



AMERICAN HUMANE

Protecting Children & Animals Since 1877



Introduction to Animals Lesson Plan

Grades: 2-3

Ages: 7-9 years

Time: *This lesson should take place over the course of several days to allow time for student research group work, project development and presentation. However, the timeline can be modified to fit various time constraints.*

Character Pillars:

Citizenship

Respect

Responsibility

Standards:

Standard	Area	Performance Description
English/Language Arts	Speaking, Listening, Viewing	E3b
Science	Life Science Concepts	S2a,S2b, S2c
Science	Scientific Thinking	S5f
Applied Learning	Communication Tools and Techniques	A2a, A2c
Applied Learning	Information Tools and Techniques	A3b
Applied Learning	Tools and Techniques for Working With Others	A5a

Rationale: Learning about animals is a naturally motivating process for young children, whether they love animals, fear them or are simply curious about them. In this lesson, students will develop their knowledge about the various types of animals living around them, not only in their own communities, but also in the rest of the world. Introducing students to research skills will help build a foundation for the ability to disseminate knowledge to others, and learning about animals may evoke more humane behaviors that will benefit animals, the environment and other humans.

Behavioral Objectives:

Students will:

- Work in small groups to find, share and present information.
- Work as a group to research information about one of four animal categories.
- Individually research information about specific animals within their group's category and collaborate to compile all of the research into one cohesive presentation.
- Share information they have gathered for their category and their individual animal through the use of display and presentation.
- Identify ways they can demonstrate the character pillars of citizenship, respect and responsibility in their own lives with animals.

Materials:

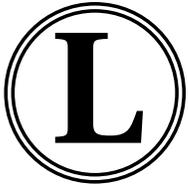
- Flip chart, chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Poster boards, tri-fold presentation boards or shoe boxes
- Art supplies (markers, colored pencils, glue, construction paper, etc.)
- Computer with access to the internet and/or books or magazines about animals
- “Animal Information Research Worksheet” (included)
- “Team Checklist” (included)

Procedure:

Set:

- This lesson is intended to involve students in learning how to research information on specific topics and also develop the ability to work as part of a team.
- The students will participate in activities that help them become more aware of the needs and importance of animals in the world around them. Such awareness creates the potential for development of more humane behaviors toward animals, the environment and other humans.





Lesson

Project requirements:

- Divide the class into teams of three to five students per team.
- Explain that each team will be researching and presenting information on a different category of animals (pets, farm animals, wildlife or exotic animals).
- Explain that each team member will also be responsible for researching and presenting information on individual animals within the assigned category (provided below).
- Groups should focus on quality research, teamwork and clarity of presentation.

Class discussion:

- Facilitate a brief class discussion to identify examples of information topics that should be addressed and researched.
- Record all responses.
- Through discussion and prompting, the following topics should be identified and included in student research:
 1. Scientific name of animal
 2. Physical description: height, weight, size, overall appearance, etc.
 3. Habitat: description of habitat needs, shelter, environment, etc.
 4. Diet: what it eats, prey/predator, how it hunts/gathers, etc.
 5. Population information: distribution (where it is found), numbers, status in the wild (endangered/threatened/abundant), etc.
 6. Adaptations: unique qualities, what makes this animal different, how does this animal fit into its environment, what helps it survive, etc.
 7. Human pressures that face this animal: pollution, hunting, habitat loss, etc.
 8. How can the students and others reduce the difficulties affecting the specific animal, as well as other animals within the category? (invites thinking about the character pillars)
 9. Interesting facts: things you learned that surprised you about this animal, interesting facts or trivia, etc.



The following are words the students may encounter during their research. The educator may need to define the following terms, among others:

Habitat	Prey	Predator	Indigenous	Herbivore
Survive	Environment	Extinct	Adaptation	Carnivore
Endangered	Threatened	Abundant	Niche	Omnivore

Group assignments:

- After the research topics have been identified, assign one of the four categories below to each team and explain the criteria for each category.
- *Examples are provided below for animals in each category and represent a wide variety of animals from around the world.*
- *Educators are welcome to identify additional or alternative animals.*

