

Why Should You Have a Pet in Your Kindergarten Classroom?

A classroom pet is a worthwhile addition to any classroom, but can be particularly special in Kindergarten. They add to the positive atmosphere of your room and enrich your classroom community. Classroom pets can be used to engage your students in multidisciplinary lessons, like those seen below.

Activities:

- Have your students set up your pet habitat with you. Read nonfiction books to learn about different types of small animals and their habitat needs.
- Introduce different species of your chosen pet and have students draw pictures to vote on which one they like best. Turn the drawings into a pictograph or use them as a springboard for a writing activity.
- Have students show responsibility by following a schedule to decide who feeds the classroom pet and helps clean out the habitat.
- Draw and label a picture of your pet and its habitat.
- Have students show their creativity and thoughtfulness when brainstorming pet names.
- If students want to add additional pets to your classroom, have them write a letter to you and tell you why.
- Use your five senses to describe your classroom pet (okay, not *all* five) and make a chart of your observations.
- Discuss the needs of the fish and how they are being met. Do fish have the same needs as people?
- Use adding a classroom pet as an incentive for good behavior. You could use the word "Classroom Pet," on your whiteboard, adding and deducing letters as needed. Until the goal of having the entire word spelled is met.
- What does your classroom pet do at night when everyone goes home? Share ideas and use them to write a story together.
- Have each student draw a picture and write about your classroom pet. Turn the pages into a class book and use it to introduce visitors and new students to your pet.
- Compare and contrast your classroom pet with other animals. How is a box turtle pet the same as a sea turtle? How is a guinea pig different than a pig?

