

Meow!

Primary/
Intermediate
Level

Vol. 7
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BCSPCA Teacher Guide to Integrating Animals into the Classroom



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**ANIMAL CLUB
BUILDS COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**STUDENT-LED
DISSECTION
ALTERNATIVES**

**WHAT EXACTLY
IS HUMANE
EDUCATION?**

PREPARE TO BE INSPIRED!

What is humane education? In this edition of *Meow!*, the BC SPCA's publication for teachers, we explore the breadth and relevance of humane education, and how it is being applied in B.C. schools.

Let us help engage your students! Learn about BC SPCA presentations and lesson plans, as well as an exciting new collaboration with **Live It Earth**. Hear from a teacher and students about their experiences in starting a school animal club. Discover both fiction and non-fiction books that explore the interconnectedness of humans, animals and nature.

We hope you will find inspiration in these pages to integrate animals and humane concepts into your classroom. Want to get started right away? We've included a pull-out activity ready to be put into use today. Discover even more BC SPCA teacher resources at spca.bc.ca/teacher.



Activity: Trash Timeline

This quick and easy activity can have a big impact on student discussions about the interconnectedness of all things in our environment. Human impacts on our shared ecosystems have lasting effects on how other living things interact with their environment.

Working in pairs or small groups with these trash cards and trash timeline (page 4), students look at everyday items we put in the garbage and discover how they take different amounts of time to break down. When trash ends up in the ocean it breaks down slowly and is mistaken for food by many marine animals. Other animals end up eating trash or becoming entangled in it.

Students match the trash to the correct amount of time it takes to break down, and can discuss the impacts this can have on animals.

Other discussion questions and extensions:

- What can we do differently to make this better?
- What other things do we throw out that can harm animals?
- Write a reflection paragraph from the perspective of an animal who encounters some of this human garbage. How would you feel?



On the cover

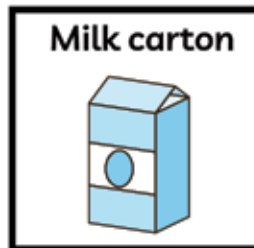
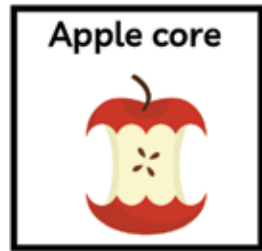
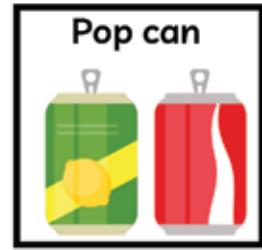
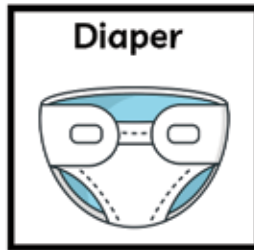
Capri Dallazanna and Andy Flores, members of the Queen of All Saints SPCA school club, pose with a handmade gift for the Tri-Cities SPCA. "We wanted to donate the paw as a gift to show our appreciation for the BC SPCA and all that they do. Thank you BC SPCA for supporting our school club and helping animals in B.C."

