

# A HABITAT FOR JET THE GERBIL\*

**GRADE RANGE:** K – 3

**TIME:** 45 MINUTES

**MATERIALS:**

- THE LEGEND OF JET THE GERBIL BY MICHAEL KELLER
- LARGE PAPER OR BOARD FOR WRITING
- OPTIONAL:
  - COPIES OF HABITAT WORKSHEET
  - SCISSORS
  - GLUE

**STANDARDS:**

**NGSS – K-LS1-1.** USE OBSERVATIONS TO DESCRIBE PATTERNS OF WHAT PLANTS AND ANIMALS (INCLUDING HUMANS) NEED TO SURVIVE.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1/1.1** [WITH PROMPTING AND SUPPORT], ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT KEY DETAILS IN A TEXT.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.8/1.8/2.8.** [WITH GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FROM ADULTS], RECALL INFORMATION FROM EXPERIENCES OR GATHER INFORMATION FROM PROVIDED SOURCES TO ANSWER A QUESTION.

**OVERVIEW:**

IN THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL GATHER INFORMATION FROM READING THE LEGEND OF JET THE GERBIL, THEN INVESTIGATE AND EXPLORE HOW THE BASIC NEEDS OF AN ANIMAL ARE PROVIDED IN THEIR HABITAT, USING ORGANISMS COMMONLY KEPT IN HOMES AS PETS. STUDENTS WILL COMPARE AND CONTRAST THESE NEEDS TO DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMON BASIC NEEDS OF LIVING ORGANISMS.

**VOCABULARY:**

**HABITAT:** THE NATURAL HOME OF A PLANT OR AN ANIMAL

**RODENT:** A TYPE OF FOUR-LEGGED, GNAWING MAMMAL WITH TEETH THAT CONSTANTLY GROW

## INTRODUCTION

READ THE LEGEND OF JET THE GERBIL.

*JET WAS A VERY SPECIAL GERBIL AND MICHAEL WORKED HARD TO GIVE HIM EVERYTHING HE NEEDED TO BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY. NORMALLY, GERBILS IN THE WILD LIVE OUTSIDE IN THEIR **HABITAT**: THEIR NATURAL HOME. IT HAS EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY. WHAT DO YOU NEED IN YOUR 'HABITAT' TO STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY?*

ON A LARGE PAPER OR BOARD, CREATE A LIST OF WHAT PEOPLE NEED IN THEIR 'HABITAT', LEAVING ROOM FOR A LIST ABOUT JET THE GERBIL NEXT TO IT. TAKE TIME TO POINT OUT PHYSICAL NEEDS, EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND CONTRAST THEM WITH 'WANTS'.

*HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SOME OF THESE THINGS IN YOUR 'HABITAT'?*

*WHAT DID MICHAEL PROVIDE FOR JET TO STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY?*

HELP STUDENTS REVIEW THE BOOK AS NEEDED TO FIND SOME ANSWERS.

START A SECOND COLUMN ON THE LARGE PAPER/BOARD FOR JET THE GERBIL'S HABITAT.

INCLUDED IN THE MAIN TEXT: GLASS TANK, EXERCISE WHEEL, SOFT BEDDING, GERBIL HOUSE; STUDENTS MIGHT ALSO POINT OUT 'MEDICAL CARE' FROM MICHAEL'S DAD.

*WHAT FOODS DO YOU NEED IN YOUR HABITAT?*

ADD TO 'PEOPLE' LIST, AS APPROPRIATE.

*WHAT DID JET EAT?*

HELP STUDENTS REVIEW THE BOOK, IF NEEDED, AND ADD TO THE 'JET THE GERBIL' LIST  
SOME STUDENTS MAY HAVE GERBILS OR RELATED ANIMALS AS PETS AND CAN SUGGEST  
APPROPRIATE FOODS.

READ SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE 'GERBIL FACTS TO CHEW ON' AT THE END OF THE LEGEND  
OF JET THE GERBIL TO FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT GERBILS EAT IN THE WILD AND  
AS PETS.

AT SOME POINT, A STUDENT MIGHT IDENTIFY THE PAPER TOWEL TUBE. EXPLAIN THAT THE TUBE  
WASN'T ACTUALLY FOOD, BUT THAT HE CHEWED ON IT TO KEEP HIS TEETH HEALTHY.

