

CAT PROJECT

Project Meeting



Introduction

AGES

All

TIME

60 - 90 minutes

COST

\$

SKILLS GAINED

Animal Care
Responsibility
Observation
Critical Thinking
Confidence
Problem Solving
Patience
Communication
Reflection

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 4-H Cat Project! Whether you already have a cat at home or are just curious about learning more, this project will help you understand what it takes to be a responsible cat owner and introduce you to the basics of cat care, behavior, health, and showmanship.

Cats are unique animals with their own personalities, needs, and ways of communicating. In this lesson, we'll cover the basics of cat ownership, general care, and what it means to participate in cat showmanship. You'll learn how to provide for a cat's daily needs, handle a cat properly, and prepare for success in the 4-H Cat Project.



CAT PROJECT

Introduction



EXTENSION

Lesson Plan Information

OBJECTIVE

Introduce participants to the 4-H Cat Project, explain what they can do in the project, and cover basic cat ownership and responsibilities. By the end of this lesson, youth will be able to:

- ✓ Explain the 4-H Cat Project opportunities and what you can do in the project
- ✓ Explain basic needs of a healthy, happy cats
- ✓ Demonstrate how to properly groom a cat
- ✓ Discuss the basics of showmanship

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Various grooming tools
 - Soft bristle brush
 - Slicker brush
 - Comb (fine and/or wide-toothed)
 - Nail clippers or cat nail grinder
 - Grooming wipes
 - Toothbrush and cat toothpaste
 - Ear cleaner and cotton pads
 - Flea comb
- Various Care tools
 - Collar, leash, harness
 - Scratching Post
 - Litterbox
- Plush cat or stuffed animal

YOUTH SHOULD BRING:

- No materials needed from youth!

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO DO ON YOUR OWN:

- Give a demonstration on how to approach an unfamiliar cat safely
- Demonstrate how to read cat food labels
- Make community members aware of cat laws in your area through brochures or posters
- Volunteer at a local animal shelter
- Develop a plan to foster cats for deployed soldiers
- Write a letter to your local paper about the importance of having cats spayed or neutered
- Gather items such as cat food, cat toys, and brushes to donate to the animal shelter
- Create new cat owner kits for animal shelters to give out to anyone who adopts a cat
- Organize a cat show for your 4-H club or community
- Organize a community fundraiser to help benefit the local animal shelter





Lesson Plan Information



INTRODUCTIONS

Brief Introduction of all members: If time permits allow youth to give details about their cats or what their dream cat is if they don't have one yet.

1

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WHAT IS THE 4-H CAT PROJECT?

- Explanation of the project, objectives, and what youth will learn. Discuss participation requirements, project activities, and upcoming events.
- Introduction to showmanship concepts on the next page



CAT MATCH

3

TOOLS DEMONSTRATION

From the materials needed section, set out all of the tools and encourage youth to pick them up and ask questions about them. Use the plush cat to demonstrate how to use each of the grooming tools.



4

Distribute Scenario Cards to half of the group or tape to the wall/ whiteboard. Then distribute solution cards to the other half of the group (or to each youth if using the wall).

Participants then either find the youth holding the correct solution for their scenario or tape their solution to the wall next to the scenario card.

Once all matches are found read them all and discuss as a group.

5



BASIC CAT CARE WORKSHEET, DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

- Towards the end of the meeting provide each youth with a basic cat care worksheet to review and bring to the next meeting to discuss basic cat care. (Worksheet on pages 5 & 6)
- Choose discussion topic questions that best align with the ages of youth present and check for understanding from the project meeting.



Showmanship Components

ENTERING JUDGING AREA

- Safely carry your cat using the safety carry.
- Keep the end of the leash looped over your wrist.
- Set your cat on the table facing the judge

INTERVIEW

- Be prepared to answer questions about your cat and general cat knowledge
- Ensure you know details about your cat such as age, breed, care required, etc
- Know general 4-H information such as the pledge and motto

CAT APPEARANCE & TEMPERMENT

- Ensure your cat is well groomed
- Work with your cat and socialize your cat so that a judge can handle your cat without protest from the cat

EXAMINATION

- You will be expected to show various anatomy and carry positions.
- Explain what you are showing the judge and why

