

Handling Companion Animals

Teacher's Notes

Aim

To establish the industry accepted methods of handling a range of the most common companion animals.

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Interpret relevant aspects of animal psychology.
- Recognise the appropriate preparatory actions.
- Describe the most appropriate method for handling a range of companion species.

Content

This unit provides the basis for an understanding of how a range of common companion animals should be handled. The general principles are introduced, and preparatory actions are summarised.

Students are encouraged to consider the psychology of companion animals, and form a rationale of why an animal is responding in a particular way.

An interactive 'Risk assessment' task is provided, for completion by student(s).

It is intended that students can apply all principles to individual species of interest. Content lends itself well to classroom discussion, independent research and particularly to practical tasks and handling, as applied within the suggested lesson plan:



Introduction – Suggested lesson plan

Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested tasks
	Watch the film clip: Animal Psychology	How do companion animals perceive humans? What sort of response does this elicit? Consider: Some are prey animals; others may be predators, and have the ability to attack in order to defend themselves. For this reason care must be taken. Consider: Some well-camouflaged companion animals such as rabbits may freeze in the hope that they remain unnoticed as predators pass by.	Classroom discussion: Predator/prey interactions. Individually or as part of a group address the following task: There is a range of ways in which animals can respond to a potential threat in order to avoid injury. Some of the most common responses are: <i>Fight/Flight/Freeze/Defecate</i> For a named species, discuss what response it might make to a potential threat. Fully justify why you believe it might take this approach, and how effective and appropriate you think this response will be.
	Watch the film clip: Attack / Bite	What happens when a stressed animal attacks? What is the correct course of action in the event of being bitten?	Discuss why it is so important to remain calm. Compile a step by step schedule of actions. Discuss, rationalise and justify schedule
	Watch the film clip: Health and safety	What is important to do to the enclosure in preparation for handling?	Individually or as part of a group: Compile a step by step schedule of actions. Discuss, rationalise and justify schedule; including the H&S act 1974.
	Watch the film clip: Preparation of Enclosure	What is important to do to the enclosure in preparation for handling?	

Ferret – Suggested lesson plan			
Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested tasks
	Watch the film clip: Ferret handling	Which are the more robust areas?	Explain which are the robust areas of the body that can be handled.
		Which are the more vulnerable areas?	Explain which are the more vulnerable areas of the body that must be avoided.
		What is the correct method of handling?	Describe the basic method of handling, and its purpose.
		How do ferrets tend to behave towards the handler?	Explain: Why is it that the ferret may be more inclined to use their teeth than some other species. What action could you take in terms of Health and Safety and using Personal Protection Equipment.
		What is the safe return procedure?	Describe the safe return procedure.
	<p>An Interactive task is included in this package – Students are required to complete a risk assessment, associated with the task of handling this animal. A 'calculator' will indicate the overall level of risk.</p>		Complete the interactive risk assessment task via the link provided.

Rabbit – Suggested lesson plan			
Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested tasks
	Watch the film clip: Rabbit handling	Which are the more robust areas?	Explain which are the robust areas of the body that can be handled.
		Which are the more vulnerable areas?	Explain which are the more vulnerable areas of the body that must be avoided.
		What is the correct method of handling? What must be avoided when handling?	Describe the basic method of handling, and its purpose. Unless the rabbit's weight is supported it will tend to kick its back legs. Why does this pose a danger to the handler? (What are the Health and Safety issues?) Why does this pose a danger to the Rabbit? (What are the animal welfare issues?) Many people assert that a rabbit may be picked up by its ears. What is your opinion of this statement; fully justify why you think this.
		What is the safe return procedure?	Describe the safe return procedure.
	An Interactive task is included in this package – Students are required to complete a risk assessment, associated with the task of handling this animal. A 'calculator' will indicate the overall level of risk.		Complete the interactive risk assessment task via the link provided.

Guinea pig – Suggested lesson plan			
Timing mm:ss	Activity	Indicative Content	Suggested tasks
	Watch the film clip: Guinea-Pig handling	Which are the more robust areas?	Explain which are the robust areas of the body that can be handled.
		Which are the more vulnerable areas?	Explain which are the more vulnerable areas of the body that must be avoided.
		What is the correct method of handling?	Describe the basic method of handling, and its purpose. Why is it usual to place a finger or thumb beneath the Guinea-Pig's chin?
		How do Guinea-Pigs tend to behave towards the handler?	Explain: Why is the Guinea- Pig inclined to flee? Guinea-Pigs are not usually aggressive, so why might they bite? What action you could take in terms of Health and Safety and using Personal Protection Equipment?
		What is the safe return procedure?	Describe the safe return procedure.
	An Interactive task is included in this package – Students are required to complete a risk assessment, associated with the task of handling this animal. A 'calculator' will indicate the overall level of risk.		Complete the interactive risk assessment task via the link provided.