*GERBILS ARE IN A GROUP OF ANIMALS CALLED **RODENTS** THAT HAVE TEETH THAT NEVER STOP  
GROWING. THEY NEED TO CHEW A LOT TO WEAR DOWN THEIR TEETH. OTHER TYPES OF RODENTS ARE  
MICE, RATS, SQUIRRELS, HAMSTERS, GUINEA PIGS AND EVEN PORCUPINES! WHAT DO YOU NEED TO  
KEEP YOUR TEETH HEALTHY?*

ADD TO LISTS AS APPROPRIATE

### APPLICATION

*THIS IS A GREAT LIST! HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU WERE JET AND DIDN'T HAVE ALL OF THESE IN  
YOUR HABITAT?*

*KEEPING A PET IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE YOU NEED TO CREATE A HABITAT THAT IS JUST  
RIGHT FOR YOUR PET TO KEEP THEM HAPPY AND HEALTHY. LET'S CREATE A HABITAT FOR JET THE  
GERBIL!*

YOUNGER STUDENTS: COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING WORKSHEET PAGE TO CREATE A HABITAT FOR JET  
THE GERBIL.

OLDER STUDENTS: DRAW A PICTURE OF A HABITAT FOR JET THE GERBIL

### CONCLUSION

*THESE WOULD BE GREAT HABITATS FOR JET. IS THERE ANOTHER KIND OF PET THAT MIGHT ALSO LIKE  
THIS HABITAT?*

STUDENTS CAN BE PROMPTED BY REMINDING THEM ABOUT RODENTS.

*WOULD THIS BE A GOOD HABITAT FOR A FISH? FOR A DOG? NO! DIFFERENT LIVING THINGS NEED  
DIFFERENT HABITATS. DISCUSS SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEIR HABITATS AND GERBIL  
HABITATS, BETWEEN WHAT THEY NEED AND WHAT GERBILS NEED, OR BETWEEN HABITATS FOR  
DIFFERENT ANIMALS.*

CONCEPTS TO HIGHLIGHT:

