

CADETTE: ANIMAL HELPERS

Hey Girl Scout! Animals are fun and are interesting to learn about. With this badge we will find out how animals can help us! Learn about the many ways animals help humans. When you have earned this badge, you'll know how animals help humans and how to help them keep it up.

Step 1: Explore the connection between humans and animals.

1. The lives of human and other animals have been linked for thousands of years - and the connection keeps getting stronger.
2. People used to think animals had no feelings, and they didn't always let cats and dogs sleep on their beds. Find 10 examples of how and why the animal-human connection has changed over time. Then, share what you've learned with your family and fellow Girl Scouts.

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

Step 2: Find out how animals help keep people safe.

1. If you were ever in danger, an animal may truly be your best friend. Fire departments use canine units to find fire victims. Police work with dogs to detect drugs, bombs, and unexploded mines. In disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes, or floods, animals often help find survivors.
2. Even animals that haven't been trained to save people often rise to the occasion. Cats have alerted sleeping families of house fires. Dogs have carried children out of collapsing buildings. Find five animal-heroes stories and share them with your family.
3. Then research if there are any animal heroes in your own community.

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

Step 3: Know how animals help people emotionally.

1. Studies show that just being around an animal can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and make people feel happier.
2. Interview at least 5 pet owners. Ask how their pet helps them feel better. Capture their story in writing, audio, or video. If you want to make a short video of their stories, you need to get permission first. Then you can show your whole troop.

Supplies:

1. Paper
2. Pencil
3. Camera
4. Audio recorder

Step 4: Check out how animals help people with disabilities.

1. I bet you have heard of a seeing eye dogs. They are trained to help people who are visually impaired live independent lives. Many other animals including parrots, monkeys, and miniature horses help people with physical disabilities.
2. Research the pros and cons of training assistance animals. As more animals are being trained, some people are questioning how and why animals are selected. Look into different sides of this issue and share your opinion in writing or artwork.

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Pencil
3. Paper

Step 5: Look at how animals might help us in the future.

1. Scientists continue to work with animals, hoping to find new ways to use their special skills.
2. Conduct your own observation of an animal's behavior. Whether you are watching a racoon in the backyard or you own a pet, try to notice the details about the animal. How does it move? How does it eat? How and where does it sleep? How does it react with humans? What times of the day does it seem tired or energetic? Keep a log book of your observations done for a week.