

YOUR ACTIONS MATTER

The Five Freedoms

Developing a sense of responsibility is a critical component to character and citizenship education. Learning about and recognizing the value of responsibility can empower students to make good choices for themselves and consider how their actions affect others, animals and the environment. It's important for students to understand that being responsible isn't just completing a task or a chore—it's following through with commitments, taking responsibility for actions and thinking through choices. In terms of animal care, being responsible is paramount as animals rely on us to meet their needs—every day, for their entire lives.

Discussion Questions

- What does “your actions matter” mean? Can you give some examples?
- You often hear “A pet is a big responsibility.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? Do some pets require more responsibility than others? Explain.
- What are some responsibilities you have now that you didn't have in the past year or so? What additional responsibilities do you foresee having in the future?
- What are the rewards for being a responsible person? Are there any consequences for being irresponsible?
- How can being responsible affect your self-esteem?
- How can being responsible benefit your school? Your home? Local and global community?

The Responsibility for Animals in Our Care: The Five Freedoms

Animal welfare is the combined responsibility of individuals who own or care for animals and the greater community to establish acceptable practices for their care. In 1965 the government of the United Kingdom created a committee to look into the well-being of farm animals in response to concerns from citizens about their welfare and treatment. The committee, led by Professor Robert Brambell created the “The Five Freedoms,” now a core concept in animal welfare for all domestic animals. These freedoms are internationally recognized, and are used as goals or ideals when thinking about meeting both the physical and mental needs of animals.



The Five Freedoms:

An animal's primary welfare needs can be met by safeguarding the following Five freedoms:

1. **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. **Freedom from Discomfort** – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. **Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. **Freedom from Fear and Distress** – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
5. **Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

Discussion:

- Go through each of the Five Freedoms. Ask: How is this freedom met for you? Do you rely on anyone to have this freedom met?
- Go through The Five Freedoms again, how are these freedoms met for pets? Farm animals?
- Is one freedom more important than another? Explain.
- Is it realistic to meet every freedom all the time? Why or why not?
- Is it possible for one freedom to conflict with another?
- Is there a freedom that you could improve upon with your own pet or farm animal? If so, how?

Activities:

1. Select an animal (pet or livestock) and research how each of The Five Freedoms can be met. Present your research in a poster, PowerPoint, video, etc.
2. Interview an animal owner or caretaker and ask them how they meet The Five Freedoms for their animal(s). (You may need to educate the owner about The Five Freedoms). Ask the owner if there are any of the freedoms they could improve upon and how.
3. Look at Alberta's [Animal Protection Act](#). Find the sections of the Act that addresses The Five Freedoms and identify the specific freedom that is being covered. Are any of the freedoms not covered by the law?

Make Your Mark!



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some of your
students' projects or
work to get on the
Kindness Map!

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