Answer key >>>

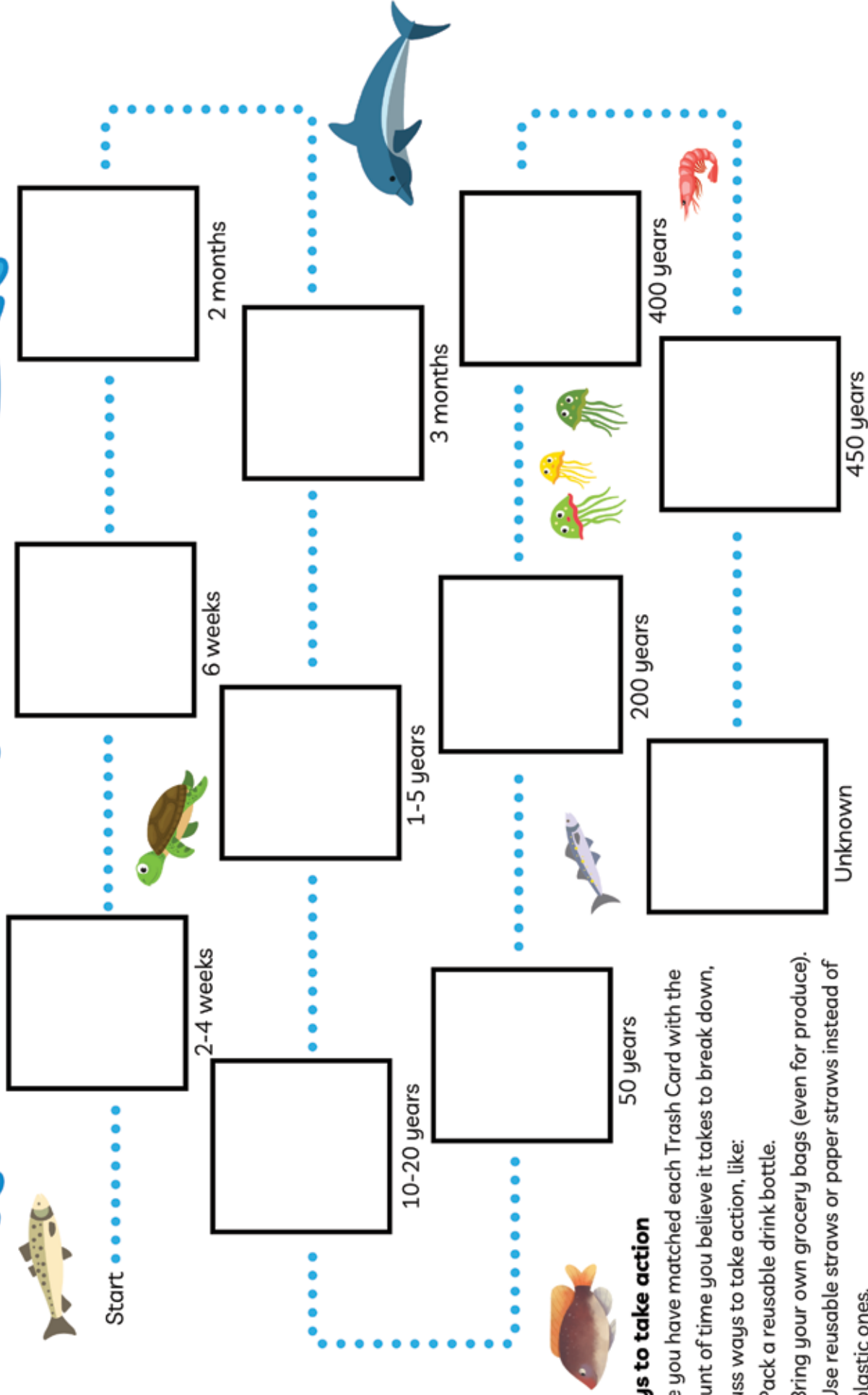
Paper towel	2-4 weeks
Newspaper	6 weeks
Apple core	2 months
Milk carton	3 months
Wool socks	1-5 years
Plastic bag	15 years
Tin can	50 years
Pop can	200 years
Six-pack rings	400 years
Diaper	450 years
Glass bottle	unknown

Trash Cards

Photocopy and cut out these cards for students, or create your own. Make a copy of the timeline on the back of this page to hand out to each student group, along with a set of cards.



Trash Timeline Board



Ways to take action

Once you have matched each Trash Card with the amount of time you believe it takes to break down, discuss ways to take action, like:

- Pack a reusable drink bottle.
- Bring your own grocery bags (even for produce).
- Use reusable straws or paper straws instead of plastic ones.

What other actions can you think of?

Humane education today



ecocentric understanding is the goal of humane pedagogy. Ecocentrism is defined as placing intrinsic value on all living organisms and the natural environment, central to the pillars of humane education.

Teachers are familiar with environmental education, social and emotional learning, and the social justice curriculum. Yet you may not be as familiar with humane education, a pedagogy that combines all three of these areas and much more.

Humane education grows out of two essential qualities: awareness and wholeness. Awareness is an organic, natural ability to perceive one's self, and the world around us, through experience. To learn and grow from these experiences fundamentally shape our worldviews, attitudes and behaviours.



Wholeness is a deep recognition of the interconnected relationships and systems upon which our planet exists (Palmer, 1999).

