



AMERICAN  
HUMANE



## Be Kind to Animals Week® Ideas for Educators

American Humane Association's first Be Kind to Animals Week in 1915 marked a new commitment to humane education in the United States. Since then, animal shelters, schools, libraries and community groups have celebrated the role of animals in our lives with special Be Kind to Animals Week activities each year during the first full week in May.

For educators, **May 3-9, 2009**, is the perfect time to encourage kindness and compassion in children. Please help us celebrate Be Kind to Animals Week by distributing the **Be Kind to Animals Week Entry Form, Rules and Releases** to the children and parents you work with and encouraging them to participate in American Humane's annual Be Kind to Animals™ Kid Contest. Two Grand Prize winners will take home \$1,000 each! These materials are accessible from our main Be Kind to Animals Week web page.

We also invite you to plan animal-related activities during Be Kind to Animals Week. The following list of activities provides thought-provoking and skill-building projects for children of all ages. All activities can serve as vehicles for family or group involvement, whether you are in the classroom, leading a Boy or Girl Scout meeting, in charge of a church group or working with children in some other capacity.

Additional information and resources can be found by interviewing people who work or volunteer with animals, consulting books or conducting research online.

Please select an age group to find the ideas best for you: **Elementary Grade (K-5) Activities**, **Middle School Activities**, or **High School Activities**.

*Note: If you decide to participate in any donation or fundraising activities to benefit a local organization, please be sure to contact that organization for permission and guidelines before your start!*



## Elementary Grade (K-5) Activities

### ***Pennies for Puppies***

Children can work together to decorate cans, distribute them among local merchants and then use them to collect coins as a fundraiser for a local animal shelter or animal/wildlife group in your area.

### ***Pet-to-Person Matching Game***

A group can decorate a bulletin board with pictures of people and their pets. The purpose of the game is to correctly match the pets with their people. This game can also be used as a fundraiser by asking participants to make a donation that will be contributed to a local animal shelter or animal/wildlife group.

### ***Make Pet Blankets***

Following directions from an online resource, craft book, craft store or other source, make a blanket for your pet or the pet of a friend, family member or neighbor. You can also donate blankets to a local animal shelter or veterinary clinic in need of warm pet bedding. Another option is to donate blankets you've made to local animal organizations that could then sell the blankets to raise proceeds for the animals they care for.

### ***Make Homemade Dog/Cat Treats***

Using a recipe from an online resource or pet cookbook, make dog or cat treats for your pets, for distribution to a local shelter or for a fundraiser. Profits can be donated to a local shelter or animal welfare organization.

### ***Build a Bird Feeder***

Contact your local Audubon Society for directions on how to make a bird feeder that is attractive to birds in your area. Make the bird feeder, fill it with the appropriate seed and determine the best place to display it. You and your students will enjoy observing the different types of birds that visit the feeder. Be sure to have bird identification reference books on hand to name the types of birds that are coming to the feeder. Essays, poems, artwork and other projects can be created around the birds that visit the feeder. Also, charts and graphs of behavior, populations and species variety can be created.

### ***Build a Kitty "Castle"***

Decorate a cardboard box with non-toxic markers or paints. Close all the sides, but make sure there is an opening large enough for a cat to easily pass through. Place blankets or towel inside the box to create a soft bed and let your kitty enjoy this fun new castle. Castles can also be given to friends, neighbors or relatives who have cats, or can be donated to local animal shelters.

### ***Make a Puppy Bed***

Cut the top flaps and one side off a cardboard box, so you are left with a back, two sides, and a bottom. Decorate the box with non-toxic markers or paints and place blankets or towels inside to create a soft bed for your puppy or small dog. You can also give beds to friends, neighbors or relatives who have puppies or small dogs, or to a local animal shelter.

### ***Make a Pet Dish Placemat***

Cut construction paper into strips that are 2 inches wide by 24 inches long. Place eight of these side by side to form the finished size of the placemat. Cut 12 additional strips 2 inches wide by 16 inches long and weave the first through the others that were already laid out. Glue the first strip in place, and use paper clips to hold it securely while the glue dries so you can continue the weaving. After the weaving is complete, glue along the outside edges where the strips overlap. This placemat can also be sealed in adhesive-backed plastic (or laminated) to make it waterproof. Placemats can be donated to local animal shelters for a fundraiser sale.

