



Looking after pets takes time

This lesson looks at the daily responsibility of pet care, the amount of time and the activities required to look after a pet properly. Pupils will explore the fact that people and other living things have rights and that everyone has responsibilities to protect those rights. Pupils will understand and be able to describe the basic needs of animals, including humans.

KEY STAGE: 1**What you need:**

Soft toy pet

[Diary template](#)

Presentation –
[providing images and videos to support lesson \(see downloads\)](#)

1 Starter activity

Pet care diary

- Explain to the class that all pets need looking after every day. Point out that many people get a pet without thinking about how much time they need to spend looking after it every day.
- Choose a particular pet and ask pairs of pupils to research all the things someone who was looking after the pet would need to do.

2 Main activity

How much time?

- After the pupils have researched what someone who has a pet needs to do, ask them to make a diary of what has to be done every day with specific times for each task.
- When the diaries are finished, ask the pupils to estimate how much time the pet owner would have to spend every day looking after the animal.
- What advice would they give someone who was thinking of looking after the animal?

Pretend pet

- A pretend pet can be an excellent focus for developing responsibility and care towards animals. The pupils can be involved in every step of the process.
- Ask the pupils why they think the classroom is not an ideal environment for a pet. N.B. the RSPCA does not believe live animals should be kept in classrooms. Here are some things to think about:
 1. It is an extra responsibility on top of an already busy school day.
 2. Who is responsible for the pet?
 3. Who will pay for the food and veterinary bills?
 4. Who will care for the animal in the evenings, at weekends and during holidays?
- In addition, some children have allergic reactions to animals. Zoonotic diseases – infections passed from animals to humans – can be dangerous. Animals also bite! You should carry out a full risk assessment before anyone brings an animal into the classroom.
- Once the class has decided on a pretend pet, ask the pupils to think of all the things it needs. For homework, can they find out how much all these things cost? Are they surprised by the cost?
- Ask the class to write a pet diary about looking after the animal. They should think about who is going to look after the animal at the weekend and during the evenings. Invite them to write a pet care rota so that individuals or pairs of pupils can look after the pet for 24 hours.

- Use examples of items needed to look after the animal (food, etc.), or use images. Use a soft toy to take the place of the animal. Introduce the animal to the class as realistically as you can and give your pretend pet a name.
- You could make the pet the class mascot and use it in other work.

Plenary activity

Class discussion

During circle time or a class discussion encourage the pupils to talk about the good things and the difficult things about looking after the pretend pet.

- What was difficult?
- What was easy?
- Has it made them feel differently about getting a pet of their own?
- Or, if they already have a pet, has it made them feel differently about their responsibilities? What advice would they give people who are thinking of getting a pet?

What next?

Want to explore the topic of caring for pets further? Try these lessons:

- [Exotic animals as pets](#)
Explore the complex needs of exotic (non-domestic) pets and the responsibility involved in looking after them.
- [A nation of animal lovers](#)
This lesson introduces the concept of animal cruelty and whether it is deliberate or based on neglect.
- [Growing up: Lifecycles](#)
Discuss the responsibilities of pet care, the amount of time and the activities required to look after pets properly.
- [We all have basic needs](#)
Explore the similarities and differences between humans' needs and pets' needs.
- [How do we care for animals?](#)
Building on the lesson '[We all have basic needs](#)', explore the needs of pets further and our responsibilities as owners.