



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Lesson Plan: Domestic and Wild Animals

Appropriate for 4th and 5th graders

Objective: Students will be able to understand the difference between domestic and wild animals and the reasons for animals being domesticated.

Materials:

Domestic and Wild Animals reading and worksheet

Vocabulary:

Domestic animals - Animals that have been selectively bred and genetically adapted over many generations to live with humans. They are distinct from their wild cousins and ancestors

Wild animals – Animals that live on their own without any help from humans. They find their own food, water, shelter, and any other needs within its natural habitat.

Tame – an animal that's relatively tolerant of human presence. This can be from deliberate training so the animal changes its wild or natural instincts to avoid harming people.

Genetically modified – an animal whose genetic material has been altered by adding, changing, or removing certain DNA sequences in a way that doesn't occur naturally.

Selective breeding – Choosing parents with particular characteristics to breed together and produce offspring with more desirable characteristics.

Introduction:

- Begin by passing out the reading or projecting it on the monitor. Either have students silently read or have students read out loud to the class.
- After the reading, pass out the worksheet and have everyone complete it individually. If they haven't used a venn diagram before, quickly explain how it works.
- Next facilitate a class discussion about the questions they answered on the work sheet.

- “Do you think a wild animal (tamed or not) would be happy in captivity?” If students seem unsure you can talk about how wild animals live in small enclosures at zoos or aquariums for human entertainment. Although their enclosures might mimic what their natural habitat is like, a wild animal can’t live a healthy and happy life in captivity compared to how they would in the wild. Ask the students if captive wild animals can socialize, mate, explore, migrate, forage or hunt, etc. as they would in the wild?
- “Do you think a domesticated animal could survive on its own in the wild?” The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA receives so many stray animals like rabbits and guinea pigs because people release them into nature. Although you might see wild rabbits hopping around your backyard, they are different from the ones we have as pets. Remind the students domestic animals don’t have the same instincts as their wild ancestors and cousins. Domestic animals can’t survive on their own in the wild because we have bred them to be dependent on humans.