### ***Poster Contest***

Have children make a poster that shows ways to be kind to animals. Hold a contest to choose the best poster. You can then have all posters on display in the school, a local pet store, an animal shelter or a business during the week.



## Be Kind to Animals Week® Ideas for Educators

### ***Essay Contest***

Have children submit essays on a topic related to kindness toward animals. The winning essays can be read to the group (troop, church group, classroom, school assembly, etc.) and/or displayed. Suggested topics:

- Ways to be kind to animals
- What Be Kind to Animals Week means to me
- How a special animal made my life better
- A special animal in my life
- What it means to be kind

### ***Show and Tell***

Have children present a picture of an animal and explain how one should properly care for that animal. Have the child explain why it's important to be kind to the animal. The animal could be the child's pet, a class pet, a friend or relative's pet, etc.

### ***Visit a Wildlife Refuge or State Park***

Arrange a trip to the local wildlife refuge or state park. Have children focus on the animals living in their community. Discuss what they learned from the trip on the way home.

### ***Draw an Animal***

Have children draw or paint an animal and then draw or cut and paste pictures around it of what that animal needs to be happy and healthy. Pets or wildlife would be appropriate for this project.

### ***Supply Drive***

Contact a local animal shelter, animal welfare organization or wildlife organization and ask workers what supplies they might need. Organize a drive with specific instructions as to the needs, gather those items and then deliver them to the organization.

### ***Host a Guest Speaker***

Invite a humane educator, wildlife rehabilitator, animal behaviorist, dog trainer, veterinarian or other animal professional to visit your group. Prepare the children before the visit so that they have a variety of questions ready for the expert.





## Middle School Activities

### ***Make a Wildlife Feeder or House***

Contact your local Audubon Society or other wildlife organization to find out what type of house or feeder would be best for the wildlife in your area (see suggestions that follow). Using directions from your local wildlife organization, from online or from a woodworking class, construct a house or feeder made out of wood (adult supervision is imperative). Hang the house or feeder in an appropriate area and enjoy observing the different species that visit. Be sure to have identification reference books on hand to name the species you see. Essays, poems, artwork and other projects can be created around the wildlife that visits. Also, charts and graphs of behavior, populations and species variety can be created. Recommended building projects:

- Bird house or feeder
- Squirrel feeder
- Bat house
- Butterfly house

### ***Help Care for a Pet***

Ask a neighbor, friend or family member if you and a child can help them care for their pet. Walking, playing, feeding, brushing and petting are great ways to help someone out. Be sure to always supervise the child.

### ***Design a Brochure***

Have your students interview the director of a local shelter, wildlife organization or other animal group to identify pertinent information to include in a brochure. Children can work together to design and distribute a brochure promoting the organization within their community.

### ***Make a Scratching Post***

Research directions online on how to make a scratching post for a cat. You can give the post to your own cat or as a gift to someone you know with a cat. Another option is to build several to donate to your local shelter for sale or for the resident cats.

### ***Make a Dog Bed***

Search online or in your local craft store for instructions on how to make a dog bed with fabric and foam. The dog bed can be used by your dog, a dog you know or a shelter that houses dogs and needs supplies.

### ***Make Catnip Toys***

Search online for ideas for making catnip toys. Make the toys and give them to your own cats, or give them as gifts to friends, neighbors or relatives. Toys can also be donated to local animal shelters to give to their cats or to sell as a fundraiser.

### ***Make a Pet Care Bin/Bucket***

Using a bucket, basket, box or bin, create a place to neatly store all your pet-care products, toys, blankets and other supplies. Decorate the bin with non-toxic paint and use it for your own pet, give it as a gift to someone you know with a pet or donate it to a local shelter for sale or use.

### ***Interview a Professional***

Have students interview an animal shelter worker or volunteer, dog trainer, veterinarian, groomer, wildlife rehabilitator or other local animal professional. The interview can be audio or video recorded and then turned into an essay or presentation. You can also edit it and submit it for use on a local cable TV show. Be sure to conduct research and prepare appropriate questions in advance.



## Be Kind to Animals Week® Ideas for Educators

### ***Newspaper Articles***

Have students find and cut out articles relating to kindness and animals or kindness and the environment in a local, national or international newspaper (not online). Ask each student to prepare a discussion of how the article shows kindness to animals. Encourage students to come up with ideas for how they could get involved and then vote on one or two ideas. Follow through on the ideas for getting involved. Link this to civic responsibility.

