

Small Animals

LAPORTE COUNTY

4-H



Project Superintendent |

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Description | Provide a fun and hands-on learning experience which develops both small animal subject skills (such as nutrition, housing, and health care) and life skills (such as responsibility, decision-making, nurturing and communications) under the direction of caring adult volunteers.

Record Sheet | General record sheet due with your first project check in

Project Specific Forms | Turn in Small Animals project forms with project

State Fair Entries | This project does not have a State Fair Entry. When entering into 4-H Online & FairEntry, this project will be listed under Small Animals.

Beginner (Grades 3-5) | Intermediate (Grades 6-8) | Advanced (Grades 9-12)

Animals | Fish, Gerbils, Guinea Pigs, Hamsters, Chinchilla, Mice & Rats, Birds, Reptiles, Miscellaneous Pets

Exhibit Guidelines |

- Members will complete the suggested activities in the LaPorte County Small Animals Manual and exhibit manual in a binder at fair.
- If a 4-H project exists for a particular species then that species must be entered in that project. For example, rabbits should be entered in the rabbit project and not in small mammals. Pigeons likewise, should be entered in the pigeon project and not the bird project. Contact the Extension Office for referral.
- Select and care for one or two small domestic animals for at least 12 weeks.
- Note: Indiana residents over the age of 17 may not collect amphibians or reptiles from the wild in Indiana unless they have a valid hunting or fishing license, unless otherwise exempted by law. For all collectors, there is a possession limit of four on all non-game species except endangered species and eastern box turtles. Collection of endangered species and eastern box turtles is prohibited.

To Be Done In Each Age Group For All Species |

1. Complete the small animal record sheets for your exhibited animal.
2. Complete the activity sheets for your animal type and age group.
3. Exhibit your animal in an appropriate cage. The animal will be brought to judging (consult the fair catalog for check in time, judging, etc.).
4. A three ring binder is to be used to hold the record sheets and the activity sheets you choose to do within your age group. This will show how much you learned about taking care of your animal. The animal you exhibit and the binder will constitute your project scoring- not just the animal you exhibit.

Activity Sheets |

- Beginner (Grades 3-5)- Complete 1 activity from the beginner section relevant to your species.
- Intermediate (Grades 6-8)- Complete 2 activities from the intermediate section relevant to your species.
- Advanced (Grades 9-12)- Complete 2 activities from the advanced section relevant to your species.

Record Sheets

All exhibitors should complete the record sheets and display in binder for judging.

Equipment and Supplies | All age groups and species

This is to help keep track of the supplies and equipment you buy during the year for your animal.

Item	Where Purchased	Cost

Animal Record | All age groups and species

Record the details of your animal. If your animal lives with other animals (such as a snail in your fish tank), those can be recorded here as well, but the exhibited animal should be listed first.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date Acquired	Comments

