

Animal Helpers

In this activity, students will investigate the many ways that animals can help people physically, emotionally, and cognitively.

Objectives:

Students will...

- explain different ways animals can help people;
- discuss different strategies for coping with stress;
- research assistance animals.

Background Information:

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a form of therapy that involves animals with the purpose of assisting people. Animals have been shown to help people socially, emotionally and cognitively. Research suggests that AAT can help to reduce anxiety and depression and increase motivation and social interactions.

Materials

- [everylivingthing podcast](#);
- [Animal Assisted Therapy Picture](#) (or use an appropriate picture from an internet search);
- Research materials.

Activities

1. Podcast Interview

Pre-video activities:

Show students [Animal Assisted Therapy](#) picture.

Ask them to describe what they see. How are the dog and the girl interacting?

Introduce the term Animal Assisted Therapy:

Ask students if animals make them feel better when they are feeling down. What other things can help to make us feel better when we feel sad or are dealing with stress? (Brainstorm a list as a class.)

Introduce the Podcast video to students.

(Interview between a student and Ann Campbell from Chimo Animal Assisted Therapy) Before watching the video or listening to the audio, have students make some predictions about AAT.

Making Predictions:

Ask students to answer the following True or False questions. Have students record their answers or take a poll as a class and record the responses on the board.

1. Only dogs can be AAT animals. (F)
2. Only small animals can be AAT animals. (F)
3. Animals can help many people, young and old. (T)
4. AAT animals visit only hospitals (F)
5. Animals must pass tests to be an AAT animal. (T)

Post-video activities:

After watching/listening to the podcast, revisit the Making Predictions questions. Ask students



if they were correct with their predictions, and to share what they've learned from the podcast (write a list on the board.)

What else would you like to know about AAT?

Have students write down their questions. Students can research the answers to their questions or send their questions to someone who works or volunteers in AAT.

2. Animal Helpers:

As a class brainstorm a list of all the different types of animals that help people. Examples include: guide dogs, hearing dogs, search and rescue dogs, seizure alert dogs, protection dogs, livestock guardian dogs, herding dogs, military

dogs, therapy animals, etc.

In pairs or groups, have students select an assistance animal and research it.

- How does the animal help people?
- How is the animal trained?
- How long is it trained for?
- Are there any programs near your town/city?

Students can present their findings in a report, poster or short presentation. Students could also create a story or series of cartoons that highlights a day in the life of the assistance animal that they've researched.



Animal Helpers

Alberta Education Program of Studies: *Curriculum Connections*

Grade 2

English Language Arts

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider others' ideas

- connect own ideas and experiences with those shared by others

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use comprehension strategies

- apply a variety of strategies, such as asking questions, making predictions, recognizing relationships among story elements and drawing conclusions

Grade 3

English Language Arts

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use comprehension strategies

- apply a variety of strategies, such as setting a purpose, confirming predictions, making inferences and drawing conclusions

2.2 Respond to Texts

Experience various texts

- choose a variety of oral, print and other media texts for shared and independent listening, reading and viewing experiences, using texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as nonfiction, chapter books, illustrated storybooks, drum dances, fables, CDROM programs and plays

Health and Life Skills

R-3.2 demonstrate safe and appropriate ways for sharing and/or expressing feelings through words and behaviour; e.g., demonstrate good manners when expressing feelings

R-3.3 develop, with guidance, strategies to deal with stress/ change

Grade 4

English Language Arts

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- share personal responses to explore and develop understanding of oral, print and other media texts

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Extend understanding

- explore ways to find additional ideas and information to extend understanding

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use comprehension strategies

- comprehend new ideas and information by responding personally and discussing ideas with others



Grade 5

for time and length of investigation and presentation

English Language Arts

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- read, write, represent and talk to explore personal understandings of new ideas and information

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Extend understanding

- search for further ideas and information from others and from oral, print and other media texts to extend understanding

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues

Use comprehension strategies

- comprehend new ideas and information by responding personally, taking notes and discussing ideas with others

Grade 6**English Language Arts**

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express preferences

- assess a variety of oral, print and other media texts, and discuss preferences for particular form

3.1 Plan and Focus

Plan to gather information

- develop and follow own plan for accessing and gathering ideas and information, considering guidelines

