



Taking responsibility for animals

This lesson focuses on an animal welfare campaign highlighting the importance of responsible pet ownership for all animals, including exotics.

? Did you know?

- It is difficult to give a clear definition of exotic.
- Any animal that is not native to the country where it is kept in captivity, can be called exotic. As such, this could also include hamsters and guinea pigs.
- Tortoises can live for up to 100 years.
- Female chinchillas are larger than males. In captivity, chinchillas live for about 10 years, but they can live to 18 years old.

1 Starter activity

What makes a good pet?

- Ask the class which animals make good pets. Why? (If you have not already done so, make a class list.) Write a selection of common pets, such as dog, cat, goldfish, hamster, on sticky notes and put them on the board. Ask the children to discuss what you would need to do to meet each of their needs e.g. dogs need to be taken for a walk, cats need litter trays, hamsters need enriching activities.

Differentiation – Adapt the starter activity for pupils at different levels. Pupils could research the facts for themselves and justify their decisions orally.

2 Main activity

What is meant by an exotic pet?

- Introduce the idea of exotic (non-domestic) animals as pets. Show the class photos of exotic animals (see image collection [Pets](#) in the Gallery or source your own). Do they know what each one is? Define an exotic pet. ([See our advice page for more information.](#))
- Work in groups to make a list of what pupils can find out about exotic animals. Focus on one animal, such as the green iguana, or do a general search. You could provide children with some information on four or five exotic animals.

The needs of an exotic pet – information sheets

- In pairs, read an [information sheet](#) on exotic animals. Each pair is looking for specific details, such as habitat, diet, size it will grow to, length of life. Each pair should find another pair and swap two facts. Continue until all the groups have shared their facts. Review what the class has learned.
- Pupils can also use the worksheet [Exotic pets](#). Ask them to find out more about exotic pets. Do they think exotic animals are easy to look after?

KEY STAGE: 2 PROGRESSION STEP 3



Downloads:

[Exotic pets](#)

Supporting materials:

Presentation – visual prompts (see downloads)

[RSPCA – All about animals – Other pets](#)

[RSPCA – Animal Welfare Act – Exotic pets](#)

The RSPCA campaigns to protect the welfare of exotic pets because:

- They may have been taken from the wild where the species is endangered.
- They may have been taken into captivity after being born in the wild.
- They may have special needs: diet, temperature and space, which are difficult to provide in captivity.
- They may live longer than their owner.

Mini role-play

Option 1

Work in pairs. Half the class are As and half Bs. As have to persuade Bs that exotic animals make good pets. Remember exotic pets' needs. Bs have to persuade As the opposite – exotic pets don't make good pets.

Option 2

Alternatively, work in groups of six. Each group could discuss the following scenario: a friend sees a green iguana in a pet shop and wants to buy it. What would you say or do? Think about: the law, your family, the pet's needs, your commitment. One group could act out the scenario. The rest of the class can put up their hands to 'rewind' or stop the role-play at any time if they have a better idea. Half the class should prompt the person who wants to buy the iguana and the other half will advise the friend.

+ What next?

Extension activities

- Pupils could develop their ideas on exotic pets into a poster for the school library or a leaflet that could be used in an RSPCA animal centre.
- Pupils can find out more about RSPCA campaigns by accessing the Campaigns section of the RSPCA website (see [Useful websites](#)).

Check out our other pet-related lesson plans:

- [Looking after pets takes time](#)
- [Campaigning for animal welfare](#)
- [Exotic animals as pets](#)
- [A nation of animal lovers](#)

Bilingual version

We have relevant resources for each Progression Stage on our website:
<https://education.rspca.org.uk/education/teachers/lessonplanswales>