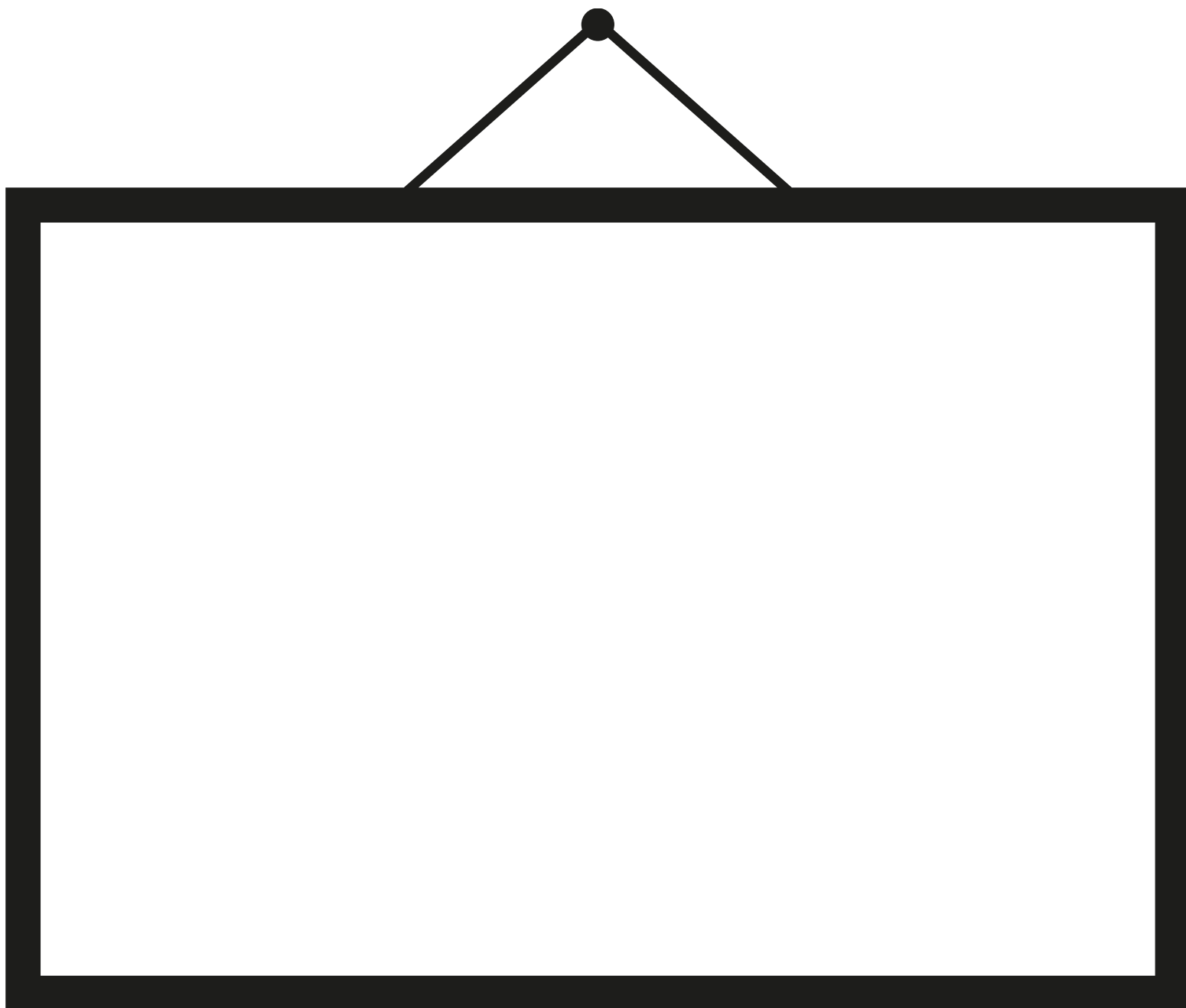
Health Observations | All age groups and species

Observe your animal on a regular schedule (for example, once per month) and record any observations related to the health of your pet. Example, change in appetite, skin/fur/fin issues, etc.

Animal	Date	Comments

Picture | All age groups and species

Include a photo of you and your small animal.



Beginner
(Grades 3-5)
Activity Sheets

Choose 1 sheet relevant to
your animal to display in
binder for judging.

Beginner Activity Option #1

My Pet

Directions: There are so many different types of pets that you can care for. You can learn about pets by talking to friends and family, reading books, visiting a pet store, or contacting a local animal shelter. Find information about your pet and it's needs and record the information you learn.

The kind of pet I have: _____

My pet's habitat (what conditions does your pet live in, does it need a hot/dry climate, does it need a salt water tank, etc.): _____

What my pet eats: _____

Care my pet needs: _____

An interesting fact about my pet: _____

Why I like my pet: _____

Habits my pet has: _____

Beginner Activity Option #2

My Pet's Home

Directions: All pets need a safe and secure habitat in which to live. Their habitat should match the needs of your pet, and it may require research to know what your pet needs to have a healthy home. In this activity you will describe the habitat that you have created for your pet to live safely in your home. Be sure to describe everything that is in their habitat including any special lighting, filters, bedding, toys, temperature controls, etc. that help ensure your pet is happy and healthy. Include a picture of your pet's habitat.



Item	Reason it is in the habitat

Beginner Activity Option #3

Pet Care Instructions

Directions: It is important to set-up a healthy habitat for your pet, but it's also important to check on your pet often to ensure that their basic needs are met. Your pet needs food, water, exercise, and a clean area to live in. In this activity you will write instructions for how to care for your pet- imagine you are going on vacation and someone else will be caring for your pet while you are gone, you want to make sure that your directions are detailed and keep your pet healthy.