YOUR APPEARANCE & ATTITUDE

- Dress neatly with closed toed shoes
- Listen and wait patiently for instructions.
- Be considerate of other people and cats.
- Be polite
- Focus on your cat (not people in the audience)
- Be confident - stand tall and speak clearly

SHOWING YOUR CAT

- Overall you will be asked to present your cat to the judge, emphasize your cat's best traits. You don't need expensive or pure-breed cats for showmanship.
- You'll be expected to maintain control over your cat at all times, accidents happen however, remain calm if they do

CAT PROJECT

Introduction



EXTENSION

4-H Basic Cat Care Worksheet

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

Cat's Name: _____

Cat's Breed (or describe appearance): _____

Feeding & Nutrition

What type of food does your cat eat? (Circle all that apply)

Dry Kibble Wet/Canned Food Raw Diet Homemade Diet Other: _____

How often do you feed your cat?

Free-feed (food available all day) Measured meals (specific times) Other: _____

What are your cat's favorite treats? _____

Does your cat have any food allergies or special dietary needs? _____

Grooming & Hygiene

How often do you brush your cat? Daily Weekly Rarely Never

What grooming tools do you use? (Circle all that apply)

Slicker Brush Bristle Brush Comb Flea Comb Nail Clippers Other: _____

How often do you trim your cat's nails? Daily Weekly Rarely Never

Do you clean your cat's ears or brush its teeth? Yes / No (If yes, how often? _____)

CAT PROJECT

Introduction

4-H Basic Cat Care Worksheet



EXTENSION

Health & Veterinary Care

When was your cat's last vet visit? (Approximate date: _____)

What vaccinations or health treatments has your cat received? (Check all that apply)

Rabies FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia)

Flea/Tick Prevention Deworming Other: _____

Does your cat have any health concerns? (If yes, describe: _____)

Behavior & Enrichment

Where does your cat spend most of its time? (Indoors, Outdoors, Both) _____

Does your cat use a scratching post? Yes / No

What are your cat's favorite toys or activities? _____

Does your cat have any behavior challenges? (e.g., scratching furniture, hiding, excessive meowing)

Yes / No (If yes, explain: _____)

Reflection & Next Steps

What is one thing you'd like to improve in your cat's care? _____

What is something interesting you learned about your cat this week? _____

CAT PROJECT

Introduction

Discussion Topics/ Check for Understanding



EXTENSION

Juniors

- What are the most important things a cat needs every day?
- Why do we brush and groom our cats?
- How should you properly pick up and carry a cat?
- What do you do if a cat seems scared or nervous?
- What are some ways you can keep your cat happy at home?
- What is one new way you can help take care of your cat at home?
- How do you think showmanship helps us learn more about our cats?
- What do you want to learn more about in the Cat Project?

Intermediates

- What are some differences in grooming needs between short-haired and long-haired cats?
- What are some signs that a cat is healthy or unhealthy?
- Why is handling and carrying a cat properly important for both you and the cat?
- What are some ways to make grooming easier for a cat that doesn't like it?
- What do you think makes a good showmanship presentation?
- What is something you learned about cat handling or grooming that you didn't know before?
- How do you think showmanship skills can help outside of a 4-H cat show?
- If you could improve one thing about how you care for your cat, what would it be?

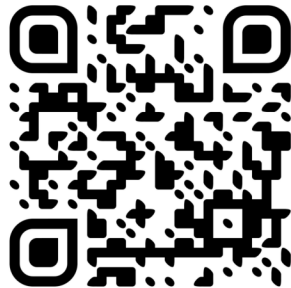
Seniors

- How does proper grooming impact a cat's health and comfort?
- What are the biggest mistakes people make when handling a cat, and how can they be avoided?
- Why is confidence important in showmanship, and how can you practice it?
- How does learning cat showmanship help develop responsibility and leadership skills?
- How would you teach a younger 4-H member the proper way to hold and present a cat?
- What is one thing you want to improve in your showmanship presentation?
- How do you think a judge evaluates a well-presented cat vs. a poorly handled one?
- How does learning about cat care help you become a better pet owner or mentor for younger members?



