CERTIFICATION FROM A THERAPY DOG ORGANIZATION
Last but not least there’s an ad for what’s known as EMOTIONAL SUPPORT animals. This category of dogs differs from the others, especially from service dogs, because emotional support animals receive no specific training, and sometimes very little training at all. A medical DOCTOR needs to give their owner a letter stating that the dog is an ESA (emotional support animal) and is helping to support its owner who has a mental health condition, like anxiety, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) or others. The only training required is basic manners although technically even that isn’t legally required. These animals are allowed in their owner’s homes, at college and on airplanes but not everywhere an official service dog can go. These dogs are not highly trained service dogs... but they still do very important work.

Spell: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOCTOR
What are the training requirements for ESA?
What does a doctor need to give the owner that says the dog is an emotional support animal? A LETTER
PTSD stands for? (or reverse, what’s the acronym for post-traumatic stress disorder)
Name a place an emotional support animal has legal access to. HOME, COLLEGE, AIRPLANES

Now having read through the history of working dogs maybe you’ve started to wonder if one might be able to help you? Good question! Feel free to refer to the graphic on the following page made by the founders of Good Dog! Autism Companions which summarizes everything you learned above and you can start doing some research. There are many resources available today to help you achieve AGENCY, access and autonomy. A service dog, companion dog or even an emotional support animal might be one of those resources you want to consider!

Creative Writing:

Imagine if you had a service dog. What component of living with autism would you hope the dog might “mitigate” or lessen / help improve for you?

One definition of the word “agency” is a person or thing (dog?) through which power is exerted or an end is achieved. Name one way a service dog can provide a person with greater agency.

Write a short essay called “A Day in the Life” from the perspective of a facility dog who was trained to work at your school. What does he see? What does he smell? What does he experience working in your classroom and with your classmates?

Write an ad for the service dog or companion dog of your dreams. What qualifications should the interested canine applicants have? What job requirements are there to become your future BFF?
Sources:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assistance_dog#Classification
4. https://www.akc.org/sports/title-recognition-program/therapy-dog-program/what-is-a-therapy-dog/

Lesson By: Dawnmarie Gaivin
S2C Practitioner, Transcending Autism & Apraxia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
<th>A dog trained specific tasks to mitigate their person/handler’s disability</th>
<th>A dog trained specific tasks to help multiple individuals in a designated facility</th>
<th>A pet dog trained specific tasks to help a person with a disability at home or anywhere pet dogs are allowed</th>
<th>A temperament-tested pet dog providing comfort in an approved facility</th>
<th>A pet dog that provides emotional support to its owner with a mental health condition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Required</strong></td>
<td>Extensively trained specific tasks to mitigate their person’s disability including public access training and obedience</td>
<td>Trained specific tasks to help multiple individuals in a variety of situations within the facility</td>
<td>Trained specific tasks to help a person with a disability at home or anywhere pet dogs are allowed</td>
<td>Basic obedience and certification from a Therapy Dog organization</td>
<td>Basic manners expected but none required by law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access Rights</strong></td>
<td>ADA rights to access public places with their person/handler with a disability</td>
<td>Only with permission from a designated facility (ie: school, therapy office)</td>
<td>None; legally this dog is considered a highly-trained pet</td>
<td>Only with permission from a designated facility (ie: library, hospital)</td>
<td>Only allowed in owner's home, college, &amp; airplanes, see Fair Housing Act and Air Carrier Access Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership (Dog lives with)</strong></td>
<td>The person with the disability that they help (and their family if a child)</td>
<td>A professional working in a field that serves individuals with disabilities; handler must be educated to best utilize the dog</td>
<td>The person with a disability that they help (and their family if a child)</td>
<td>The dog owner that brings their dog to a designated facility to comfort others</td>
<td>The individual diagnosed with a mental health condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic: Good Dog! Autism Companions