	How much?	How often?	Why is it needed?
Food			
Water			
Exercise			
Cleaning Area			

Why is it helpful to plan ahead for your pet's care? _____

How will you decide who is the best person to care for your pet if you go on a trip?

How does planning help you become more responsible? _____

Beginner Activity Option #4

Pet Safety

Directions: It is your job to make a safe home for your pet. While not all pets leave their habitat that you've created for them, some pets do leave their cages and explore the house. In this activity, you will think about the ways different things in a home might be a danger to a pet and reflect on ways you can help to make your home a safe place for an animal to live. Even if you have an animal that doesn't leave their cage, like a fish, things like temperatures in your home could have an effect on their habitat, so it's always important to consider your environment when bringing a pet into the family.

Household Item	Possible Danger To a Pet (can be specific to your pet or about pets in general)
Houseplant	
Space Heater	
Open Window	
Electrical Outlets	

What possible hazards can you find in your home? _____

Why is it important to make your pet's environment safe?

How does planning ahead help you provide a safe place for your pet to live and play?

Beginner Activity Option #5

Parts of Your Animal

Directions: Getting to know your pet is an important part of pet ownership. In this activity, you will need to research and find a picture of your animal online and label the body parts of your animal. Include your labeled image in your binder along with your answers to the questions below.

What is one body part your pet has that you do not have? What is the function of this body part?

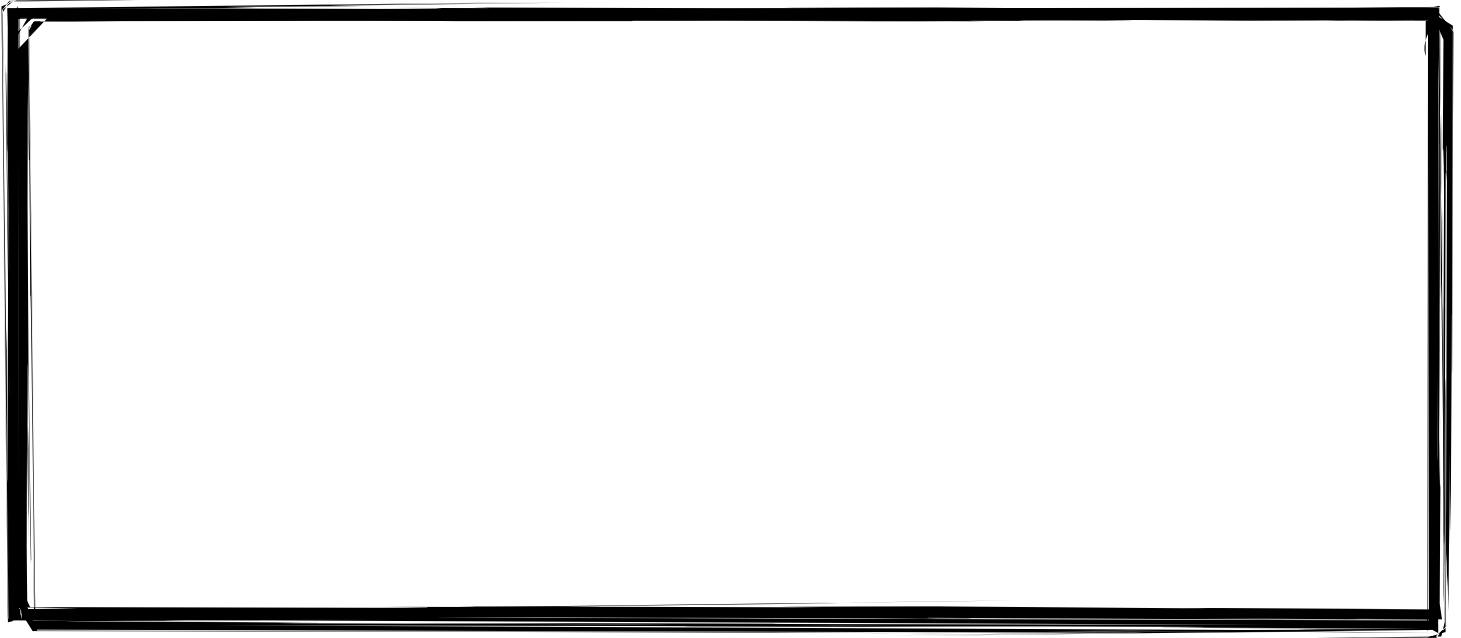
Why is learning about your pet's body parts important for the care of your animal?

