Pet Responsibility
Lesson Plan

Grades: 6-9
Ages: 11-14 years
Time: These six lessons can be modified to meet various time constraints.

Character Pillars:
Responsibility
Fairness

Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Performance Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
<td>Speaking, Listening, Viewing</td>
<td>E3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Arithmetic and Number Concepts</td>
<td>M1a, M1b, M1f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Function and Algebra Concepts</td>
<td>M3b, M3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Statistics and Probability</td>
<td>M4a, M4d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mathematical Skills and Tools</td>
<td>M6a, M6b, M6f, M6g, M6h,</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematical Communication</td>
<td>M7a, M7b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Putting Mathematics to Work</td>
<td>M8a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Scientific Tools and Techniques</td>
<td>S6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Learning</td>
<td>Information Tools and Techniques</td>
<td>A3a, A3b</td>
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Rationale: Often, the match between a pet and a family is not successful if emotions are the primary factor involved when choosing a pet. Consideration of the cost and time involved in owning a pet are usually overlooked during spontaneous pet adoptions or purchases, and in some cases, the pet ends up being given away, ignored or neglected. By learning to consider all factors and make appropriate decisions, children can develop important skills that are vital to becoming responsible pet owners, both today and in the future.
Behavioral Objectives:

Students will:

- Develop an awareness of the responsibilities of pet ownership.
- Learn how to choose the right pet for their lifestyle.
- Develop a cost sheet of expenses incurred for a pet initially, during a one-year period and for a pet’s estimated lifetime.
- Develop a bar graph of expenses incurred for a pet initially, during a one-year period and for a pet’s estimated lifetime.
- Develop a pie chart of the time they spend on different activities each day and estimate how much time is needed to care for a pet.
- Utilize the information they gather and develop to determine their own readiness for pet ownership.
- Become more aware of the character pillars of responsibility and fairness as they relate to pets.

Materials:

- Included worksheets: Worksheet 1a “Pet Ownership Expenses”; Worksheet 1b “Bar Graph of Expenses”; Worksheet 2a “Pie Chart of Time”; Worksheet 2b “Commitment Requirements Chart”; and “Are You Set for a Pet?”
- Graph paper
- Graphing computer software
- Access to books, online resources and animal care professionals

Procedure:

Set:

- These lessons are intended to present and examine issues surrounding pet responsibility, such as planning, financial, time and emotional considerations.
- Students will participate in a variety of activities that will help them make an informed decision about whether they are ready for a pet and what type of pet would be best for their lifestyle.
Lesson 1: Discussion of Needs

- Facilitate a discussion about considerations in caring for a pet.
- Record responses on the board, which should include:
  - Food
  - Supplies
  - Love
  - Homeowners’ insurance
  - Training
  - Exercise
  - Identification
  - Life expectancy
  - State and town regulations
  - Time
  - Space
  - Health care
  - Landlord permission
  - Treats

- Some students may already have a pet, in which case these activities will help them become aware of their responsibilities.
- Some students may not have pets or are considering getting a pet, in which case these activities will help them determine whether they are ready for the responsibility of a pet.
- Ask students to think about what types of pets they may want.
- Ask students to select the type of pet they would like to research for this lesson plan.
- Cover all areas, including specific examples of each area (such as supplies like litter boxes, leashes, etc.).
- Lead the discussion into the consideration of the cost of caring for a pet and whether students and their families are ready for pet ownership.

Considerations for the educator to discuss with students:

- Ownership of domestic pets versus exotic pets versus wildlife
- Adult pets versus young pets
- State and town restrictions on various species
- Pets living inside versus outside
- Adoption versus purchasing a pet
- Freshwater aquariums versus saltwater aquariums
- What will students do if they move to a location where the pet is not allowed (college, new apartment, new town)?
Lesson 2: Expense Calculations

- Students should complete Worksheet 1a “Pet Ownership Expenses” to calculate costs incurred by pet ownership.
- Students should then use the information from Worksheet 1a to complete Worksheet 1b “Bar Graph of Expenses” and develop bar graphs of their own.
- Give students several days to complete the worksheets, which will be the basis for discussion in the next lesson.
Facilitate a discussion about the expenses incurred by obtaining and owning a pet. Refer to Worksheets 1a and 1b as you consider the following:

