

Accommodation of Companion Animals

Teacher's Notes

Aim

To establish the advantages and disadvantages of housing companion animals in different ways; and for different purposes, such as transport.

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify advantages and disadvantages of different types of housing.
- Establish which would be most suitable for various species.
- Establish which would best meet the needs for transporting animals.
- Give a recommendation as to which accommodation would best meet animal's needs.
- Justify these opinions.

Content

This unit provides the basis for an understanding of what the housing requirements of some common companion animals are. The general principles of the animal accommodation needs are introduced, in terms of both physiology and psychology; and this is linked to the animal's natural behaviour and environment.

It is intended that students can apply these to individual species of interest. This principle lends itself well to classroom discussion, independent research, or practical tasks, as applied within the suggested lesson plan. An interactive task is included for use in testing a student's ability to identify requirements for transporting animals.

Introduction – Suggested lesson plan			
Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested Tasks
	Watch the film clip: Animal Physiology	Why must we consider an animal's physiology? What groups of Pathogens and Vermin pose a threat? What range of equipment can be used to thoroughly clean an enclosure? What cleaning agent(s) are commonly used?	Discuss what disease causing agents are most relevant to different species. As part of a group - Form a plan that will ensure vermin is kept to a minimum, and decide how infection from external sources can be reduced. Inspect an existing establishment, and identify any risk areas/factors.
	Watch the film clip: Animal Psychology_1	Why is mental health an important consideration? What psychological state will an inappropriate environment lead to? What sorts of behaviour will excessive stress cause? What is the link between stress and an animal's natural environment and natural behaviour?	Students to give a presentation entitled 'Environmental Enrichment.' Research and present some symptoms of stress, and identify specific behaviour patterns that indicate an animal is suffering from stress.
	Watch the film clip: Animal Psychology_2	What is the legal responsibility placed upon anyone keeping animals? How does this relate to the Animal Welfare act 2006? How does this relate to the RSPCA's 5 animal freedoms? In particular the 'freedom to express normal or natural behaviour'?	Explain why providing a natural environment allows an animal to display natural behaviour, and how this reduces stress. Apply findings to an existing establishment in the form of an audit.
	Watch the film clip: Enrichment	Consider: A well prepared and suitable environment is said to be Enriched. An environment can be enriched by making sure that all the correct equipment and bedding is present – what effect would this have on animal behaviour? How might enrichment differ for predators / prey species?	Design, build and implement a puzzle or task that would enrich an animals environment for: -A predator -A prey animal Observe how the animal subsequently interacts with this novel object.

Enclosure options – Suggested lesson plan

Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested Tasks
	Watch the film clip: Hutch	What makes this enclosure suitable for companion animals? Consider shelter, potential predators, and stress.	Design an enclosure suitable for a companion animal. Fully justify your decisions.
	Watch the film clip: Large enclosure	What makes this enclosure appropriate? What substrates can be used? What behaviour does this allow? What are the disadvantages? Consider risk of escaping.	
	Watch the film clip: Outdoor Run	What are the advantages of using this enclosure? Consider: Ventilation, natural weather, behaviour & exercise. What are the disadvantages? Consider: Vermin, disease, escape.	

Transporting Animals – Suggested lesson plan

Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested Tasks
	Watch the film clip: Transporting animals	What would be common reasons for choosing to transport animals?	Draw up a list of others other reasons why it might be necessary to transport animals? Investigate the legal requirements and guidelines associated with this practice.
	Watch the film clip: Cardboard box	Is this an acceptable vessel for transporting companion animals? What are the advantages of this particular mode of transport? What are the disadvantages of this particular mode of transport?	Students discuss the pros and cons of each carrier, draw up a list and decide which one you would use for a given species.
	Watch the film clip: Plastic tank	Is this an acceptable vessel for transporting companion animals? What are the advantages of this particular mode of transport? What are the disadvantages of this particular mode of transport?	
	Watch the film clip: Pet Carrier	Is this an acceptable vessel for transporting companion animals? What are the advantages of this particular mode of transport? What are the disadvantages of this particular mode of transport?	