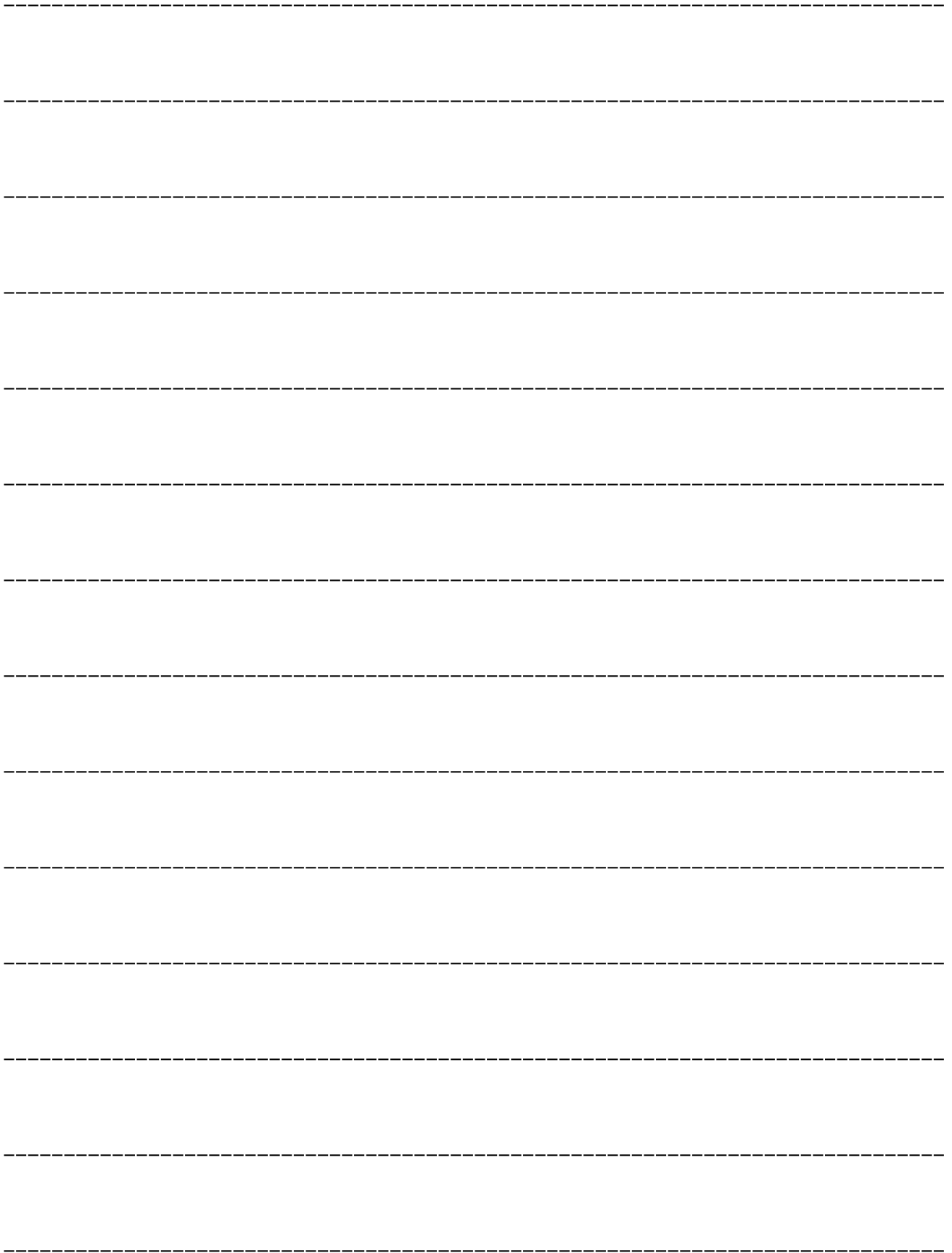
Explain one adaptation (body part) your pet has that helps it survive in it's habitat.

Beginner Activity Option #6

Tell A Story.

Directions: Tell a story about your animal. It could be a true story about the life of your pet, or you could imagine your pet is a mighty superhero or world explorer. Your imagination is the limit! Draw a picture that goes with your story to bring it to life for the reader.





