

Classroom Pets

Introduction

Did you know that school and learning can actually be fun, especially when the learning involves pets? At Lessenger, the 4th graders are lucky enough to have not one, not two, but three classroom pets! We have a gecko, bunny, and turtle. The best part is that the students are in charge of caring for these pets. Taking care of our classroom pets isn't always easy, but it is fun!

Bunny

One of the pets that the fourth graders take care of is a bunny named BA70. BA70 is a Mini-Rex, which is one of the most popular breeds in the United States, according to Wikipedia. She is gentle, soft, and playful. Taking care of her is especially fun because she lives a courtyard at our school. A courtyard is an enclosed outdoor area. Each day the students follow these steps in caring for her.

Step 1: A small group of students head out to the courtyard area each morning. As they open the door to the beautiful courtyard the early morning sun shines, the birds are happily chirping, and the squirrels quickly scurry away. They open the door to BA70 outdoor hutch. Then she eagerly leaps out and runs around stretching her legs. She roams around the courtyard freely all day.

Step 2: Next, the students make sure that she has fresh clean water and plenty of food. She eats bunny food, alfalfa sprouts, and oats. Occasionally, she is given bananas or blueberries as a treat. In the winter she has a heated water bottle to keep her water from freezing.

Step 3: Once a week the students clean her hutch. They make sure she has plenty of hay to burrow in to keep warm. They also have to pull out a tray from under her hutch to remove her waste.

Step 4: At the end of the day, the students are responsible for getting her back safely into her hutch. This is usually a challenge, most days she resists going back into her hutch. With teamwork and patience, they get the job done.

When there is a long weekend or a break from school, BA70 gets to go home with a teacher or a student. Taking care of BA70 is a big responsibility, but it is also fun.

Turtle

Our Michigan Painted Turtle was donated to our classroom. Lulu was found up north by Lake Michigan, but now lives in a 20 gallon tank in room 15 at Lessenger.

Lulu needs water to swim in and a platform to climb up and dry off on. The filter keeps her tank clean. Lulu loves to bask under a heat lamp. The tank has rocks both big and small on the bottom.

Each morning a student feeds Lulu a teaspoon size portion of turtle food. Occasionally, she is fed feeder fish for a treat. She also likes to nibble on plants that naturally grow in fresh water lakes and rivers.

Lulu is surprisingly fun. She likes to **bask** on her platform under the heat lamp. That is until a student walks by. Then, she explodes off of her platform and darts towards the glass wall ferociously nipping at them. When the students feed her, she stretches her neck and body halfway out of the water trying desperately to get at the tasty fingers and food. On land, she is remarkably fast. This Michigan Painted turtle is full of interesting surprises!



Did you know?

Turtles shed their shell as they're growing; this skin resembles a burnt leaf.

Painted turtles can swim underwater.

A group of turtles is called 'a bale of turtles'.

Gecko

In Mrs. Hanawalt's class is a Diamond Crested Gecko named Newme. This gecko has mad skills. His coloring allows him to hide, this is called **camouflage**. He also has little suction cups on his feet that allow him to climb vertically very easily. He sheds often and if attacked or scared can lose his tail. He can also leap pretty far!

Caring for him is easy. All he needs is a tank, water, a few meal worms, a heat map, and an occasional spray of water to keep his home moist.

Newme is a little creepy, but also fascinating and fun!






A gecko is a lizard.

There are over 1,500 different types of lizards and most are **nocturnal**.

Closing

Every classroom should have a pet. One reason is class pets provide a fun opportunity to learn about different animals. In addition, caring for them teaches students responsibility. Whether they are furry or slimy, classroom pets make learning more fun!

Glossary

Camouflage	A way of hiding something by covering or coloring it so that it looks like its surroundings.	 A photograph of a light-colored gecko with dark spots, curled up on a sandy, rocky surface. The gecko's coloration blends perfectly with the surrounding environment, demonstrating camouflage.
Bask	Lie exposed to warmth and light, typically from the sun, for relaxation and pleasure	 A photograph of a turtle resting on a flat surface under a bright, focused light source, likely a heat lamp. The turtle is positioned directly under the light, illustrating the behavior of basking.
Nocturnal	Active at night	 A photograph of a gecko standing on a dark surface at night. The gecko is illuminated by a light source, showing its active state during the dark hours.

The Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World

Have you ever been to a magical kingdom? Have you ever wanted to feel like a little kid even though you might not be one anymore? In the city of Orlando, in central Florida, there is such a place. This magical land is called, Walt Disney World.

Walt Disney World consists of several theme parks, water parks, campgrounds, restaurants, shops, hotels, and playgrounds. The original park in Walt Disney World is called The Magic Kingdom. This park consists of magical lands, futuristic beings, and fairy tales.

When one goes to the Magic Kingdom there are so many sites to see that will bring a smile to your face! The Magic Kingdom is divided into different sections, or lands. These lands are named based on what "theme" it represents. For example, Main Street is the main entrance and hub of the Kingdom, Fantasyland is fantasy based, Frontierland is based on outside frontier life, Tomorrowland is futuristic, and Adventureland is adventure based.

No matter how to travel to the Magic Kingdom, the first amazing site you will see is the flower filled grand entrance to the magical kingdom. The Walt Disney World Monorail and the Disney Boats both arrive here bringing happy people to the "Happiest Place on Earth," as what Disney World's theme says. This massive grand entrance is where you actually enter the kingdom through big iron gates. There you will see beautiful flowers, smiling faces of the workers, and in the distance, Main Street and Cinderella's Castle.

After entering through the grand entrance, you find yourself on Main Street USA. Here you will see old fashioned store fronts, colorful everything, old fashioned trolley cars, a brick paved road, and delicious smells. These smells come from the bakeries, candy shops, fudge shops, and ice cream stores. While wandering along you will hear the music of barber shop quartets singing along the street corners and you may just run into a character or two.

At the end of Main Street USA you will see the beautifully decorated and often lit Cinderella's Castle. This is the main thoroughway to the rest of the lands. Cinderella's Castle is where Cinderella lives! This castle also has a hotel room that people who win contests can stay, but isn't open to the actual public. Inside there is also a gift shop. At night you can see TinkerBell fly from the castle and some nights an amazing fireworks show.

To the right of Cinderella's Castle is Tomorrow Land. Here the theme is the future. You will find Stitch, Buzz Lightyear, Space Mountain and Spaceship Earth. The only Earthlings is you and those that look like you! In Tomorrowland you can drive a spaceship, shoot laser beams, get spit on by Stitch, and you can also drive cars here, even if you're only a kid.

Fantasy Land is next. Here you're in a fantasy world with Snow White and her dwarfs, fly a sailboat to see Peter Pan, Fly an elephant, or take in a show with the King of the Lions! Whatever your fantasy, it's fun here!

As you're leaving Fantasyland, be careful as the Haunted Mansion might call you in with ghosts and goblins, and the smell of Churros outside.

Continue on into Frontierland and you will find yourself riding a train through Thunder Mountain, take a raft to Tom Sawyer Island to explore the frontier life, take up shooting at the arcade, or get yourself soaked on a mountain.

Finally, you travel through the lands into Adventureland. Here your adventures are unlimited. Did you want to cruise through the jungle? How about fight pirates? Climb a tree house?? These are the adventures you can take here!

Eventually you will find yourself back around The Magic Kingdom and you're at Cinderella's Castle again. Now it's time for the parades! Maybe a character parade or the Electric Light Parade. Do you love lights and music? This is the parade for you. Disney has the best parades.

There are many pros and cons of going to The Magic Kingdom. Disney World isn't a place most people can go to often as it is very expensive; admission is about \$115 per person (adults) or \$90 (for kids 12 and under), it is often overly crowded. Don't go during a holiday like Christmas or Easter unless that is the only time you can. In the summer it is terribly hot and usually rains every day for at least an hour. Don't think it's all bad. Disney World is the most magical place you will ever get to see. Here almost everyone is happy and smiling. The rides are fun and entertaining, the flowers are extremely beautiful, there's even things to learn. There are characters all over and you can collect their autographs in an autograph book! And some people collect pins and share and trade with people they don't even know! How fun is that??

Walt Disney World is "the happiest place on Earth", said Walt Disney himself. While you're there you can act like a kid, smile, and laugh your heart out. You can visit with Disney characters, and pretend to be someone or something else. Visiting the Magic Kingdom and it's magic feeling. You will miss it as soon as you leave.

Sully Gamble