

Kindergarten  
Rabbit-small animal

K.L.1.1 Compare characteristics of animals that make them alike and different from other animals and nonliving things.

I have had a classroom rabbit for the past 9 years in my kindergarten class. One year there were three pet bunnies at our school. I took my class on a tour to visit the other two bunnies and we discussed appearance, size, names, food and habitats. Then we returned to class and we made an anchor chart of a Venn Diagram comparing all of the elements (similar/different). This was a lesson that they never forgot and we'd stop by and check on our neighborhood bunnies from time to time.

Other years we have compared how our class pet rabbit is the same and different than a rabbit that lives in the wild. Then the children write a story about our bunny and draw our bunny by studying it's appearance.

K.L.1.2 Compare characteristics of living and nonliving things in terms of their:

- ° structure
- ° growth
- ° changes
- ° movement
- ° basic needs

The students get to observe me changing and cleaning the rabbits cage weekly. They always ask what the poo is! I explain how all living animals use the bathroom as a result of eating every day. I explain to them the responsibilities of being a pet owner and how important it is for me to feed and water the rabbit daily. The kids always get tickled when the room is quite and you can hear the clicking of the rabbit drinking from the water bottle.

I do not let them reach their fingers thru the cage to touch the bunny but I will let them poke Timothy Hay through the holes and see the rabbit nibble on the end. I also use "Pet the Rabbit" as a class reward calling one table at a time to pet the rabbit while I hold it following my instructions.

My hutch has a two-story level, thanks to a parent building a custom run for me a few years ago. This allows the children to observe different ways that the rabbit is able to move.

As far as growth, the children always assume the rabbit is a baby and will grow or they think it will have babies. I tell them it's age and where I bought it from, and there's usually a posted biography on a wall chart near the cage. I explain that it is full grown and will never get any bigger and also that it is alone and will never have babies.