### ***Classroom and Group Activities:***

- *PowerPoint, poster presentation*
- *Essay, poem, short story, research paper*
- *Skit, poster contest, drawing, collage, mural, posters*
- *Web page*

Have students use one of the modalities above to address a topic from the list below. Presentations and projects can be graded and put into regular classroom curricula. Contests can be held and winners can be presented to the group and/or put on display at school, a local pet supply store, an animal shelter or a business during the week.

### **Science:**

- Animals and their environments, niches, needs, etc.
- Pet care and responsibility
- Where our food comes from and how it is produced
- Pet diseases/illnesses, the treatments, the need for veterinary care
- Spaying/neutering

### **English/ Language Arts:**

- Write from the point of view of a pet or about a special animal
- Pet adoption
- What it means to be kind
- What Be Kind to Animals Week® means
- The role of animals in art and literature

### **History:**

- The history of animals in film, art, literature, movies
- The history of animal laws
- Timeline of the domestication of animals

### **Math:**

- Pet overpopulation
- Cost of having a pet
- Cost of operating an animal shelter





## Be Kind to Animals Week® Ideas for Educators

### High School Activities

#### ***Build a Doghouse for a Dog in Need***

Search online for instructions and, providing adult supervision at all times, construct a safe and weather-resistant doghouse for an outside dog in need. Be sure to get permission from the dog's caretaker before beginning the project.

#### ***Organize a Fundraising Activity***

Team up with a local pet or wildlife organization to organize a fundraising activity, such as:

- A walk to benefit a shelter
- A game (volleyball, basketball, baseball) of students versus faculty
- A clean-up day (inside the building, on the grounds, in your community, etc.)

#### ***Design a Pet Adoption Kit***

Work with your local shelter to determine what the kit should contain. Suggestions include: coupons from local businesses, lists of veterinarians in the area, pet toys, pet care information, list of local trainers, list of local pet supply stores, healthy treats, etc.

#### ***Volunteer Clean-Up***

Contact a local pet or wildlife organization and volunteer to help them clean up. Clean-up can be inside their facility, on facility grounds, in the community or in wildlife habitats.

#### ***Local Animal Professional Speaker***

Contact a local pet or wildlife organization or professional and arrange for a speaker to visit your group or for a field trip to the speaker's facility. Ask students to prepare questions in advance.

#### ***Newspaper Articles***

Have students find and cut out articles relating to kindness and animals or kindness and the environment in a local, national or international newspaper (not online). Ask each student to prepare a discussion about how his or her article shows kindness to animals. Encourage students to come up with ideas for how they could get involved and then vote on one or two ideas. Follow through on the ideas for getting involved. Link this to civic responsibility.

#### ***Debates***

Organize students into groups of "pro" and "con" and have them research their assigned positions on one of the hot topics that follow. Be sure to focus on both sides of each issue. Schedule debates and facilitate informative discussions.

Suggested topics:

- Animal testing (cosmetic and/or medical)
- Vegetarianism
- Factory farming
- Exotic animals as pets
- Circuses
- Hunting
- Wearing fur
- Breeding cats and dogs
- Cloning pets



## Be Kind to Animals Week® Ideas for Educators

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- Essay, poem, short story, research paper
- Skit, poster contest, drawing, collage, mural
- Web page

Have students use one of the modalities above to address a topic from the list below. Presentations and projects can be graded and put into regular classroom curricula. Contests can be held and winners can be presented to the group and/or put on display at school, a local pet supply store, an animal shelter or a business during the week.

### **Science:**

- Animals and their environments, niches, needs, etc.
- Where our food comes from and how it is produced
- Pet diseases/illnesses, the treatments, the need for veterinary care
- Endangered animals in the community
- Unusual pets
- Pet care and responsibility

### **English/Language Arts:**

- Write from the point of view of a pet or about a special animal
- Pet adoption
- What it means to be kind
- What Be Kind to Animals Week® means
- The role of animals in art and literature

### **History:**

- The history of animals in film, art, literature, movies
- The history of animal laws
- Timeline of the domestication of animals
- Animal fighting

### **Math:**

- Pet overpopulation
- Cost of having a pet
- Cost of operating an animal shelter

### **Miscellaneous:**

- Adopting pets
- Choosing a pet

