

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

How Long Do Pets Live: Grades 3-5

In this activity, students match each pet with their average life spans. To initiate class discussion, ask the class if they know the life span of familiar pets. Make a list of the students' answers on the board.

Students can work individually, in pairs, or in groups on the handout. They can use an encyclopedia, books, or the Internet to find the answers. You may wish to have students guess. After the class finishes the activity, students can share their answers and discuss them. Note: Estimates of average life expectancies may vary from source to source.

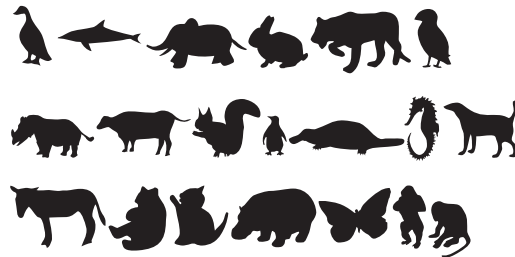
To summarize the activity, you can ask students how the needs of pets are similar to and different from the needs of people.

Answers:

Hamster, 1-3 years; Goldfish, 5-10;

Rabbit, 8-12; Dog, 10-15; Cat, 15-20;

Parrot, 50 plus



Extension Activity:

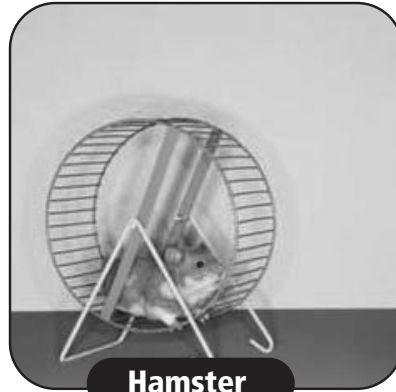
After students have matched pets with their lifespans, ask them to order the animals from the longest-living to the shortest-living. Then, each student can practice adding their age to the lifespan of each of the animals.

Will they be in elementary, middle, high school, or even older when the animal is still alive? Discuss with students the implications of this. For example, what are some reasons that an animal might not live as long as his or her natural lifespan? What can the students do to help their pets live long lives? In addition, some animals—like parrots—can live very long; can students be sure they can take care of a parrot for his or her whole life?

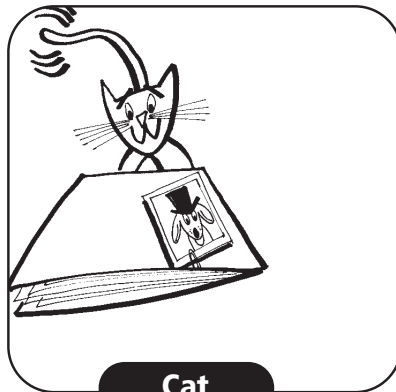
How Long Do Pets Live?

Draw a line from each pet to the number of years the pet usually lives. You can use an encyclopedia or the Internet to find the answers.

1 to 3 years



5 to 10 years



10 to 15 years

15 to 20 years



50 plus years