



**LESSON:** Categorizing Animals

**GRADE:** K—3<sup>rd</sup>

**TIME:** 30-35 min.

**DESCRIPTION:** Students will categorize different animals, and learn the differences between pets, farm animals, and wild animals. They will discuss what each type of animal needs, and how to interact with each. The students will apply their learning by playing interactive games.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS:** ELA: Speaking & Listening

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will discover the differences between different types of animals and learn how to interact with each.

**GOALS:**

1. Brainstorm animals in their community/state and organize them into categories of pets, farm animals, and wild animals.
2. Learn the difference between pets, farm animals, and animals.
3. Learn pets and farm animals must be cared for, wild animals must be left alone.

**MATERIALS:**

- Whiteboard or flipchart and markers
- “Who Am I?” Animal Cards
- Clothespins
- ¼ Page “Want to do More with Heart of the Valley?” Handout

**LESSON DETAILS:**

1. Introduction
  - a. Heart of the Valley takes in stray and surrendered dogs and cats from all around Gallatin and Madison Valleys. What does stray mean? *A pet that is lost from his or her family.* What does surrendered mean? *When a family can't take care of a pet anymore, and brings the pet to the shelter.* We make sure the animal is healthy, behaves well with people/children/pets. If there is a problem, our veterinarians and behavior specialists work with the pet to help fix the problem. Once the pet has been checked out, what do we do with him/her? *Find him/her a new family!*
  - b. Today we are going to talk about different kinds of animals living in Montana.
2. Categorizing Animals
  - a. Everybody close your eyes. Think about the types of animals you might see in your living room, your backyard, in your community, in the forest, in the mountains, etc. Write students' answers in a list on the board, leaving enough space for 3 columns to the left of the list.
  - b. Can these animals be categorized in different ways? Incorporating students' answers, establish categories of Pets, Farm Animals and Wild Animals and write them in the columns.

- c. *Kindergarten Adaptation*: As you get suggestions, separate the animals into three different columns: Pets, Farm Animals and Wild Animals (without actually labeling them as such). Then ask about each column, “what do we call these animals?”
- d. Guide the class through categorizing each animal.

Animals	Pets	Farm Animals	Wild Animals
<i>Bear</i>			X
<i>Elk</i>			X
Rabbit	X		X
Dog	X		
Cow		X	
Snake			X
Bird	X		X
Cat	X		

3. Discussion questions:

- Can some animals belong in more than one category?
- What is the difference between a wild animal and a pet?
- What do all animals need? *Food, water, shelter*. How does each category of animal get these needs?
- Do we treat each category of animal the same? How do we interact differently with each category of animal? Do we treat a cat the same way we do a bear?
- \*\*Make sure to discuss:
  - Never touch a wild animal/leave wild animals alone
  - Pets and Farm animals depend on us for food and shelter
  - Always ask before petting a pet you do not know

4. Games: May choose one or any combination of the three.

a. **“Who Am I?”** “I am going to pin a card with an animal on the back of your shirt. You will not be able to see who you are, but you will be able to see who everybody else is. You will need to figure out who you are by asking YES or NO questions about your animal, like ‘Do I need humans to feed me? Do I live on a farm?’ ‘Can a human touch me?’ The questions MUST be answered with either a YES or a NO. When you have gathered enough clues, you can ask ‘Am I a \_\_\_?’ If you are wrong, ask some more questions, if you are right, you can get another card.”

b. **“Animals around the Room”** *Each student is given an animal card. “We are going to practice categorizing animals. When I say ‘Go,’ all the pets will go to this corner of the room, all the farm animals will go to this corner, etc. Ready? Go!” Students move. “We’re each going to take turns telling the class what our animal is. If anybody disagrees, raise your hand and tell us why.” If there are disagreements, try to foster a debate, allowing each student to say their reasoning and asking the student with the card “do you want to switch categories or stay here?” To move students back to their seats, use prompts such as “Now every animal who relies on humans to feed them move back to your seats/ Every animal who hunts or scavenges for their own food move back, etc.*

c. **“The Big Wind Blows”** *Each student is given an animal card, and have everybody sit in chairs or on the ground in designated spots. “We are going to play a game called The Big Wind Blows. When I say, ‘The big wind blows for all animals who depend on humans for shelter, all of the students with animals who depend on humans for shelter must stand up and switch seats with another student who got up. You may not switch seats with your neighbor. Ready? The big wind blows for all animals who...should be left alone/provide us from milk, eggs, labor, etc./are pets/are found in a forest/who live in a barn, etc.*

## **NOTES:**

Adapted from the “Pet or Wild?” activity in “Sharing the World with Animals” Activity Book by The ASPCA

Definitions from the ASPCA:

**Wild Animal:** “An animal that lives and reproduces outside of human care.”

**Pet:** “Also referred to as a companion animal, a pet is an animal that lives with humans and shares their homes. Humans are responsible for their care and health.”

**Farm Animal:** “An animal that has been domesticated to provide humans with food, labor, fiber or leather. Humans are responsible for their care and health.”

**Stray Animal:** “A pet that has become lost or abandoned and is living on its own without human care or protection. Stray animals did have a home with humans at one time and are not accustomed to providing for their own needs”

**Domestication:** “A process over time in which humans play a role in changing a wild species, involving controlled breeding and management of animals”

**Taming:** “The process of reducing an animal’s tendency to flee or react defensively to humans. Whereas domestication is a process that affects a species, taming alters the behavior of a single animal.”