Intermediate (Grades 6-8) Activity Sheets

Choose 2 sheets relevant
to your animal to display in
binder for judging.

Intermediate Activity Option #1

Shopping Comparison

Directions: Go to 4 stores and compare prices on 5 different items associated with your pet. You may include online shopping sites as well. This could be the price of the animal itself, but should also include pricing of other items associated with the care of the pet: cage, bedding, food, cleaning supplies, etc. When possible, try to find the same brand at each store. If an item is on sale, make sure to note the regular price, you may also include the sale price. You do not have to purchase the items (as you may already have them), but just compare the prices.

Product	Store #1 -----	Store #2 -----	Store #3 -----	Store #4 -----

Activity Option #2

Diet

Directions: All animals need a well balanced diet to make sure that they stay happy and healthy. Each species has unique dietary needs that must be met to ensure that they stay healthy. For some animals, they may require extra vitamins or additives to their food to keep them healthy outside of their natural habitat. Research what foods make up a balanced diet for your animal. Include what foods should be their main diet, what foods can be fed as treats, and what foods must be avoided for the overall health of your pet.

Main Meal	
Treats	
Foods To Avoid	
Feeding Schedule	

Why is it important to know your pet's nutritional needs? _____

What are good sources you can use to find nutritional information for your pet? _____

What changes in your pet might indicate that their nutritional needs are not being met?
Do some research into what symptoms to look for in your pet related to their diet and
record your findings.

Intermediate Activity Option #3

Pet Diseases

Directions: Just like humans, pets need to be cared for in a healthy environment in order to thrive. Without the right diet, environment, and care, disease and sickness may result. When you notice a change in your pet's behavior or physical well being, immediate action is necessary. Diseases and symptoms vary by species. In this activity, you will research the treatment required for diseases and symptoms in different species, and then research 1 disease or symptom common to your pet and how to treat it.

Disease/Symptom	Species	Treatment Plan
Lice or mites	Bird	
Fin and tail rot- ragged fins	Fish	
New Castle Disease- a bad cold then unable to stand	Bird	
Pneumonia	Guinea Pig	
Swollen or red eyes	Hamster	
Ich	Fish	

What is one disease or symptom common in your type of animal? _____

What steps can you take to prevent this disease or symptom? _____

What treatment is needed if your animal develops this disease or symptom?

Intermediate Activity Option #4

Habitat Care

Directions: Write a tutorial on how to properly clean and maintain your animal habitat. Include a description of each step in the process and the products that you use. Think of this as a how-to for someone who is new to owning this type of pet. You may include pictures or illustrations if you choose to help in explaining the process.