A humanistic (whole) child approach to humane pedagogy weaves cognitive (head), affective (heart) and kinesthetic (hands) learning together.

Therefore, humane education is a transformative, intersectional approach to teaching and learning,

with the understanding of the interconnectivity of all living systems: **animals, humans and the natural environment.**

The contemporary view of humane education remains firmly rooted in fostering empathy, and cultivating an ethics of kindness, care and responsibility with animals.

However, the broadened scope moves “beyond the classroom walls to serving as a social movement” (Itle Clark, 2021), and affirms the need to develop an awareness and ethics of care for the environment, and a deeper sensitivity to humans and all beings. As we continue to face numerous global challenges, humane education sheds a light on the interconnected links between systems of oppression including: social justice, animal welfare, and human rights issues in safe and non-judgmental ways, supporting learners to investigate further, looking beyond the surface to think critically, and to initiate positive and meaningful action, in support of a fair and just society for all. Shifting from an anthropocentric (human-centered) view of the world to an embodied

Bringing meaning, relationship and critical thinking into the process of learning encourages learners to continue growing and expanding their knowledge and experiences through deep inquiry, social and emotional learning and the shaping of values and ethics; this supports the development of pro-social behaviours. Incorporating humane pedagogy into school curriculum asks for a creative and critical mindset, allowing space for honest dialogue with investigative and experiential approaches to learning. The humane educators at the BC SPCA bring forward collective and diverse backgrounds to support teachers across B.C. to incorporate interactive, engaging and meaningful presentations designed to fit into their existing curriculum. We are continually updating our materials to support the needs of students from kindergarten to high school, and committed are the wellbeing of animals, people and the planet.

References:

Itle Clark, S. (2021). *Core components of Humane Education: An inclusive and comprehensive approach to teaching*. www.hecoalition.org

Palmer, P. (1999). *The heart of learning: Spirituality in education*. Penguin Group, USA.



About the writer

Michelle Atterby is completing her thesis on humane education for her master's degree in environmental education at Royal Roads University. She has an extensive professional background in animal welfare, behaviour and training, and is a humane educator with the BC SPCA.



PAWSOME SPCA HELPERS

A SCHOOL CLUB MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Gema Chavez, a grade 3 teacher at Queen of All Saints School in Coquitlam, was looking for ways to encourage students to volunteer and give back to their community. Having previously invited a BC SPCA presenter to teach her class about empathy and kindness, Gema knew the BC SPCA's values aligned with her own. An SPCA school club seemed like a perfect fit. After reading through the BC SPCA school club manual, Gema introduced the idea of a club to her school. In January 2022, 24 very eager students met for the first time – and the “Pawsome SPCA Helpers” club was born.

school year. We can't wait to see what they accomplish for animals in their community next!

During its first year, the group completed three major events. First, at a school-wide assembly, members presented about their club and what the BC SPCA does. Next, they organized a School BC SPCA Day, setting up stations for face painting, colouring, paw necklace-making and more – all while accepting donations for animals in need. Finally, the Pawsome SPCA Helpers hosted another collection day, requesting donations of food, toys and blankets. In addition to the many bagged food and treat items for the BC SPCA Pet Food Bank, the club raised more than \$1,500.

Gema and the Pawsome SPCA Helpers are back in action this

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An interview with club advisor Gema Chavez

What inspired you to start a BC SPCA school club?

As an educator, I strongly believe in the importance of empowering students by helping them build essential life skills, such as empathy, communication, collaboration and leadership. Combining this with my own love of animals and stewardship, I came across the BC SPCA's school club program. I quickly realized that this student-centered club helped develop all those skills and more.

What are some of the benefits you have seen in students since starting a BC SPCA school club?

Being a classroom teacher, I have a limited opportunity to work with students in other grades, let alone from various grades at one time. After starting the club last year, which consists of students in Grades 4-7, I have seen a growth in connection and friendship among club members. Students learn to work together and support each other to achieve a common goal, through learning about something that they are all passionate about.

Has a BC SPCA school club inspired or changed any of your classroom assignments or activities? If so, please explain.

The BC SPCA has a lot of educational resources online and a very friendly and helpful staff to support teachers. I was able to book presentations for my class, as well as provide information to other teachers in my school so that they could find activities/presentations catered to their grade level. Having a club at our school not only helped facilitate several conversations about current events, stewardship and animals in B.C., but it also helped make it relatable to students.

