**FABULOUS FELINES**

**LESSON 5: Grades 4-6**

**SOLVING PET PROBLEMS**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 1, 6; Science: 3

**Objective:** To teach students to solve animal-related problems.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.5.1c—Write for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences.** Gathering the information you have learned about cats, write an article for your school newspaper or pretend you are writing for the community newspaper. Include all the reasons you’ve discovered about how wonderful cats are as affectionate, fun and interactive pets. Write persuasively, encouraging others to visit their local animal shelter and adopt a cat in need of a loving, second chance for life. Be sure to include the responsibilities you need to show a feline friend.

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility, Caring

**Responsibility:** Following the “golden rule” to treat another being as you would want to be treated. This includes providing the essentials of a healthy existence, especially for animals that can’t speak for themselves.

**Caring:** Being kind to creatures. Being compassionate and showing you are concerned for their well-being. Providing the necessities to create a healthy and enriching environment for your pet.

**STEM initiatives**: **Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**ESS3.C-** Research pet overpopulation concerns in your community. Talk to animal care and control agencies. Gather statistics. Is the current community action plan (ex., spay/neuter initiatives) working? Construct an argument to agree or disagree with the current plan. Why do you agree or disagree? Construct a new course of action.

**Materials Needed:**

* DOWNLOAD Handout: “When You Get a Pet…”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Kitty Quandaries Question & Answer Cards”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Are You a Cat’s Best Friend?”

**Method:** Today is our last lesson about cats. We began our first lesson by talking about how to choose the perfect pet for your family. As we discussed, getting a pet is a huge responsibility and not something to enter into lightly. Most of the time owning a pet is a wonderful experience. But, occasionally it is challenging. You should be committed enough to your pet to work through any problems that arise over the course of your life together. After all, life will always have its ups and downs.

There are some things you should remember as a pet owner. Distribute the “When You Get a Pet…” handout.

*Remember to expect some problems.*

If you are adopting a new cat or already have a favorite feline friend, you are bound to encounter some kitty quandaries. Most pet quandaries have fairly easy solutions. Some require patience and understanding to solve. Owning a pet is a learning experience that can help teach you how to become a good pet quandary solver.

*Remember to seek advice.*

Part of learning to solve requires knowing who to ask for help. If you have a quandary with a pet, who can help? A veterinarian, an animal shelter, a friend or relative who is an experienced pet owner, a trusted pet store employee, a trainer, or a pet behaviorist. Don’t forget about other important sources of information like books, the Internet, and pet magazines. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

*Remember to help take care of him.*

Having a pet is a family affair! It can be fun to help care for your pet. What can you do to help care for your cat? Clean the litter box, give your cat food and water, play with your cat, give your cat love and attention, comfort him on the way to the vet, and be aware of any signs of illness.

*Remember to train him kindly.*

Don’t ever hit your pet. This will only make her afraid of you. It will not reinforce learning. Pets respond best to gentle training. They need time and patience to learn what is expected of them. Put yourself in their “paws” and imagine how it would feel to be hit every time you did something “wrong.” Teach them kindly and soon they will be irreplaceable members of the family that know the rules of the house.

Now let’s practice being responsible pet owners who can solve problems. To prepare for this next section, copy the “Kitty Quandaries Question & Answer Cards” so the answer is on the back of the correct question. Cut apart each question/answer card. Place students into groups. Give each group one question/answer card. Have students choose a spokesperson. The spokesperson will read the question to the group. Allow five minutes of discussion time. When five minutes is up, bring the class back together. Ask each spokesperson to talk about their quandary and how their group solved it. Then have the spokesperson read the correct answer to the class.

To reinforce this lesson plan, take “Are You a Cat’s Best Friend?” quiz. Do you deserve a medal for being a responsible pet owner? Find out!

**Call to Action:** There is a community problem that needs to be solved: the plight of homeless and abandoned animals. Brainstorm as a group to come up with solutions to this overwhelming problem. How can students help animals right now? Choose one solution that everyone agrees upon and act on it. Create a problem-solving plan that accomplishes your group’s goal of helping animals.

Reading: Visit our section entitled *Recommended Children’s Literature* for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

Web sites: Visit our section entitled *Recommended Web Links* for animal-related web sites.

**HEY TEACHERS! If your students want more fun, here are some additional hand-outs to download:**

“Multipli-cat-ion”

“Cat True/False Quiz”