Categories	Criteria	Animal Examples
Exotic	Non-domesticated wildlife that are not native to the United States, but are native to other parts of the world.	tiger, poison dart frog, koala, rhinoceros, emperor penguin, gorilla, chimpanzee, Komodo dragon, polar bear, sea turtle, parrot
Native Wildlife (choose an animal indigenous to your region)	Non-domesticated wildlife that are native to the United States.	deer, owl, turtle, coyote, hawk, bear, bobcat, squirrel, skunk, snake
Pets	Animals that have been domesticated for the purpose of companionship, or pets.	dog, cat, rabbit, horse, guinea pig, cockatiel/parakeet, lizard, tropical fish, rat
Farm Animals	Animals that have been domesticated for the purpose of providing humans with food, materials or transportation.	cow, chicken, pig, sheep, horse, goat, duck, donkey, turkey



- Depending on the number and needs of the students, the educator may choose one of the options below:
 1. Allow each team member to choose a different animal to research that fits within the team's single category.
 2. Have students choose one or two partners within their team to research one of the animals that fits within the team's category.
 3. Have each team choose one animal to research that fits within the team's category.
- Explain to the students which form of presentation they will be using to present their information.
- The form of presentation can be determined by the educator or left up to the students. Suggestions include:
 - Tri-fold project boards (may be purchased in schools or office supply stores)
 - Posters
 - Dioramas
- Explain to the students that they will be evaluated as a team, not as individuals.
- Distribute one "Team Checklist" form (included) to each team, and ask the teams to check off the tasks as they complete them.

The research:

- Remind students to split the topics, research tasks, project duties and presentation responsibilities among all group members. Some groups may need direction from the educator when splitting up the tasks. The educator should provide direction and assistance to each group as needed.
- Distribute the enclosed "Animal Information Research Worksheets" to assist the students with their research.
- Review the information topics the students are required to address.
- Discuss the resources available to the students for finding the information.
- Develop a list of suggested resources for students (optional).
- Suggest that students find more than one source of up-to-date information, including at least one source other than a website.

Conclusion:

- Schedule a specific day when each team of students will present its research to the rest of the class.
- Other presentation options:
 - Invite family members and friends, other classes, outside organizations or support personnel to attend this celebration of the students' learning.



- Organize a schoolwide presentation opportunity.
- Coordinate presentations with a relevant event, such as Be Kind to Animals Week[®], Earth Day, Animal Appreciation Day, Arbor Day, etc.
- Evaluate each team's work using the Educator's Team Evaluation provided.
- Collect "Team Checklists" and refer to them when evaluating each team's work.



Animal Information Research Worksheet

Complete this worksheet with information about your animal.

What is your animal: _____ Scientific name: _____

Circle the group it belongs to: Pet / Farm Animal / Native Wildlife / Exotic

What does your animal look like? _____

Where does your animal live? What is the environment like? What type of shelter does it need?

What does your animal eat? How does it find food? Do other animals eat your animal?

Where in the world is your animal found? _____

About how many of your animal are there? _____

Is your animal: Endangered / Threatened / Abundant / Other _____

-continued-



Does your animal have any adaptations, or things that make it special or different from other animals? Does this special thing help it fit into its world? Does this special thing help the animal survive?

What difficulties (or pressures) have humans caused that affect your animal? For example: hunting, pollution, habitat loss, etc.

How could humans make the world a better place for this animal? _____

What are some interesting things that you learned or that surprised you about this animal?



Team Checklist

Check each box after that task is done.

- Each team member chose an animal.
- Each team member researched his or her animal.
- Each team member finished an “Animal Information Research Worksheet.”
- All team members worked together to make a final project.
- The final project included the information from the “Animal Information Research Worksheet.”



Educator's Team Evaluation for "Introduction to Animals" Lesson

	Possible Points	Points Achieved
1. The students worked well as a team.	15	_____
2. Team members researched their animals thoroughly.	10	_____
3. At least one "Animal Information Research Worksheet" was completed for each animal.	10	_____
4. The information on the worksheet(s) was accurate.	10	_____
5. The presentation (tri-fold board, poster, diorama) contained accurate information.	10	_____
6. The presentation (tri-fold board, poster, diorama) was organized and clear.	10	_____
7. The presentation (tri-fold board, poster, diorama) was colorful and creative.	10	_____
8. The presentation included the participation of all students.	10	_____
9. The presentation (tri-fold board, poster, diorama) covered all information from the "Animal Information Research Worksheets."	15	_____
	Total Points 100	_____

