

SENIOR: VOICE FOR ANIMALS

Hey Girl Scout! Animals cannot speak to us using words. Sometimes we have to stand up and be the voice for the animal. Find out about the complex relationship between animals and humans so you can make informed choices and help others make them too. When you have earned this badge, you'll better understand issues worldwide and know what you can do to help.

Step 1: Find out about domestic animals.

1. Primitive cultures only tolerated dogs in their camps because they would eat smelly scraps and scare off intruders. However, humans eventually began caring for animals as pets. Think about these questions. How do we treat our pets today? What rights should they have? How are pets protected?
2. Start by looking at city and state laws to answer the following questions. Then write up a document stating what you think it takes to treat pets ethically and respectfully.
3. Questions:
 - Is it okay to declaw a cat?
 - Is it okay to use a shock collar on a dog?
 - What guidelines should be in place for a classroom hamster?
 - What guidelines should be in place for a family dog?
 - What guidelines should be in place for a pet rabbit?

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

Step 2: Investigate animals used for science.

1. Weather animals should be used for product and medical testing is a very controversial issue.
2. First, research arguments for and against animal testing. What animals are most likely used in tests? Are any protected by the Animal Welfare Act?
3. Then, track 5 beauty products. Find out which ones do not have "cruelty-free" or "produced without animal testing" on the label. Research how it was developed. Were animals used? If they were, why? Then, make a visual diagram of development.

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. 5 or more beauty products
3. Paper
4. Pencil

Step 3: Explore animals in husbandry.

1. Husbandry is the practice of breeding and raising farm animals intended to be used for food. Cows, chickens, lamb, and pigs all come under this category.

2. Many farms employ breeders to improve the genetics of the herd and speed of reproduction. Research and find the answer to the following questions. Then share your findings with your troop or family.
3. Questions:
 - What practices are being used?
 - How are they regulated?
 - What is the science behind farm practices?
 - Why are some farmers moving away from confinement barns?
 - How do confinement barns affect pigs?

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

Step 4: Take a look at animals used for sports and entertainment.

1. Think about the first time you saw an elephant in the circus. Or, visited a marine park and watched a killer whale perform. Worldwide, from bullfighting in Spain to foxhunting in England, animals are part of our sport and entertainment culture.
2. Choose a sport to research. It might be rodeo, greyhound racing, polo or dressage, horse racing, or falconry. Explore how owners and handlers care for the animals. Share your findings with your family or troop.
3. Then, looking into the sports history. Find out why the animal sport began.

Supplies:

1. Computer

Step 5: Look into an animal issue.

1. Research animal issues and create a public service announcement. Make a two-minute video or slide show to get your message about the issue across.
2. The following are some issues. Feel free to find your own.
 - Eating meat.
 - Wearing fur, leather or other animal products.
 - Medical advances for humans, using animals.
 - Zoos that keep animals confined.