

# LEARNING WITH GUINEA PIGS

Cross Curricular lessons with Molly and Minnie Pig in Grade 2

By: Kelly Gaines



# LEARNING GOALS

## General Outcomes:

1. Students will learn how to handle and care for our pet guinea pigs (feeding, water, and handling).
  2. Students will learn how to do these jobs through modelling (the teacher will teach the first student, who will then model for the next student until all students have learned how to care for the guinea pigs).
  3. Students will learn a sense of responsibility and empathy towards our new pets.
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# LEARNING GOALS – CURRICULUM SPECIFIC

You and Your World:

2.1.1. Students will describe the growth and development of familiar animals during their life cycle.

Literacy (Information Writing):

GCO 9	Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.
SCO 9.1	use a variety of familiar text forms and other media (messages, letters, lists, recounts, stories, poems, records of observations, role-plays, Readers Theatre)
SCO 9.2	demonstrate some awareness of audience and purpose; choose particular forms for specific audiences and purposes; realize that work to be shared with an audience needs editing
GCO 8	Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imagination.
SCO 8.1	use writing and other forms of representing for a variety of functions; to ask questions; to generate and organize ideas; to express feelings, opinions, and imaginative ideas; to inform/communicate information; to record experiences; to explore learning
SCO 8.2	begin to develop, with assistance, some ways to make their own notes (e.g., webs, story maps, point-form notes)
GCO 10	Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and media products to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.
SCO 10.1	to develop strategies for prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and presenting/publishing; use prewriting strategies, such as drawing, talking, and reflecting; use appropriate drafting strategies for getting ideas on paper (taking risks by using temporary spelling or by exploring various forms, writing freely with a focus on getting ideas on paper, composing simple text using a word processor); use simple revision strategies to create a meaningful message (e.g., adding on, crossing out, starting to insert information); use simple editing strategies (e.g., making some simple corrections in spelling and punctuation - capitals, periods; circling and correcting a few misspelled words; using beginning dictionaries or class-made word lists as resources for spelling); use a variety of techniques for publishing/presenting information (sharing writing/representing with the class or another class, publishing online, submitting work to school/district anthology or magazine)
SCO 10.2	use some conventions of written language; use conventional spacing between words; use an increasing number of letters to represent sounds (most vowel and consonant sounds represented); use an increasing number of words spelled conventionally; use simple sentence structures; attempt to use punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation marks); use capital letters for proper names, pronoun I, and sentence beginnings
SCO 10.3	demonstrate engagement with the creation of pieces of writing and other representations; engage in writing and representing activities every day; sustain engagement in writing and other forms of representation (drawing, role-play, plasticine art, collage, etc.); choose to write independently during free choice time; share writing and other representations with others and seek response; contribute during shared writing activities; contribute observations/information to classroom records of field trips, science experiments, etc.

# DAY 1:

Read aloud - "Tails are not for pulling" by Elizabeth Verdick. Once the story is finished have a class discussion on what the message of the book is. On chart paper, brainstorm things pets would say if they could talk. Hand out the writing prompt (resource listed below) and have students complete the prompt and illustrate. Responses will be bound into a book.

Resource: [www.crittersintheclassroom.blogspot.com](http://www.crittersintheclassroom.blogspot.com);  
[www.ericabohrer.blogspot.com](http://www.ericabohrer.blogspot.com)

Mini Lesson - Read the guinea pig care book to the class; go over general classroom rules with the guinea pigs

# DAY 2:

Mini Lesson - **Read Aloud** more information about guinea pigs. **Now that they have had a chance to observe the guinea pigs ask students for name suggestions - remembering that these names will be their forever names and that we will have to vote on these names.**

**Share the handout that will go home to parents to allow students permission to feed and handle the guinea pigs.**

# DAY 3: (WRITING LESSON)

**Before:** Let students know that we will be completing a research project about an animal (insect, bird, etc). I will be modelling information writing using **guinea pigs** as an example. Students will not be allowed to choose this as we will create a report together. Explain that this type of writing is called informative writing and we will all be creating our own nonfiction books. Show students the covers of some of the different animal books I have gathered and let students know they will be taking a book walk to help them decide which animal they want to choose for their project. Model how to complete a book walk.

**During:** Students will walk around from animal to animal to sit, explore, and read the books that you've gathered. As they walk around reading, remind students they will get to pick their 3 favourites at the end.

