

Activity 3: Happy Pet Environments



Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Define the word “research” and practice researching a topic.
- Describe the proper environment for a chosen companion animal.

Time Needed

Several sessions of 20–45 minutes

Materials

- Internet access or reference books with pictures
- 1 small box for each student
- Construction paper, paste, scissors
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons

Insider Tips

- Instead of the students drawing, give students magazines from which they may cut out objects and backgrounds for their dioramas.
- If you are unable to get enough boxes, pair students or have them work in small groups.

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension, have students write descriptions of their dioramas.
- As an extension, have students write a brief story about the companion animal they created.

Outside Humane Educators

- If you will not have Internet access, come prepared with a variety of books, articles, and magazines that feature the proper living environment for a variety of companion animals.
- A “gallery walk” is an effective way for students to share their work with peers. Since this requires that children physically move around the room, it can be especially engaging for young and kinesthetic learners.

Overview: By creating positive dioramas out of shoeboxes and construction paper, students will review how to take care of companion animals.

Procedure:

Introduction

Review the term *research* and remind the students of the many ways that research on a topic can be done. Examples: Internet; interviewing people with experience; looking up information in non-fiction books in the library.

Getting Started

1. Instruct the students to each choose a companion animal that s/he would like to learn more about.
2. Once each student has chosen an animal, ask the students to research facts about the animal as well as what the animal needs to be happy and healthy.
3. Ask the students to write down three facts about their animal and to list the ways to properly take care of their animal.

Creating the Diorama

1. Explain to the children that they are going to create shoebox environments (dioramas) to show their pets in their healthy environments. Explain that they will make their companion animals out of paper and put them inside the environments. Add that it is important that their environments are safe for the animals.
2. Share a completed diorama with the students as an example. Point out what you have added for the animal (e.g., scratching post/litter box for a cat or a fenced yard/collar for a dog). If students want to work on the project at home and have small figurines of their animals, they can use those objects as well.
3. Go over some of the construction techniques to make the paper shapes stand up inside the box.
4. Remind the students that they are focusing on making the environment happy for their chosen animal.

Tips: Fold a bottom flap to glue to the base; fold paper to create an accordion strip.

Wrap Up:

Once the students complete their projects, have the students do a gallery walk.