

Guinea Pig Growth Unit

Second Grade

Standards/Benchmarks

The students will...

Common Core ELA Standards

Reading: Informational Text

- Ask and answer questions such as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
- Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text.

Writing

- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Speaking, Viewing, Listening, and Media

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issues.

MN Mathematics Standards

Geometry and Measurement

- Understand the relationship between the size of a unit of measurement and the number of units needed to measure the length of an object.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between length and the numbers on a ruler by using a ruler to measure lengths to the nearest centimeter or inch.

Number and Operation

- Use addition and subtraction to create and obtain information from tables, bar graphs, and tally charts.

MN Science Standards

- Raise questions about the natural world and seek answers by making careful observations, noting what happens when you interact with an object, and sharing the answers with others.
- Provide evidence to support claims other than saying, "Everyone knows that," or "I just know," and question such reasons when given by others.

MN Social Studies Standards

- Use and create calendars to identify days, weeks, months, years, and seasons; use and create timelines to chronicle personal, school, community, or world events.

Supplies/Materials

Baby guinea pig

Guinea pig cage and supplies

Rulers

Scale

Pencils

Writing notebooks

Graph paper

Chart paper

Markers

Veterinary Technician guest speaker

Informational texts about guinea pigs

Unit Activities

- Before meeting the baby guinea pig students will read and research about guinea pig care using informational texts. Students will write about how to care for a guinea pig. The class will create a care plan for the new classroom guinea pig.
- Introduce the baby guinea pig by having students sit in a circle on the carpet and allowing each student to pet it, but not yet hold it. Hold a classroom conversation about questions, comments, and concerns. Record questions for the guest speaker.
- Ask a local veterinary technician to come in to do an exam on the baby guinea pig with the students, specifically talking about care, and recording length and weight.
- Students will glue graph paper into their writing notebooks and record the guinea pig's length and weight. The guinea pig will be weighed and measured weekly and students will continue to graph it's growth throughout the year, making predictions along the way and calculating weekly growth. Also keep a large class graph on chart paper.
- The class will create daily, weekly, and monthly calendars to plan out care for the guinea pig.
- Students will begin to take over the weekly veterinarian job, which will include feeding, watering, and cleaning the guinea pig's cage. Students will write about their experiences as the vet in the guinea pig's care journal, and sign off on the guinea pigs care calendar as they do each job.
- Students will write informational texts about what they learn about guinea pigs, the classroom guinea pig's growth, and to teach others how to care for guinea pigs.

Just a note...

Having a classroom guinea pig provides countless learning opportunities, as demonstrated above. Most importantly though, I have found that our classroom guinea pig creates a strong sense of community and family in our classroom, and gives my students something in common that they all love and care for.

Evaluation/Assessment

- Observations and anecdotal notes
- Student interviews
- Simple rubrics to assess student writing
- Weekly writing notebook checks