**After:** When the book walk is complete, students will go back to their seats and independently choose their top 3 favourite animals. Show students the voting sheet and explain how to fill it out.

# DAY 4: (WRITING LESSON)

**Before:** Remind students that they will be completing a research project and reveal each animal group. Explain to students that today they will be doing some initial notetaking on their animals just to get excited and gather some facts. Show students the animal books that you will be using to model throughout the unit (guinea pig books) and explain that you are excited about your animal and have many questions that you are hoping to find out some answers about. Think about some of the questions you may have, "I am wondering where guinea pigs live in the wild. I wonder if there are different types of guinea pigs, etc." Model reading a couple of your book aloud and writing down some of the facts you find fascinating on the "Fascinating Facts" sheet (see resources below).

**During:** Students will get into their animal groups and before they start reading, they will each say one question they would like to find the answer to about their animal.

**After:** Students will then begin to read some of the books about their animal and record some of the facts they found interesting on their fact sheet.

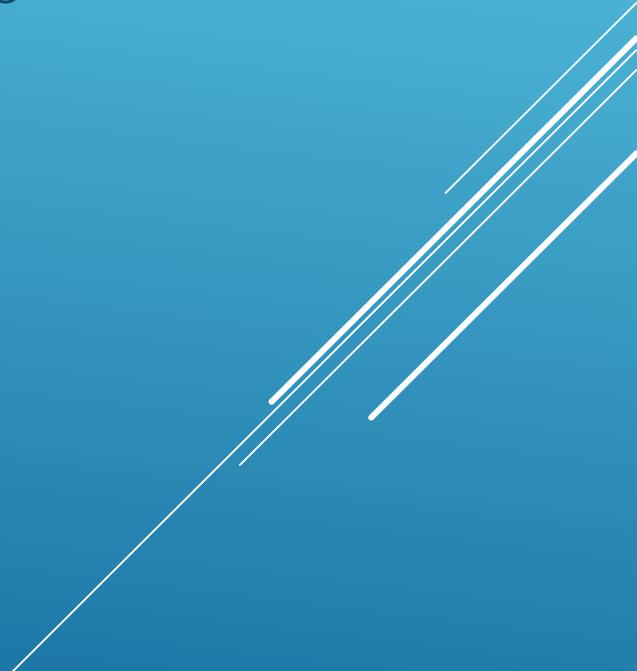
Resource: We Can Create an All About Book (Teachers Pay Teachers by Susan Jones)/<https://thankgoditsfirstgrade.blogspot.com/>

# DAY 5: (WRITING LESSON)

**Before:** Today we will be gathering information about what our animal eats. Model for students with the topic **guinea pigs** how we will state a main topic and add 3 supporting details on the graphic organizer. We will then conclude with a closing sentence.

**Doing:** Students will work together in their group to come up with the topic sentence (main idea). They will then work independently to fill in their graphic organizer - students may still discuss and share information but each will fill in this organizer independently.

**Closing:** Students will share their topic sentences with the group.

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# DAY 6: (WRITING LESSON)

Before:

Let students know that today we will be writing about where our animal lives. To do this we will state the main topic, 3 details and a closing sentence. Use the graphic organizer to model completing it for guinea pigs. Main topic - Guinea pigs are mammals which means they give birth to live babies and feed them milk.

During:

Provide students with copies of the graphic organizer and have them fill them out using their information books with their groups.

After:

Have students share what they have learned.

# DAY 7: (WRITING LESSON)

**Before:** Let students know that today we will be creating a diagram of our animal. Explain that this will let our readers see the important parts of our animal easily. This is our draft diagram so we won't be using colour we will use pencil only and a ruler to draw our lines to label. Show the students a labelled diagram from one of the books (the shark book is a good example). Model how to make the sketch and label the important parts. Also model the zoom in strategy for certain parts (i.e. on guinea pigs you could zoom in on their legs, eyes, ears, or fur).

**Doing:** Students will return to their topic groups and each do a quick sketch of their animal. They will then label 4 or more important parts of their animal.

Students who finish their diagrams will return to habitat and food sections from previous lessons to gather more facts.