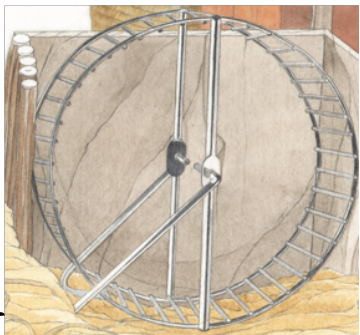
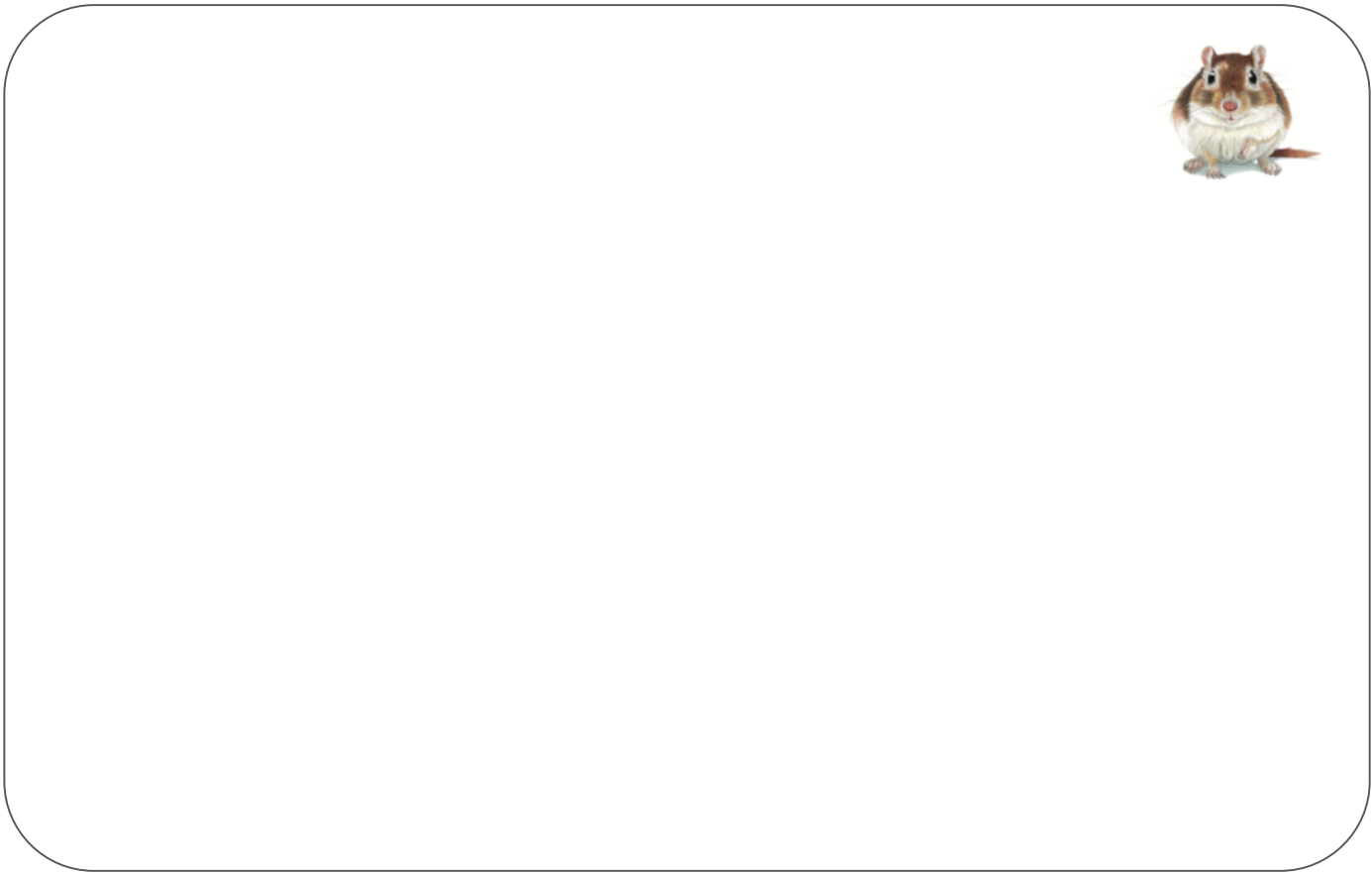
- EATING ONLY PLANTS, EAT MEAT (OR BUGS, LIKE GERBILS!) OR BOTH,
- LIVING IN DIFFERENT SHELTERS
- ALL LIVING THINGS NEED WATER TO SURVIVE

### EXTENSIONS:

- RESEARCH AND DESIGN HABITATS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF PETS
- DESIGN AND BUILD A HABITAT FOR A NEW OR EXISTING CLASS PET (MAYBE A GERBIL!).
- BUILD MODELS OF GERBIL HABITATS OUT OF SHOEBOXES: SHREDDED PAPER BEDDING, PAPER  
TOWEL TUBES, TISSUE BOXES, EMPTY TRAVEL-SIZE SOAP BOTTLES FOR WATER BOTTLES, PENCIL  
SHAVINGS OR GRAVEL TO REPRESENT FOOD.
- BRING IN PICTURES OF 'HABITATS' THEY HAVE CREATED FOR THEIR OWN PETS AT HOME.  
HOUSEPLANTS ARE PETS, TOO!

# MAKE A HABITAT FOR JET THE GERBIL

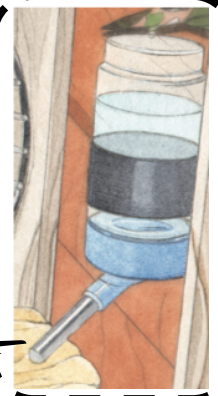
CUT OUT THE THINGS THAT JET NEEDS TO STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY.  
PASTE THEM INTO THE SPACE BELOW TO MAKE A HABITAT FOR JET!



WHEEL



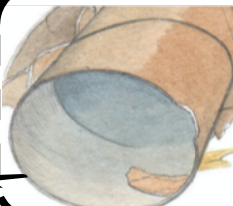
HOUSE



WATER



FOOD



PAPER TUBE



SOFT BEDDING