

# STAY CURIOUS

## Animal Behaviour

**Curiosity** is powerful. It encourages us to ask questions, seek answers, think critically, find solutions and develop better ways of doing things. It helps us to be open to others, build understanding and foster empathy. Animals are intrinsically interesting to young people and can be a powerful motivator for fostering curiosity that can be easily extended to others and the environment.

Curiosity, inquiry, and finding answers is essential for all subject areas and makes learning more meaningful. *Use the following poster discussion questions to encourage curiosity in your classroom!*

### Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be curious?
- Why is it important to ask questions?
- What are different ways we can find answers to our questions?
- How has the artist conveyed curiosity? Do you think it is effective?
- Do you think animals are curious? If so, how can you tell?
- Can you tell how an animal is feeling just by observing it? What are some examples?
- Who are some famous curious people?
- What are the benefits to being curious? How do these impact animals? People? The environment?

### Activities

1. **Animal Behaviour** – Animals often do unusual things! As a class, watch the “[Budgie Preening](#)” video (2:32). What did you observe? Why do you think the budgie was behaving that way? *Budgies, like all birds, preen or groom to keep their feathers in great condition. This natural behaviour helps remove dirt, dust and any parasites from their feathers. Preening helps keep birds healthy, and is done several times a day.*

Individually or in groups, have students observe an animal (could be a pet or wildlife) either in person or online (there are many animal behaviour videos online or watch an [Animal Cam](#)) and have them record any interesting behaviours they notice (ex. cat scratching, dog wagging a tail). Next, have students select one of the observed behaviours and record a hypothesis as to why they think the animal engages in the behaviour. After they make a hypothesis, have students research and explore reasons for the behaviour. Students can present their findings on a poster and share with the class.

**ADVISE STUDENTS:** While observing wildlife, it is critical to not disturb the animal. Remind students to be respectful by giving the animal space, being quiet, and observing from a distance. Never touch or feed wildlife as this can result in injury to the animal and person.

**EXTENTION:** Does a student have a question they can't find a definitive answer to? If so, send us the question! *The Alberta SPCA will answer one 'curious question' each week of the school year and post the answer on social media and websites.*



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## Activities continued

2. **Curious People** – Scientists, such as Dr. Jane Goodall and Albert Einstein have used their curiosity to change how we see the world! Read aloud *The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with Chimps* by Jeanette Winter and/or *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein* by Jennifer Berne. Alternatively, you can show the read aloud videos: "[The Watcher](#)" (11:12) and "[On a Beam of Light](#)" (13:51).

## Post-Video Questions

- What do Jane Goodall and Albert Einstein have in common?
- They both discovered their findings using different methods, why do you think they used the methods they did?
- What are their contributions to the world?
- What characteristics do they have that allowed them to make these contributions?

Curiosity is essential across disciplines! Curiosity and innovation is required for artists, musicians, historians, etc. Individually or in groups, have students pick a famous curious person to learn more about. Have students create a poster, blog, or PowerPoint that includes a short biography and the contribution the individual has made to the world.

3. **Exotic Pets** – A pet is an animal that we keep for companionship. Domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, and many species of farm animals have been living with humans for thousands of years and through artificial selection have adapted to living with (and relying on) humans to meet their needs. In recent times, other non-traditional animals (exotics) are being kept as pets. Many exotics have retained their wild behaviours and require specialized care that many people are unfamiliar with.

Ask students to research an exotic pet they find interesting (ex. rabbit, ferret, fish, budgie, etc.). Have students research the animal's needs (diet, appropriate environment, behavioural needs, health, handling). Have students create a pamphlet on how to best care for the animal.

Option – This activity can be done by addressing the [Five Freedoms](#) for animals. This is an internationally recognized concept used by professionals in animal care and welfare. Watch '[Life with Louis](#)' (0:90) for an example of how Five Freedoms are met for a dog.

## MAKE YOUR MARK!



Let us know if you do any of the activities with your students to get on our [Kindness Map](#)!



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