

Could you be the RSPCA's Most Compassionate Class?

SCENE SETTER ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

- To be able to explain what compassion means and why we should show compassion to all animals
- To identify the needs of animals
- To compare the needs of different animals

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is compassion?
- What do animals need to stay happy and healthy?
- Do all animals have the same needs?

RESOURCES

- Introductory video
- Sticky labels or post-it notes
- Blank sheets of A3 paper
- Interactive PDF slides 'Scene setter' to guide pupils through the activities

Due to the topics covered in the Compassionate Class programme, it is important to consider how different children may react. For more information on creating a safe teaching and learning environment, see guidance on pages five to seven of the Teacher Overview downloadable at: [rspca.org.uk/ccresources](https://www.rspca.org.uk/ccresources). For information on how to adapt Compassionate Class to support pupils with SEND, see guidance on page nine of this document and pages eight and nine of the Teacher Overview.



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STIMULUS

Short film about compassion towards animals

5-10
MINS



Ask pupils what they think compassion means and how it can be shown towards animals. Record their thoughts in the box on slide two or print the slide for pupils to write on. This can be used as a baseline assessment to capture pupils' initial understanding and we encourage you to revisit these thoughts at the end of the session.

Show the RSPCA Compassionate Class introductory film, using slide three of the accompanying pupil facing slides.

As they watch, ask the children to make a note of anything they find out about what animals need to be healthy and happy, and how the RSPCA helps.

SLIDE
2-3



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WHAT IS COMPASSION?

A blue handprint icon with the text '5-10 MINS' written inside it.

5-10
MINS

Display slide four and reiterate the film's message by discussing the following definition of compassion with the class:

Being compassionate means not mistreating other people and animals, and helping them if they are suffering or hurt. Compassionate people look out for others to make sure their lives are as happy and healthy as possible.

Explain that there are some things that animals need to live healthy, happy lives, that as humans we have to learn in order to be compassionate. Use the following examples to illustrate this:

- One of a dog's needs is to get enough regular exercise, so having a pet dog means you will need to take them out for a walk once or twice per day
- Leaving litter can be harmful to wild animals, so we should get rid of our rubbish properly and recycle where we can

Encourage more able children to think of some other examples that apply to different animals.

A purple handprint icon with the text 'SLIDE 4' written inside it.

SLIDE
4

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TASK

**10-15
MINS**

What do animals need?

All of the Compassionate Class activities help children to learn and explore what animals need to stay healthy and happy. These are different for each animal, but are grouped into five key needs as below.

To introduce these animal needs, display slide five and ask pupils what they think each of the needs might mean for different types of animals. Encourage them to look at the notes they made whilst watching the video to help. After a brief small group discussion, roll your mouse underneath each of the animal needs to uncover the definition.

If you are working with lower ability or younger groups, you could read through the definitions as a group and ask children to think about whether the welfare needs apply to them as humans.

1. Environment

Animals need a place where they can rest and sleep safely with plenty of space to move around, and access to an exercise space

2. Food and water

Just like humans, animals need the right diet. Animals need access to fresh clean water and the right type and amount of food to keep them fit and healthy

3. Natural behaviour

Animals should be able to perform normal behaviour. Whether they like to run, jump, dig, fly or slither, they should have the space and environment to do just that!

4. Company

Some animals like company, and might even get lonely if left on their own. Other animals like to live alone, and so live independently in the wild or are kept on their own if a pet or farm animal

5. Protection from harm

Animals should be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. Pets and farm animals need regular check-ups from a vet. Wild animals need us to protect their habitats and to leave them alone as much as possible

**SLIDE
5**

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DISCUSSION

15-20
MINS

Use some of the questions below to explore the definition of compassion and the needs of animals.

If you're working with lower ability or younger groups, you can use an **online interactive game** to compare the needs of humans and different animals.

PROMPT QUESTIONS

- How can we be compassionate to animals?
- Why is it important to be compassionate towards animals?
- Can you know what it is like to be an animal?
- In what ways are animals different to humans and how are they the same?
- What do humans need to be happy and healthy? Are these the same for everyone?
- What do animals need to be happy and healthy? Are all animal needs the same?
- Do animals need friends?
- Is it right to train animals to do things they wouldn't naturally do?

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TASK



20-30
MINS

Show slides six and seven with the table showing some of the needs of specific pets, farm animals and wild animals.

Split the class into small groups, and allow them a few minutes to discuss the needs of the animals in the table, comparing the differences and similarities between a pet, farm or wild animal.

If you are working with lower ability or younger children, you could compare the information in the table as a whole class.

Bring the class back together and summarise by explaining the key difference:

- Pets and farm animals depend totally on their owners to have their needs met
- Wild animals can meet their needs by themselves and need us to not disturb them in any way

To consolidate the children's learning around the needs of animals, play the Animal Guessing Game, outlined on the next page.