- How much will it cost for initial supplies?
- How much will it cost to have your pet for one year?
- How much will it cost for the estimated lifetime of the pet?
- What were some of the expenses you had not considered before?
- Which expense or expenses were most unexpected to you?
- Did you compare the cost and brand of supplies from different sources?
- Did you find a way to save money?
- Was there a difference in getting your pet from a shelter, a pet store or a private owner? (What was the initial cost? What did the pet come with?)
- Did you discuss with your family the expense of caring for a pet?
- Who would be responsible for the cost?
- If only the adults are determined to be responsible, is this fair?
- What could you do to help with the expenses?
Lesson 4: Time Calculations

- Lesson 4 may be completed as a continuation of Lesson 3, or as a separate lesson.
- Lead into a discussion about the time it takes to care for a pet.
- Begin by saying that not only is cost a consideration for owning a pet, but the time it takes to care for a pet is also very important to consider.
- Have a discussion about what extracurricular activities the students do during the course of a day, week, etc.
- How do they think this will impact having a pet to care for?
- Consider what they do during different times of the year (if they go away for summers, if they spend time at other homes, etc.).
- Ask students to record all activities they engage in and estimate how much time is spent doing each activity to determine an average day in their lives. (This information will be used in the next lesson.)
- Distribute Worksheet 2a “Pie Chart of Time” and have students complete the calculations.
Lesson 5: Time Discussion

Each student should have completed Worksheet 2a, as well as a pie chart. Facilitate a discussion of the following:

- What additional activities did you identify that weren't already listed on the worksheet?
- How much time did you spend engaged in each activity?
- What percentage of the day was that?
- Review each area and have various students share their results.
- What were some of the areas that surprised you?
- What did you spend the most time doing each day?
- What did you spend the least time doing each day?
- Review our discussion about what a pet needs (food, supplies, health care, training, exercise, love/care, etc.).
- Do you think you would have enough time left to properly care for the pet you chose?
- If not, what could you do to make time for a pet?

Many people fail to consider the total time involved in all the aspects of caring for a new pet. For example, some think about walking the dog, but forget about feeding it, training it, cleaning up after it, etc.

- The next exercise will help students identify pets as high, medium or low maintenance in order to truly evaluate the time pets require.
- Distribute Worksheet 2b “Commitment Requirements Chart.”
- Students can work individually or in teams to discuss, research and complete the worksheet.
Lesson 6: Pet Test

When considering how much free time they have, students may decide a different type of pet would suit their lives more realistically.

Have the students take the “Are You Set for a Pet?” test to become more aware of the areas that should be considered before getting a pet.

Referring to all five worksheets, facilitate a discussion of the following:

- Are you financially ready to acquire and care for a pet?
- Do you have enough time to care for a pet?
- Could you choose another type of pet that you may have the time and resources to care for?
- Have you considered that now may not be the right time for any type of pet? Would it be better to wait to get a pet?
- If you took on a job to help with the cost of a pet, would you have time to care for the pet?
- Have you considered who would care for your pet if you moved, went to college or got a full-time job?
- Lead a discussion into the possible ways families can compromise to afford and care for a pet.

Conclusion:

- Distribute self-evaluation forms (“Student Self-Evaluation”) for each student to complete.
- Conduct an evaluation of each student using the “Evaluation” form.
**Worksheet 1a: Pet Ownership Expenses**

Determine how much it costs to obtain and care for the pet of your choice. Be sure to calculate costs initially, over one year and during the estimated lifespan of the pet.

Suggested costs to consider:

- Estimate the life expectancy of the pet.
- What sources are there for obtaining this pet, and at what cost?
- How much does it cost to feed this pet?
- Will this pet require special vitamins, treats or dietary supplements?
- Consider the various supplies your pet will require. How much will they cost initially, and how much will they cost to maintain?
- Estimate how much health care will cost for this pet (spaying/neutering, vaccines, annual examinations, etc.).
- Consider the cost of any unexpected emergency care (injuries, illness, etc.).
- Consider what you will do to care for your pet if your family takes a vacation, and estimate how much that will cost.
- Does this pet require training? Will exercising this pet cost money?
- Does this pet require registration, licensing or permits with the city or state?
- Are there cheaper options or sources for any of these expenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Initial Cost</th>
<th>At One Year</th>
<th>Est. Lifetime Cost</th>
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</table>
Worksheet 1b: Bar Graph of Expenses

1. Referring to the expenses you noted on Worksheet 1a, organize the expenses into the following categories:
   - Obtaining the Pet
   - Food/Treats
   - Supplies
   - Veterinary Expenses
   - Training/Exercise
   - Other (Boarding/pet sitting, licensing/registration, etc.)

2. Calculate a total cost for each of the above categories, for each of the three time periods (initial, one year and estimated life expectancy of the pet).