Would you recommend a BC SPCA school club to other teachers? Why?

I would recommend starting a BC SPCA club to any teacher. The club not only focuses on humane education, outreach and what the BC SPCA does, but it also puts the students at the centre. As the teacher representative, you will be their facilitator and guide.



You will also be fully supported by the BC SPCA; they even provide you with a detailed School Club Guide to get started. It's a fantastic program that I am grateful to be a part of.

What does it mean to have a BC SPCA club at your school?

Here's what some members of the Pawsome SPCA Helpers had to say:

I think that having an SPCA club is a great way to allow for us young students to take small actions together, creating a big difference to help animals in our community. – Madison

Joining this club has suddenly changed my life. Now I can work as a team with other members in the club to help even more animals in need of safety. – Capri

For me it means that there is an opportunity to help animals. If all the schools in B.C. had a club there would be so much help for all the animals. – Andy

The BC SPCA club means everything to me. I try to always love animals and care for them and I am so happy to have this club. Animals are awesome! – Isabella

It means a lot because we had fundraisers and raised money and animal toys for the BC SPCA. I also really enjoy the BC SPCA club because we have assemblies and teach the school about what we have done. – Natalia





BC SPCA PARTNERS WITH LIVE IT EARTH

The BC SPCA has teamed up with **Live It Earth** to bring dog experts into your classroom. **Live It Earth** is a Canadian hybrid-learning library that creates compelling educational programs in French and English that connect kids to the real and natural world with place-based, curriculum-linked resources.

With a focus on dogs, BC SPCA animal experts explore how dogs see the world, how they communicate, and how we can form trusting relationships with our canine companions. Students also get an exclusive behind-the-scenes shelter tour to see how animals are cared for and rehomed. Additionally, there is a dog pile of support materials for students.

Did we mention it's free? All B.C. K-7 teachers have open access to the entire **Live It Earth** library, thanks to an agreement with Focused Education Resources. Ask your principal or librarian for the Focused ED passcode for three years of free access to **Live It Earth**. Learn more at www.liveit.earth or email support@liveit.earth.



BRING ANIMALS EXPERTS INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

BC SPCA humane educators help teachers integrate animal welfare, and social and emotional learning into your school. We have many ways to engage your students including in-person and virtual presentations and a wide array of resources (see back page or visit spca.bc.ca/teachers).



NEW classroom presentations: Sparking social and emotional learning

The past couple of years have challenged the social-emotional skills of everyone, including educators, administrators and students.

The BC SPCA humane education team continues to seek new ways to engage students in building empathy skills, personal awareness and responsibility for caring for the planet we share. In addition to our core classroom presentations including *Kindness Counts*, *You Can Make a Difference* and *Making the Right Choice*, we have added two new presentation themes, which are proving popular with educators:

Wildlife Wonders (grades 3-7) looks at what happens when wildlife and humans share the same space. Students learn about wild animals the BC SPCA has helped, and ways we can all help ensure wildlife lead healthy lives with minimal human interactions. *Wildlife Wonders* is available as a single session or a series of three presentations.

"Great presentation with activating prior knowledge, interactive learning and a game. Loved all the ways the presenter engaged the children in the learning and listening. Awesome job!"
- 2022 teacher evaluation

The Farm Animal Connection (grades K-2) explores how much we have in common with farmed animals. Seeing connections between ourselves and animals is an important part of building empathy and realizing that every creature deserves care and kindness.

View all BC SPCA classroom presentations at spca.bc.ca/presentations.



Mission: SCRAP the SCALPEL



Our Voice for Change is a small group of Okanagan Mission Secondary students who formed around a cause they were deeply passionate about: reduce the use of animals for dissections at their school. The group, which includes Lexie Pfenning, Annabelle Lee, Erin Work and Caitlin Mahony, focused on how they could reduce the use of animals used in dissection throughout their school district, and beyond.

“The group not only shares a passion for animals and their rights, but they also share the dream of a more sustainable education system,” says Keigan Hollefriend, BC SPCA humane educator. **Our Voice for Change** came together as grade 9 students in 2020 to participate in the 2021 Sustainable Development Challenge, a competition open to Okanagan youth to offer a creative solution to address one of the United Nations’ 17 development goals.

