

# Animal Ambassadors

Submitted by:	Contact Information:
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**Grade:** 1<sup>st</sup> grade (easily adaptable to all grade levels)

**Length:** Introductory activities for the first few weeks and then daily for the rest of the school year

**Classroom pets:** Aquatic Turtle and Leopard Gecko (easily adaptable for other pets)

## Objectives:

- Students will learn about the characteristics of reptiles
- Students will learn about the characteristics and specific needs of our turtle and gecko
- Students will learn about and provide proper care for our turtle and gecko
- Students will use their observation skills
- Students will make inferences based on their recorded observations
- Students will use technology to share about our pets to a larger audience

## Summary:

This lesson plan includes an introduction to the classroom pets for the entire class during the first few weeks of school. During this time, students will revisit living vs. non-living things as they begin their initial observations of the animals. Then, through an inquiry process, students will begin to learn about different animal classifications and focus in on reptiles. Students will learn more specific information about aquatic turtles and leopard geckos and learn how to care for them. Through these activities, the students will become “Animal Ambassadors” and assume the responsibility of the daily care of the classroom pets.

## Introductory Activities for the first few weeks of school

- Ask students to walk around the classroom to find living and non-living things. Add their responses to a T chart. Ask: How do you know if something is alive? Show video “It’s Alive! Biology for Kids” by SciShow Kids on YouTube. Revisit class T chart and make changes if needed. Have students complete sheet similar to the one below for their science notebooks.

Living things:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

This is a living thing:



This is a non-living thing:



- Set aside time for small groups of students to visit each pet for an observation time of 5-10 minutes. Post a chart for each pet and help students add to each chart through writing, drawing, or dictation.

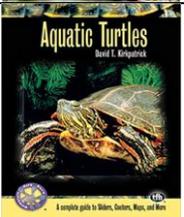
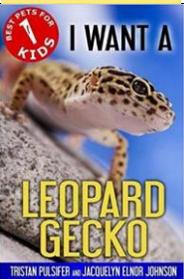
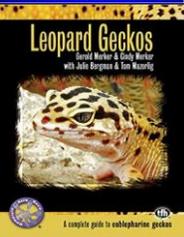
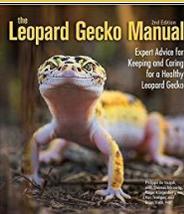
SEE	WONDER

- After all students have had observation time, compare the charts as a whole class and look for similarities and differences that the students notice. Place charts back with pets to be added to until the journaling begins.
- Give small groups or partners a set of animal cards or models that includes animals from the following five animal groups: mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, insect, fish. (flashcards, images from the internet, TPT files, beanie babies, plastic models, etc.) Ask: How can you group the animals? Visit each group and ask for their reasoning.

Show movie “Classifying Animals” (free movie) on BrainPop Jr. and then ask students to go back to their groups and see if they can regroup their cards and label them with the five animal groups discussed. Have groups visit other groups to compare and discuss. Ask: Which group(s) do our turtle and gecko belong to? Record answers.

Show movie – “Reptiles” on BrainPop (or similar non-fiction book or video). Ask: What can you tell me about reptiles? Think about our turtle and gecko, do they fit in the reptile group? Why or why not? (get to the conclusion that they are reptiles)

- Set aside some open-ended time for students to observe pets and explore specific resources about aquatic turtles and leopard geckos like:

	<p>Aquatic Turtles (Complete Pet Owner's Manual) Paperback – May 1, 2009 by Hartmut Wilke</p>
	<p>Aquatic Turtles (Complete Herp Care) Paperback – June 30, 2006 by David T. Kirkpatrick</p>
	<p>I Want A Leopard Gecko: Best Pets For Kids Book 1 (Volume 1) Paperback – October 25, 2016 by Tristan Pulsifer and Jacquelyn Elnor Johnson</p>
	<p>Leopard Geckos (Complete Herp Care) Paperback – June 30, 2006 by Gerald Merker and Cindy Merker</p>
	<p>The Leopard Gecko Manual: Expert Advice for Keeping and Caring for a Healthy Leopard Gecko -Oct 3, 2017 by Philippe de Vosjoli and Thomas Mazorlig</p>

- Make a “Needs” chart for each pet based on observations and information from books.
- Have students suggest and vote on a name for the weekly video segment. Example might include: Animal Corner, Gordon’s Pet News, or Reptile Recap.

## Daily Activities for after introductory activities are completed

- Once students have learned about the classroom pets, celebrate that learning by appointing them Animal Ambassadors with a small “ceremony” where each child receives a nametag, signs an Animal Ambassador Pledge and maybe has an animal themed snack. Have students help you write the pledge with no more than five “We promise...” statements. Copy it on large chart paper for students to sign. Students can wear an Animal Ambassador nametag when it is their turn to take care of the animals!

(made to be copied on bright paper)

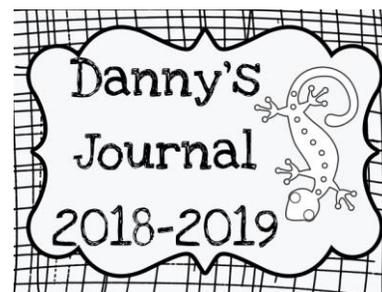


- Determine schedule and rotation for Animal Ambassadors to perform their daily tasks. Things to consider- number of students, when in your schedule will it work (morning work, bell work, during silent reading, last few minutes of the day, etc.), will you change students daily or weekly. It’s up to you!
- An outline of tasks might look like this:

Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh water</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Journal</li> </ul>
Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitat care as needed</li> <li>Video Segment</li> </ul>

- The daily journaling allows the students to focus on their observations and to use those observations over time to make inferences about the pets.

### Journal Cover Images:



**Journal Inside Pages Image:**

M T W TH F \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Did you add Food? Yes No  
Did you add water? Yes No  
Did you clean the habitat? Yes No  
Special notes, observations, or wonders:

M T W TH F \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Did you add food? Yes No  
Did you add water? Yes No  
Did you clean the habitat? Yes No  
Special notes, observations, or wonders:

- In addition to daily journaling, each week several Animal Ambassadors will create a video using the camera on an iPad. Students will record a short reflection about each pet and their behavior from the week. This can be shared with parents and the larger community through direct email, or posting to apps like Schoology or SeeSaw. As students increase their technology proficiency, FlipGrid, Chatterpix, and other apps can be used for video creation and links provided to parents.

Danny and Speedy are anxiously waiting to get know this year's group of Animal Ambassadors!