3. Create three bar graphs, one for each of the three time periods, using graph paper or a computer program. Make each graph a different color. (Option: All three graphs can be combined into one; refer to sample graph below.)

Sample Graph
### Worksheet 2a: Pie Chart of Time

1. Estimate how much time you spend, on an average day, engaged in the activities below. Record in column 2 the hours spent (include any additional activities not listed).
   - Example: You spend 6 hours per day in school.

2. Calculate the percentage of the day that is spent engaged in each activity. Record in column 3.
   - Example: 6 hours divided by 24 hours in a day = 0.25 multiplied by 100% = 25%

3. Convert the percentages into the degrees of a circle and record in column 4.
   - Ex: 0.25 times 360° = 90°

4. Plot the degrees into a pie chart using paper or a computer program. Ensure each section is clearly labeled and has a different color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours Spent</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Degree Measure of a Circle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: In School</td>
<td>Ex: 6</td>
<td>Ex: 25%</td>
<td>Ex: 90°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-school activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging out with friends</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working at a job</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing chores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

| 24 hrs | 100% | 360° |

**Sample Pie Chart**
**Worksheet 2b: Commitment Requirements Chart**

When considering a new pet, the amount of free time you have to care for the pet is a very important factor. A discussion of how much time members of your household are also willing to contribute to the pet’s care is a useful way to narrow down the choices. Be sure to refer to your pie chart.

Identify all the types of pet you would consider getting, making sure to consider a variety of species, individual breeds and ages. Record each pet in the chart below, and assign a level of maintenance (H = high, M = medium, L = low) to each category of care.

**Energy**
- H – Requires lots of exercise several times per day
- M – Requires some exercise every day
- L – Requires a little exercise a few times a week or less

**Sociability**
- H – Requires frequent interaction with family throughout each day
- M – Requires regular interaction with family every day
- L – Requires little interaction with family

**Cleaning up after the pet**
- H – Requires cleaning several times per day
- M – Requires regular cleaning
- L – Requires little or infrequent cleaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pet</th>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Sociability</th>
<th>Cleanup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: puppy</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex: goldfish</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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|                  |        |             |         |
Are You Set for a Pet?

1. Have you thoroughly researched the type of pet you want?
   Yes / No
2. Are you certain that everyone in your home is NOT allergic to this type of pet?
   Yes / No
3. Have you reviewed the “Pet Ownership Expenses Chart” and “Bar Graph of Expenses” with your family?
   Yes / No
4. Are you and your family able to afford this pet?
   Yes / No
5. Have you reviewed the “Pie Chart of Time” with your family?
   Yes / No
6. Do you and your family have enough time to care for this pet?
   Yes / No
7. Have you reviewed the “Commitment Requirements Chart” with your family?
   Yes / No
8. Can your home/property accommodate this pet?
   Yes / No
9. Do you have the landlord's permission, or does your homeowners’ insurance allow you to have this particular type of pet?
   Yes / No
10. Is the pet you selected legal to have in your state or city?
    Yes / No

- If you answered YES to all or most of these questions, you may be ready for a pet.
- Be sure to review your answers objectively, talk to your family and make a realistic decision as to whether you are able to care for a pet at this time.
- If you answered NO to most of the questions, you may want to consider the following:
  - What can be changed so that you are ready for a pet?
  - Is there a different type of pet that might be more suitable for you?
  - Would it be best to not have a pet right now, and wait until you are ready?

*Remember: Responsibility begins with making educated choices!*
# Performance Checklist for “Pet Responsibility” Lesson

## Evaluation

The following is a checklist of requirements for the six-lesson unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Points Achieved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Worksheet 1a expense list is completed with consideration of multiple cost factors.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The cost of items is realistic.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Correct math calculations for initial, one-year and estimated life-expectancy costs.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Worksheet 1b calculations are completed and correct.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bar graphs are completed, neat and clear.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bar graphs are correctly plotted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Worksheet 2a activity list is completed and takes multiple activities into consideration.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Time estimates are realistic.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Correct math calculations for percent and degree measures of circle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Pie chart is completed, neat and clear.</td>
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<td>11. Pie chart is correctly plotted.</td>
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<td>12. Worksheet 2b is completed with consideration of multiple types of pets.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. “Are You Set for a Pet?” test is completed.</td>
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**Total: 100**
### Performance Checklist for “Pet Responsibility” Lesson

#### Student Self-Evaluation

The following is a checklist of requirements for the six-lesson unit.

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