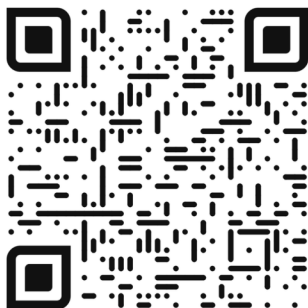
Project Ideas

Scan this QR code to
submit your project lesson
plan idea

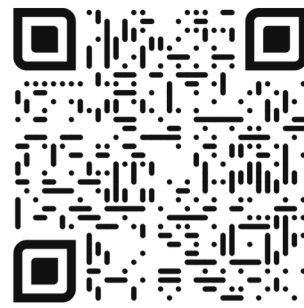


Evaluations

If you are an adult
involved in this
lesson, please scan
the QR code below



If you are a youth
involved in this
lesson, please scan
the QR code below



Scenario:

Your cat's fur is full of tangles and mats.
What do you do?

Solution:

Use a slicker brush and gently work through the mats, starting from the tip of the fur and working toward the skin. If the mat is severe, consult a groomer.

Scenario:

Your cat won't let you trim its nails and keeps scratching you. How can you make it easier?

Solution:

Try wrapping your cat in a towel ("purrito wrap") to keep them calm, and trim nails one paw at a time while rewarding with treats.

Scenario:

Your cat is shedding fur everywhere!
What grooming tool can help?

Solution:

Use a de-shedding tool or grooming glove to remove loose fur and reduce shedding.

Scenario:

Your cat has fleas! What should you do?

Solution:

Use a flea comb to remove fleas and apply veterinarian-approved flea treatment. Clean your home to prevent re-infestation.

Scenario:

Your cat keeps getting hairballs and vomiting them up. How can you help?

Solution:

Brush your cat daily with a soft brush and consider feeding them a hairball-control diet or giving hairball remedies. Always consult your vet!

Scenario:

Your cat doesn't like being brushed and runs away. What should you try?

Solution:

Try short grooming sessions and use treats or a favorite toy to create a positive association with brushing.

Scenario:

Your cat's ears look dirty and have a lot of dark wax. What's the best way to clean them?

Solution:

Use a vet-approved ear cleaner and a cotton pad to wipe out debris gently. Never use cotton swabs inside the ear canal.

Scenario:

Your cat's breath smells bad. What can you do to help?

Solution:

Brush your cat's teeth with cat-safe toothpaste and a small toothbrush, or offer dental treats and toys.

Scenario:

Your cat keeps scratching the furniture. How do you stop this behavior?

Solution:

Provide a scratching post or pad near the furniture and use catnip or toys to encourage its use. You can also use double-sided tape on furniture as a deterrent.

Scenario:

Your cat doesn't like getting a bath. What's the best way to clean them without stressing them out?

Solution:

Use pet-safe grooming wipes or a damp cloth to wipe your cat down. If a bath is necessary, use lukewarm water and be as quick and calm as possible.

Scenario:

Your cat keeps shaking its head and scratching at its ears. What might be wrong?

Solution:

Your cat may have an ear infection or ear mites. Check with a vet to determine the best treatment.

Scenario:

Your cat's paws smell bad, and their claws have dirt stuck in them. How do you clean them properly?

Solution:

Use a damp washcloth or pet-safe wipes to clean between their paw pads. Trim nails regularly to prevent dirt buildup.

Scenario:

Your cat's coat looks dull and dry. How can you improve their fur condition?

Solution:

Add omega-3 fatty acids to their diet (found in fish-based foods) and brush regularly to distribute natural oils.

Scenario:

Your long-haired cat gets mats under its legs and belly. How can you prevent this?

Solution:

Use a metal comb daily on long-haired cats, especially in friction-prone areas like the belly and legs, to prevent matting.

Scenario:

Your cat suddenly doesn't want to be touched and reacts when you try to brush them. What could be the problem?

Solution:

Your cat might be in pain due to an injury or health issue. Stop handling them and consult a veterinarian for an exam.

Scenario:

Your cat keeps knocking over its water bowl and making a mess. How can you prevent this?

Solution:

Use a heavier, non-tip water bowl or a spill-proof water fountain to prevent spills. Some cats also prefer wide, shallow bowls to avoid whisker stress.

Scenario:

Your cat has dandruff and dry skin. What can you do to help?

Solution:

Increase humidity in your home with a humidifier and add omega-3 supplements to your cat's diet. Regular brushing also helps distribute natural skin oils.

Scenario:

Your cat meows loudly at night and won't let you sleep. What can you do?

Solution:

Your cat may be bored or hungry. Try feeding them before bed, offering toys, or a short play session. If it persists, consult a vet.