SLIDE
6-7

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ANIMAL GUESSING GAME

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use the table above or visit the **RSPCA's advice and welfare pages** for more information on the needs of different types of animal. You may want to ask your class to spend some time researching before completing this activity, especially if you are working with lower ability or younger children
2. Challenge children to choose any animal and write it down on a sticky label or post-it. Without letting each other see, they should stick the label on another person's back or forehead
3. Children then move around the space to discover which secret animal they are by asking questions about their needs, e.g. do I need to live on my own or with companions? What do I need to eat? Do I need humans to help meet my needs?
4. Summarise by discussing whether all animals have the same needs and comparing some of the questions and answers they used to discover their animal

SESSION SUMMARY

Invite the pupils to revisit their initial responses recorded on slide two. Ask each pupil to think of a thought or question from the session that they would like to explore further, or something new they have discovered today. Encourage pupils to share these with the rest of the class and record them under their initial ideas from the start of the lesson. By saving the PDF, you can return to these thoughts in another session.

**5
MINS****SLIDE
6-7****SLIDE
2**



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EXTENSION RESOURCES

If you'd like to take the learning from this scene setter session further before your class moves on to their first Discovery activity, you could try the extensions below.

- The **RSPCA education website** has some fun interactive quizzes and challenges that will help children learn about the needs of animals. Children could pick an animal and create a poster to communicate the needs of this specific animal with other classes
- Independently or in small groups, pupils could design something that represents the importance of showing compassion towards animals. This could be:
 - A painting or sculpture to display in school
 - A blog post for the school website
 - A performance for other classes/in assembly

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ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SEND

The activities below are suggestions to help you adapt the Compassionate Class activities to support your pupils' needs.

TASK (PAGE FOUR)

Re-watch the stimulus video and pause each time a different animal is shown. For each animal, ask pupils: Which of their needs is being met? How might that need be met for a different animal?

Give pupils a copy of slide eight, which demonstrates when each of the five welfare needs are being met, and a copy of slide five. Ask pupils to cut out the images on slide eight and stick them below the matching need on slide five.

ANIMAL GUESSING GAME (PAGE SEVEN)

Instructions:

1. Pair up pupils and encourage them to choose any animal (alternatively you could give each pupil a choice of two animals). In their pair, they should take it in turns to ask questions to guess each other's animal. They should then swap roles
2. If pupils need prompts, provide them with a list of questions to ask their partner, such as those below, and a copy of slides six and seven to support discussions
3. Alternatively, play **Meeting The Needs** game or **The 5 Needs Quiz** either individually or as a class. Pupils may need the text read to them

Prompt questions:

- Do you get lonely by yourself?
- Do you like to play games or with toys?
- Do you need a lot of space?
- Do you need vaccinations?
- Do you only eat vegetables (a herbivore) or do you eat meat or eggs?
- Do you need tunnels underground?
- Do your teeth grow fast?
- Will eating some human foods make you sick?



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WHAT NEXT?

Now you have completed the scene setter activity, next up is to choose two Discovery activities which can be downloaded from the Compassionate Class homepage: rspca.org.uk/ccresources. You can then choose an Advocacy activity that will provide your pupils with an entry for the Compassionate Class competition.

Advocacy activities

WHY NOT TRY THE ACTIVITY BELOW THAT HELPS EXPLORE THE CONCEPT OF COMPASSION:

PHILOSOPHICAL HUMANS

What informs our views, misconceptions and ethical codes around animal welfare? This activity will encourage children to put themselves in the 'shoes' of other creatures to encourage compassion and empathy.

- Children work in small groups to consider one of the questions below. Using their ideas, children create a representation of their response to the question through art work, journal writing, scrapbooking, a film, animation, drama or story. You could start with the simpler questions as a class and build up.

Would you rather...?

- Be a dog or a cat?
- Care for an injured crocodile or catch mosquitoes?
- Have wings or a tail?
- Would you rather live underwater or in the treetops?

Do you agree or disagree that...?

- A peacock knows it is beautiful
- All animals play
- Animals can talk
- All animals dream
- People are animals

How do your answers to these questions help you understand that animals have thoughts, feelings and needs?



Advocacy activities

PHILOSOPHICAL HUMANS... CONTINUED

Would it be good or bad if...?

- Ants ate litter?
- People hatched from eggs?
- Monkeys went to school?
- Giants kept people as pets?

How do your answers to these questions help you understand the responsibilities that humans have to protect animals from harm and keep them happy and healthy?

If only they could talk...

Imagine you can interview a lion in a zoo and a lion in the wild. What would they both say about their lives? How do they spend their time and what do they eat?