Step	Description
1	
2	
3	
4	

Step	Description
5	
6	
7	
8	

Intermediate Activity Option #5

Digestive System

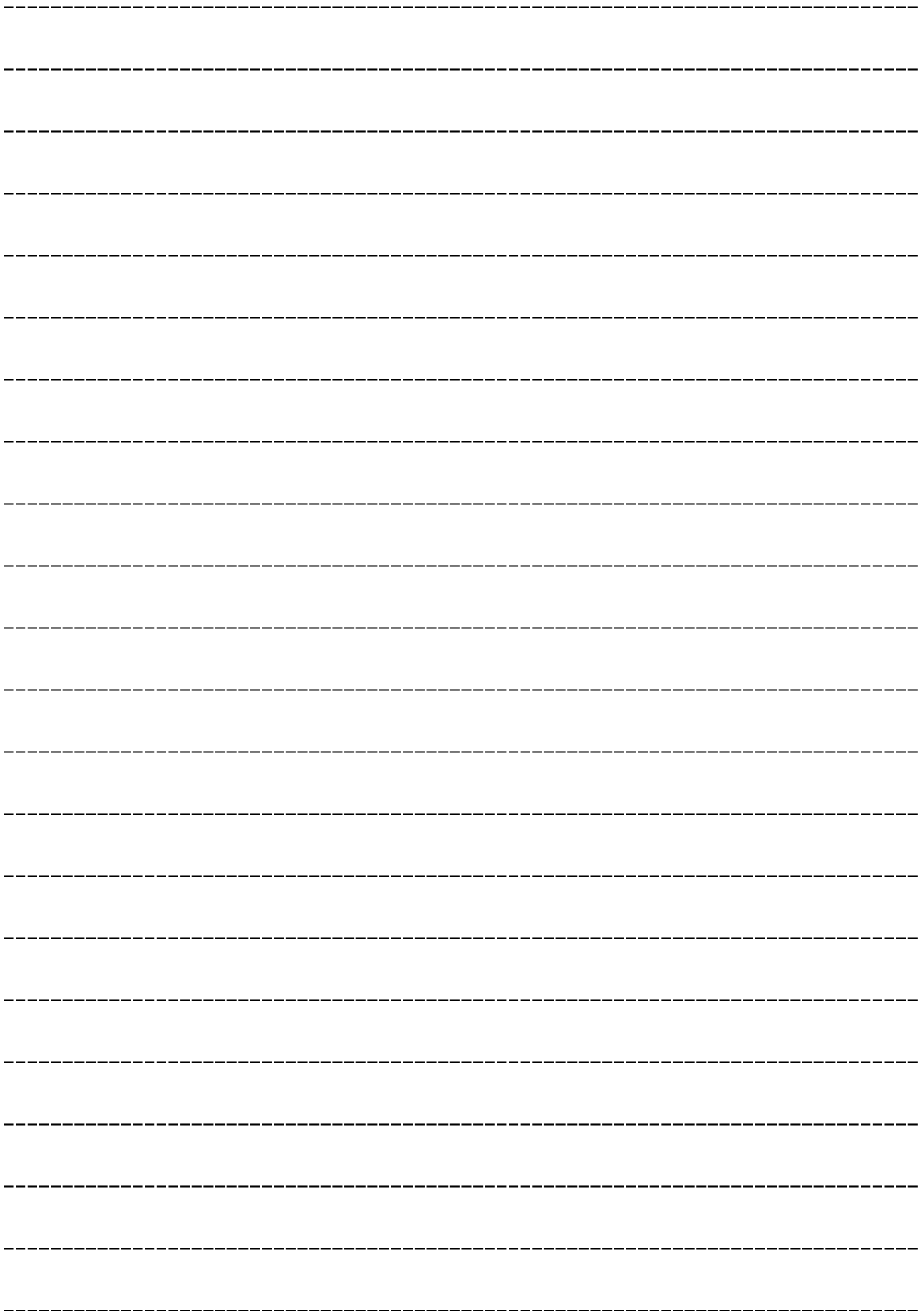
Directions: Your pet relies on you to provide the necessary nutrients that are needed for their overall health. Understanding your pet's digestive system will help you gain a better understanding of how your pet processes foods and what your pet needs to remain healthy and happy. Research the digestive system of your animal. Below, draw and label or label a printed image of the digestive system of your animal and then answer the questions about your animal's digestive system.

1. Choose 2 parts of your pet's digestive system and explain their role in the digestive process.

Part 1: _____

Part 2: _____

2. Why is it important to learn about your pet's digestive system? _____



Intermediate Activity Option #7

Pet Health Chart

Directions: Just like humans, pets show signs of being unhealthy. As a pet owner, it is important to know what to look for in a healthy pet and what observations may be signs of concern. Using research online, talking to your parents, talking to your veterinarian, or talking to a pet store employee, record the signs of a healthy and unhealthy pet for the animal you are exhibiting. If a section does not apply to your animal, you can leave it blank.

	Healthy Pet	Unhealthy Pet
Eyes		
Nose		
Skin/Fur/Scales		
Behavior		
Appetite		
Overall Appearance		

1. Why is it important to know the signs of a healthy pet? _____

2. What could cause a pet's appearance/behavior to change? _____

3. What is your family plan if you see a change in the appearance/behavior of your pet?

**Advanced
(Grades 9-12)
Activity Sheets**

Choose 2 sheets relevant
to your animal to display in
binder for judging.

Advanced Activity Option #1

Diseases In Your Species

Directions: Research 5 diseases/health issues your pet can get, how to recognize them, and how to treat them.

Resources Used: _____

Name of disease #1: _____

How to recognize it: _____

Treatment: _____

Name of disease #2: _____

How to recognize it: _____

Treatment: _____

Name of disease #3: _____

How to recognize it: _____

Treatment: _____

Name of disease #4: _____

How to recognize it: _____

Treatment: _____

Name of disease #5: _____

How to recognize it: _____

Treatment: _____

Advanced Activity Option #2

Research an Animal Related Career

Directions: Have you thought about a career working with animals? Some occupations that work with animals are zoo keepers, pet store owners, avian behaviorists, and veterinarians, but there are many other ways in which people work in animal-related careers. Choose an animal related career of interest to you and find someone to interview about that job, it could be a family member, a friend of your parents, the veterinarian you use for your pets, etc. Record your interview responses and use the reflection questions to think more about the topic.