**After:** Students will share with another student what their diagram looks like.

# DAY 8: (WRITING LESSON)

Before:

Tell students that we are going to continue working on our All About Books by writing a section about what our animal looks like (description). Model on the chart stand how to describe what your animal looks like by finding at least 3 facts. Remind students that these facts can come from pictures as well as description.

During:

Students will work in their focus groups to write about what their animals look like. Meet with the dog group to make sure they are all on the right track.

After:

Allow students the chance to share their descriptions with the class.

# DAY 9: (WRITING LESSON)

Before:

Review with students the parts they have worked on for good copies so far - habitat, food. If students have not finished either of these sections they will continue with them today.

Those who are ready will go back to working on their physical description of their animal - discuss using words to describe each aspect of their animal. Tell students that we will do just one copy of this section if we are short on time so make it the best that it can be.

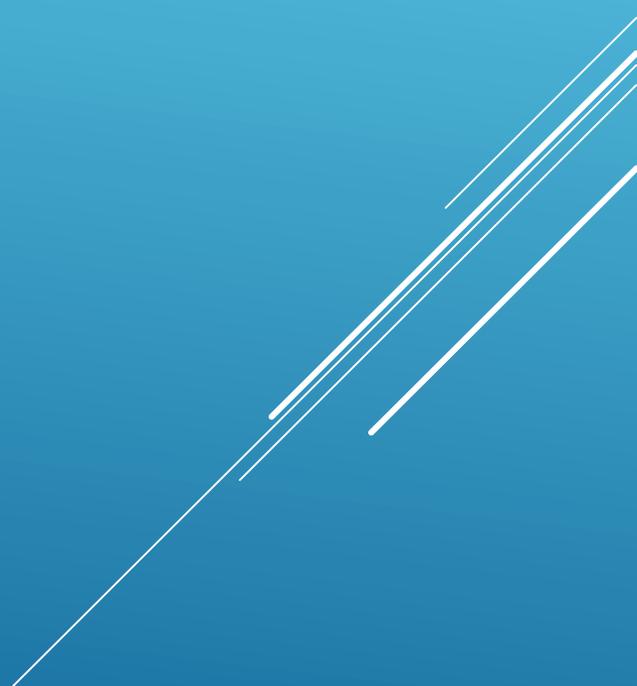
During:

Students will work on their description. Early finishers will be encouraged to go back and re-read their good copies so far using the marking rubric.

# DAY 10: (WRITING LESSON)

All About writing - model briefly for students how to write their All About the Author page and have students begin to write about themselves (students may also need to go back to habitat, food, description sections of their writing).

- Students will work on sections for longer than a day – pacing will depend on students.



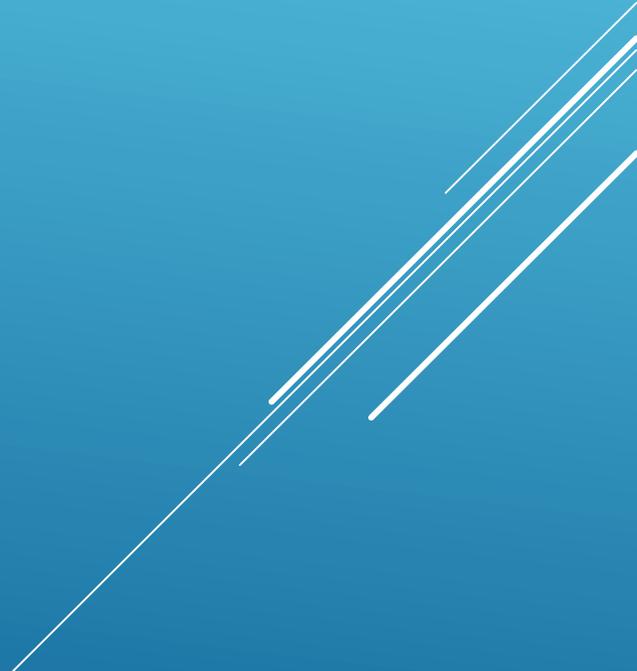
# CONCLUSION:

Through the facts learned and caring for the guinea pigs they took great pride in our class pets. When other students came to visit our room they loved showing and introducing them to our furry friends. Many were sad at the end of the year that the guinea pigs weren't moving to grade 3 with them but it will be a chance for them to come back and visit.

Thank you for this amazing opportunity,

Kelly Gaines

Connaught Street School

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