

Our library was granted a bearded dragon through the Pets in the Classroom Grant. The students voted to name him BEANS.

BEANS is well loved and enjoys reading with the students. Below is a lesson plan where the students create a “To Be Read” pile of books for BEANS. They are required to research various books and justify why they think BEANS would enjoy them. Books of all genres are chosen. Students are engaged in this lesson because they love the opportunity to sit and read with the bearded dragon. This lesson is suitable for and can be adapted for any classroom pet.

Lesson Plan: BEANS’s BOOKS (Bearded Dragon Lesson Plan for the Library)

Grade Level: Middle School (6th - 8th Grade)

Pets in the Classroom Criteria:

- **Progressive Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate the ability to research and present books on various topics suitable for a bearded dragon, adjusting the depth of knowledge for different aspects of their chosen books.
- **Interactive Learning:** Students will actively participate in researching and recording their knowledge about suitable books for bearded dragons.
- **Thorough Understanding:** Students will create a comprehensive list of books and evaluate their choices based on the suitability of content for a bearded dragon, with justifications for their selections.
- **Challenging Exploration:** Students will expand their knowledge about bearded dragon care, habitat, and reading habits, integrating this knowledge into the classroom curriculum.

Materials:

- Access to a library and access to the Internet for research
- Notebooks or digital devices for recording research
- Poster boards or digital presentation tools (e.g., PowerPoint or Google Slides)

Procedure:

Step 1: Introduction to Bearded Dragons

Begin with a brief discussion on bearded dragons as classroom pets. Explain that just like people, bearded dragons might enjoy different types of books. Students should consider all genres of books including both fiction and nonfiction. Discuss the importance of providing stimulation for bearded dragons through their environment and books. Explain that students will research and recommend books that might interest a bearded dragon. Introduce the idea that they should consider different aspects of books that would cater to the interests and needs of a bearded dragon, including visuals, content, and interaction.

Step 2: Researching Suitable Books

Students can work individually, in pairs or small groups to research a book they think would be suitable for bearded dragons. Students are encouraged to consider books from various genres and subjects. Some students justify why bearded dragons like joke books or cook books, while other students think science fiction, fantasy, or mystery would be most loved. Students then create a list of books they believe would be appealing to a bearded dragon.

Step 3: Evaluation and Presentation

Individuals, pairs, or small groups present their list of book recommendations to the class. They create a visually appealing poster or digital presentation that includes the book titles, authors, and justifications for each recommendation. In their presentations, they should explain why they think these books would appeal to a bearded dragon. After each presentation students turn and talk to discuss the book choices and support their peers' choices.

Step 4: Evaluation:

- Class Participation: Assess students' active involvement in the research, presentation, and discussion phases.
- Research Notebooks: Review students' research notes to ensure they have considered different aspects of book suitability.
- Presentation Skills: Evaluate the quality of group presentations, including their ability to articulate their justifications.

Extension Activity:

Students are then allowed time to read to the bearded dragon. Students can create a cozy reading nook in the classroom terrarium for their bearded dragon, complete with a selection of the recommended books. They can also track their bearded dragon's interactions with different books and document their observations as part of ongoing classroom learning about pet care and environmental enrichment.

Standards Alignment:

The lesson plan "BEANS's BOOKS (Bearded Dragon Lesson Plan for the Library)" can be aligned with several Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Literacy. Here are some key standards that this lesson addresses:

Reading: Literature (RL)

RL.6-8.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6-8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.6-8.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

RL.6-8.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Speaking & Listening (SL)

SL.6-8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6-8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.6-8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Language (L)

L.6-8.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Writing (W)

W.6-8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W.6-8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

NGSS MS-LS1-4: Use arguments supported by evidence for how the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells.

NGSS MS-ESS3-3: Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.

These standards align with various aspects of the lesson plan, including reading comprehension, presentation skills, vocabulary acquisition, and the scientific principles associated with caring for a bearded dragon as a classroom pet.

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Limited (1)
Research and Note-Taking	<p>Students thoroughly researched books, collected extensive notes, and demonstrated a deep understanding of how book aspects cater to a bearded dragon's interests and needs.</p>	<p>Students conducted adequate research, gathered notes, and showed a good understanding of book aspects related to bearded dragons.</p>	<p>Students conducted limited research, collected some notes, and displayed a basic understanding of book aspects for bearded dragons.</p>	<p>Students conducted minimal research, collected few notes, and had a limited understanding of book aspects for bearded dragons.</p>

Presentation Skills	Group presentations were clear, engaging, and well-organized. Students articulated justifications effectively, used visuals or props effectively, and encouraged class discussion.	Group presentations were clear and organized. Students adequately articulated justifications and used visuals or props reasonably well. Class discussion was encouraged but could have been more engaging.	Group presentations lacked clarity and organization at times. Students struggled to articulate justifications, and their use of visuals or props was minimal. Class discussion was limited.	Group presentations lacked clarity and organization. Students had difficulty articulating justifications, and their use of visuals or props was inadequate. Class discussion was minimal.
Contribution to Master Book List	Students actively participated in compiling the master book list, offering diverse book selections, and providing strong justifications for each recommendation.	Students contributed to the master book list with a variety of book selections and provided acceptable justifications for each recommendation.	Students made minimal contributions to the master book list, offering limited book selections, and justifications were weak.	Students made little or no contribution to the master book list, offering minimal book selections, and justifications were lacking.

Scoring:

- Excellent (4): Exceeds expectations; demonstrates exceptional effort and understanding.
- Proficient (3): Meets expectations; demonstrates a good level of effort and understanding.
- Basic (2): Partially meets expectations; demonstrates some effort and understanding.

- Limited (1): Does not meet expectations; demonstrates minimal effort and understanding.