



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## TEACHER NOTES:

This document covers The Five Animal Welfare Needs (which are detailed in The Animal Welfare Act 2006), and how they relate to the care of pet rabbits.

The main aims of this activity is for students to understand The Five Animal Welfare Needs, and how they relate to responsible pet ownership. There are various questions and answers following the main text.

## Curriculum links:

English – Reading

- 🐾 Word reading.
- 🐾 Comprehension.

English – Writing

- 🐾 Transcription.
- 🐾 Composition, articulating ideas and structuring them in writing.

Science

- 🐾 Explore and compare the difference between things that are living.
- 🐾 Identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other.
- 🐾 Identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat.

If completing poster task:

Art and Design

- 🐾 Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences.
- 🐾 To improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials.



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 is a piece of legislation and a code of practice to help protect the welfare of pets and domestic animals. The legislation includes the Five Welfare Needs, the main purpose of which is to provide guidance of an owner's responsibility towards their pet.

Below, we look at the Five Welfare Needs, and how they can be put into practice:

## **1. Need for a suitable environment.**

The environment is the pets housing.

Rabbits need lots of space, and constant access to an area where they can run, hop and binky (a binky is a joyful leap in the air). There also needs to be suitable space for rabbits living together, places for rabbits to hide, an area for their food, their toys and a comfortable sleeping area. Other considerations need to be taken into account to ensure a suitable living environment, such as, the temperature and time of year, and how this can change the pet's needs. For example, rabbits will need extra bedding in the winter and access to shaded areas in the summer.

## **2. Need for a suitable diet.**

Each different species of pet will have a different diet. Not only are diets different between species, but diet will also change depending on where the pet is in their life stage. Young and old animals have different requirements for their diet. Pregnant and nursing animals will need extra nutrients, and pets with medical conditions might have special diets to aid with the management of their health.

A rabbit's diet must consist of 80 – 90% hay, which is not only good for digestion, but also what rabbits need to help prevent their teeth from overgrowing. Rabbits also need feed pellets, fresh greens and fresh water every day.

## **3. Need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.**

The normal behaviour patterns for each pet and domestic animal will be different, for example some animals are nocturnal (active at night), diurnal (active during the day), or crepuscular (active at twilight).

The normal behaviour patterns for rabbits which they need to exhibit to help maintain a healthy life include running, hopping and binkying, eating for a large portion of the day, having the ability to hide when they feel scared, being able to dig, and being part of an appropriate social group.



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

#### **4. Need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals.**

Each species is different in relation to what their appropriate social grouping is. Some pets, such as the Syrian hamster, should live on his or her own.

Rabbits are very social animals, and are therefore best cared for when they are homed with at least one other rabbit.

#### **5. Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.**

The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease covers a lot of the day-to-day care of any pet. Pet owners need to ensure they are feeding the appropriate diet, providing a suitable environment, providing suitable companions for your pet, and ensuring suitable preventative measures are taken to reduce the risk of illness.

Rabbits can get a condition called flystrike in the warmer months. Flystrike occurs when flies are attracted to an animal's rear end when covered in urine or faeces. Flystrike can be prevented with daily checks and ensuring bedding is kept clean and dry. Pet owners need to ensure pets are kept warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. Rabbits will need extra bedding in the cooler months, and their run will need protection from the sun in the warmer weather. It is also the owner's responsibility to ensure their pet receives the appropriate veterinary care when required.

If pet owners do not comply to The Animal Welfare Act 2006, and The Five Animal Welfare Needs, they can be prosecuted and convicted of animal cruelty. Conviction could result in a prison sentence or a fine.



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## Questions:

Do rabbits like to live together?

What percentage of a rabbits diet should be made up of hay?

What medical condition can rabbits get in warm weather?

Does every species of pet have the same diet?

What is a binky?

When is a diurnal animal active?



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## **Answers:**

Do rabbits like to live together?

**Yes**

How much hay should a rabbit have as part of their diet?

**80 – 90%**

What condition can rabbits get in warm weather?

**Flystrike**

Does every species of pet have the same diet?

**No**

What is a binky?

**A joyful leap in the air**

When is a diurnal animal active?

**Active during the day**



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## Questions:

What do you think would be a suitable environment for a hamster?

What would be a suitable diet for a cat?

What normal behaviour patterns do you think a dog would exhibit?

Do you think different breeds of dogs might exhibit different behaviour?

Under which act are the Five Welfare Needs?



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## Answers:

What do you think would be a suitable environment for a hamster?

**An appropriate cage with space to sleep and exercise.**

What would be a suitable diet for a cat?

**Cat biscuits or cat meat (cats should have a complete diet to ensure they get all their nutrients).**

What normal behaviour patterns do you think a dog would exhibit?

**Own answers. Running, walking, playing, having cuddles with the owner.**

Do you think different breeds of dogs might exhibit different behaviour?

**Yes.**

Under which act are the Five Welfare Needs?

**The Animal Welfare Act 2006**



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

**TASK:** Have a think about how the Five Welfare Needs relate to the care of a cat, dog or a hamster. Research about how the Five Welfare Needs change with different species of pet?

- 1. Need for a suitable environment.**
- 2. Need for a suitable diet.**
- 3. Need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.**
- 4. Need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals.**
- 5. Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.**



# The Five Animal Welfare Needs

## **TASK:**

Design a poster on an A4 piece of paper, which explains how to care for a pet rabbit. Make your piece eye catching!

Be sure to include information about:

- Housing (environment) to keep rabbits in
- Diet
- Health
- Living with other rabbits
- Exercise
- Keeping your pet rabbit content (happy)