Interview Questions:

1. What kind of work do you do? _____

2. What made you choose this career? _____

3. What type of training is needed for this job? _____

4. What do you like most about your job? _____

5. What skills do you need to be successful in your job? _____

6. Your Question: _____

7. Your Question: _____

Reflection Questions (after interview):

1. Why did you choose this person to interview? _____

2. Why is it helpful to talk to people about their experiences when researching careers?

3. Is this a career that you might be interested in pursuing in the future? Why or why not?

Advanced Activity Option #3

Animal Taxonomy

Directions: Scientists classify living things using the characteristics and traits that animals have in common, otherwise known as taxonomy. In this activity you will learn about the 7 levels of taxonomy and complete the naming process for 4 animals, one of which should be your pet you are exhibiting at the fair. Use ielc.libguides.com/sdzg Fact Sheets, animaldiversity.org, or another online resource to help you with your classification.

Taxonomy Levels: Think of the levels of taxonomy as an increasingly specific description of something that ends in a specific item. Let's look at a non-animal example first:

Kingdom: Classroom
Phylum: Student Materials
Class: Language Arts
Order: Reading Center
Family: Books
Genus: Picture Book
Species: *Oh the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss

For a **cow** this would look like:

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: Bos
Species: Taurus

Note: There are lots of ways to remember the 7 levels of classification- Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species (K, P, C, O, F, G, S)

A few fun ones are:

Kids **P**refer **C**heese **O**ver **F**ried **G**reen **S**pinach

King **P**hilip **C**ame **O**ver **F**or **G**ood **S**paghetti

Keeping **P**recious **C**reatures **O**rganized **F**or **G**rumpy **S**cientists

Directions: Fill in the missing information in the taxonomy classifications below. Use ielc.libguides.com/sdzg Fact Sheets, animaldiversity.org, or another online resource to help you with your classification.

Taxonomy Levels	American Flamingo	Black Rhinoceros	Bobcat	My Pet -----
Kingdom		Animalia		
Phylum				
Class	Aves			
Order				
Family			Felidae	
Genus		Diceros		
Species	P. ruber			

Advanced Activity Option #4

Pet Business Plan

Directions: Have you ever thought about running your own business? Maybe one involving pets, like a dog walking/dog sitting service or selling homemade animal treats? In this activity, you will create a plan for a pet related business, including designing a logo that represents your business and includes your business name so it could be recognized in your community.

Pet Business Plan:

Type of business: _____

Business name: _____

Product or service being offered: _____

Price of product or service: _____

Target audience (For example, are you only advertising to dog owners?) _____

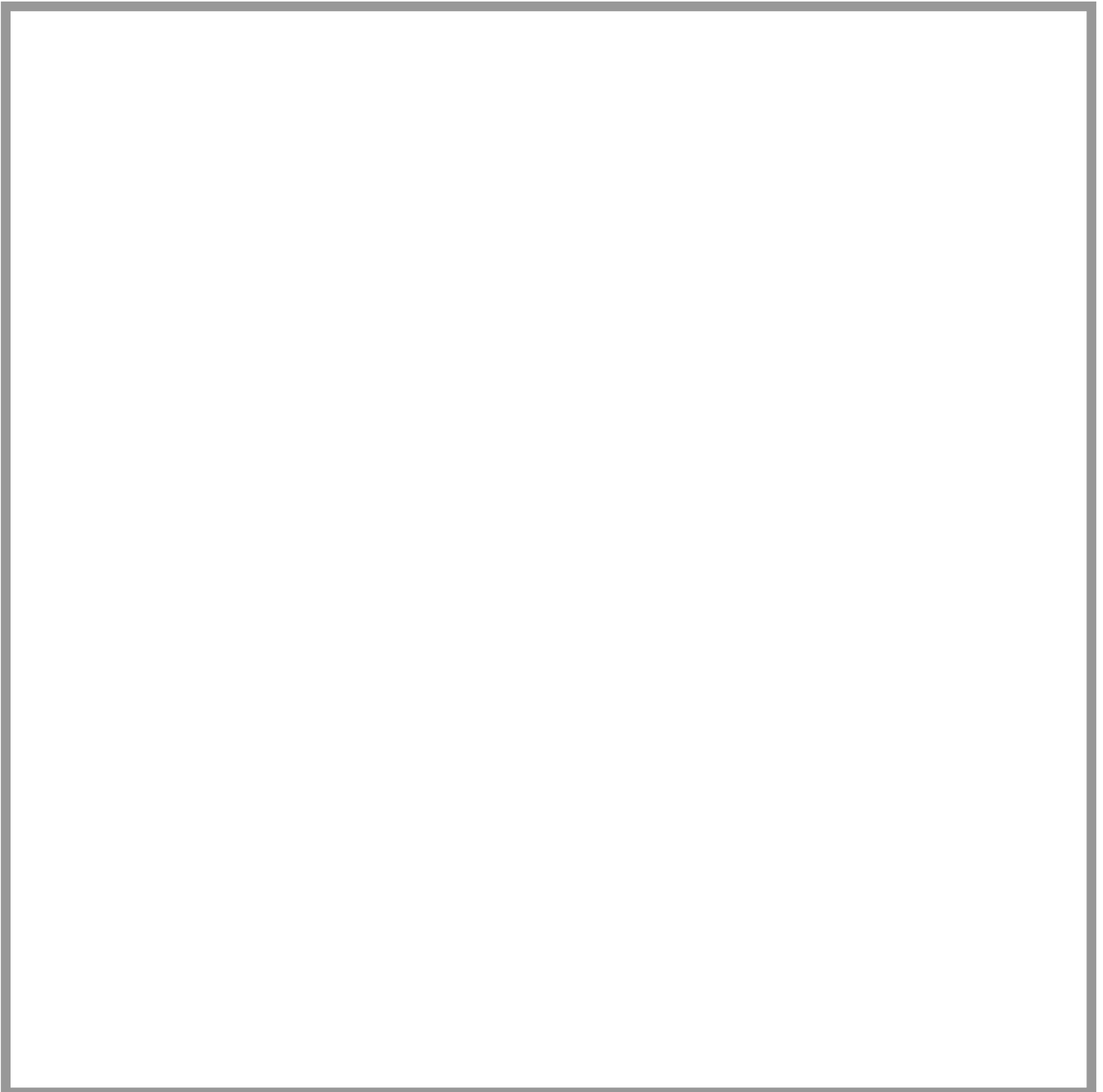
Start-up costs: (What supplies do you need to start your business?) _____

Business "Pitch": (How would you explain your business to a potential customer in one to two sentences to make them want to buy your product or use your service for their pet?)

Logo: Create a logo that includes your business name. Make your logo eye-catching to potential customers.

Things to consider:

- What colors would make your logo stand out?
- What image(s) would help make it clear to the customer what your product/service is?
- Make sure your business name relates to your business plan. For example, don't name your business Cats R' Us if you are only offering dog walking services.



Advanced Activity Option #5

Pet Products

Directions: Research pet products that are available for your animal. For each category, choose 2 products available for your pet and research the pros and cons of each. Consider the impact on the health of the animal, impact on the health of people in the household, and the impact of the product on the environment. At the end of your research, list the product that your family uses in each category and why your family makes that choice.

Litter/Bedding/Gravel		
Product	Pros	Cons
What product your family uses		
Why your family chooses that product		

Cage/Housing/Tank

Product

Pros

Cons

**What product your family
uses**

**Why your family chooses that
product**

Toys

Product

Pros

Cons

**What product your family
uses**

**Why your family chooses that
product**

Food		
Product	Pros	Cons
What product your family uses		
Why your family chooses that product		

Date	Time	Observations

Date	Time	Observations

Advanced Activity Option #7

FISH ONLY- Breeding

Directions: Begin breeding your fish. Keep a diary of your fish successes, failure, problems, and comments. This diary must include at least 2 months of breeding time. You will include your diary in your binder to exhibit at fair.

The fish you bring to the fair judging should at least be the breed you bred or tried to breed if the parent fish or babies are not available at fair time. (Fish don't always have babies when we want them to.)

Your diary can include photos of your breeding process or it can just be a written record of your work and observations.