

ACTIVITIES LIST - Advanced

Please complete **three** different activities for each year in this division. You may choose from this list or gain approval from the Project Leader for any other ideas.

- Color is often a trait for which genetics are used when planning for offspring. What color is your pet? Explore genetics. One idea is to plan (on paper) what colors could your pet's descendents be. Use the example of your pet when mated to two different possible colors of the species. You could also explore what colors your pet's ancestors might have been. Genetics can also be explored by focusing on different fur types instead of or in addition to colors.
- All pet species once lived only in the wild. Research your pet's species' origin. How much has years of breeding in captivity changed the species? In what ways? Explore any interesting facts in its history since first being kept in captivity.
- Normal behavior is different for each species, and often different between individuals. Keep a record of observations of your pet throughout the year (does not have to be every day, but often enough to record patterns and seasonal changes). If you have more than one animal of the same species, what are the differences between them? Or, what might be differences between your pet and a former one?
- Pets can inspire us, as well as teach and entertain us. Draw a picture of your pet, or write a poem or short story about your pet.
- Some pets can have a short life-span, and we want to remember them. Decorate a scrapbook page featuring your pet.
- Research another species. After analyzing the pros & cons, would you still get it? Why or why not? Or, first decide your criteria for the ideal pet. What species fits? Is that a pet you want?
- Use your pet for a demonstration, or visit a nursing home.
- Study the physiology or anatomy of your pet's species – systems such as skeletal, nervous, digestive, or reproductive.
- Study the diseases and/or ailments that could strike your pet. Are there any that are contagious between species (interspecies, including humans)?
- Interview a breeder of any pet species, a rescue operator, or exotic or small pet veterinarian or vet tech, or other professional in animal care.
- Looking ahead – what will happen to your pets after high school? Can you take them with you to college? Can a younger sibling or parent be depended upon to provide care in your absence? Must you find your pet a new home? Start planning now and implementing steps to aid in a smoother transition.
- There are different types of food on the market for every species. Go to a pet store or search online to compare different brands. Consider the ingredients, as well as factors such as cost and actual nutritional quality. Is there a kind that is better suited for your pet? Switching gradually, what does your pet prefer?
- Volunteer at a shelter, small animal clinic, or animal rescue. Document your hours, responsibilities or activities, and what you learned.
- Exhibit in a show for your species. How did your pet place, and what did you learn?
- Continue exploring all forms of enrichment. Use your creativity to find ways to work your pet's mind, by training or challenging toys.
- Careers that work with plants or animals – biologist, zookeeper, landscaper – utilize scientific (Latin) names for what they study or work with. What is the genus and species names (the most common parts used) for your pet? What is the family names? Name two other species related to your pet.

- Most pets can be trained behaviors, although some individuals and some species are more receptive than others. Some behaviors are useful, like multiple rats or ferrets coming on command for a treat after out-of-cage playtime, which can assist in returning everyone promptly. Other behaviors are fun, like teaching a bird to talk or rat to wave a paw in the air. What useful or fun behaviors can you train? Document your steps in training and successes or failures.
- The difference between babies! Some are born or hatch blind & hairless, others are ready to start running, such as cavies or chinchillas. Reptiles can be born live or hatched from eggs. Some babies shouldn't be touched by a human until a certain age, like hedgehogs, and others such as hand-raised parrots become better pets from immediate handling. Learn about the young of different species, the similarities and differences. Which do you think is cutest?
- By now, you may want to let your pets produce babies. How many offspring might be born? What might you have to do to prepare, during the first few days, during growth until weaning, and after weaning? Will you have to find new homes for the offspring? Plan thoroughly before attempting this adventure – remember, lives are at stake!
- An altered animal is one that is spayed or neutered. In small pets, this is most common in ferrets (females who are allowed to reach maturity without breeding can often develop fatal complications). Define the terms “spay” and “neuter” and what are other benefits to a ferret's health? Is there any advantage to altering your pet? Also, choose another species and would alteration be beneficial or not?