After receiving both support and resistance from their teachers, the group decided to propose a student choice policy on dissection. They created a website and Instagram account to share their work and raise awareness of the need for this issue to be addressed. They even asked their classmates and members of the public to send them pictures with the hashtag **#ditchdissection** to add to their live pitch, showing the vast support for their cause.

It wasn’t a big surprise to those who saw the group collaborating and preparing, that **Our Voice for Change** won first place, earning a \$5,000 prize to help bring their vision to reality.

The group successfully implemented a student choice policy in their school, giving students freedom to choose alternatives to animal dissection. Plus, the grant allowed them to equip the school with alternative software technologies as well as workbooks and paper dissections to give students and teachers alternative options.

The group didn’t stop there. They have helped design an administrative procedure that has now been implemented in all SD23 schools to allow students dissection alternatives that are as good or better in meeting learning outcomes without harming animals.

Our Voice for Change continues to be a voice for change to further reduce animal dissections in schools with the hope their project inspires other students in other districts to stand up for what they believe is right. They have a comprehensive website with arguments and resources on dissection alternatives at **ourvoiceforchange.org**. Be sure to view their persuasive six-minute Youth Ted Talk linked from their site. You will be inspired.



Our Voice for Change at Youth TedX Talk explaining why schools should offer student choice dissection policies with alternative methods. View at youtube.com/watch?v=F1h4XfN2K_s&t=168s



Reading with animals in mind



From illustrated stories about the interconnectedness of living things to fresh non-fiction that engages students with animal issues, these recommended books have humane education at their heart.

The Wolves Are Back by Jean Craighead George, illustrations by Wendell Minor (Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2008)
Grade level: Pre-K-3

Over many decades of persecution, wolves nearly went extinct in the United States. This engaging story, following one wolf cub through Yellowstone Park, outlines the cascading effect of the wolf's removal on practically every aspect of the ecosystem. This book is a significant resource for teaching about ecosystems and the interconnectedness of their members.

My Papa Lost His Lucky by David Bouchard, illustrated by Josée Bisailon (MTW Publishers, 2009)
Grade level: Pre-K-3

My Papa Lost His Lucky discusses the human-animal bond in the context of what happens when there is a lack of pet-friendly housing. A young girl's papa is forced to surrender his beloved dog to an animal shelter when he moves into a new apartment. What implications does this have? Students may consider ways that pet-friendly housing can make a difference not only for animals but for people, too.

It's a Mitig! by Bridget George (D&M Kids, 2020)
Grade level: K-2

Readers are invited on a rollicking journey into the forest, to meet some of the animals there while also learning some basic Ojibwe nature words. Students may be prompted to continue learning about local Indigenous communities and connections to the natural world.

Lessons From Mother Earth by Elaine McLeod, illustrated by Colleen Wood (Groundwood, 2010)
Grade level: K-3

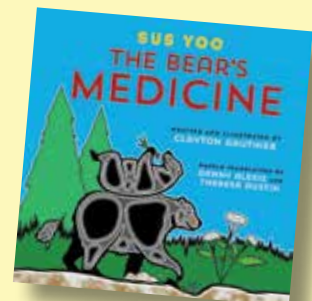
Through exploring with her grandmother, Tess learns that nature is like a garden, full of nourishing gifts for people and animals. Readers can gain a new appreciation for these gifts, as well as an understanding of our responsibility to care for the natural world.

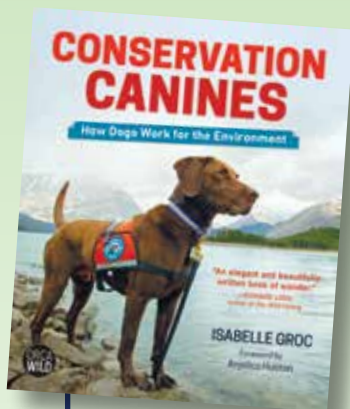
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The Bear's Medicine by Clayton Gauthier (Theytus Books, 2019)
Grade level: 1-3

The Bear's Medicine tells the tale of a mother bear and cubs moving through the seasons, grateful for the sun, the food and the teachings of their ancestors. This beautiful story illustrates for young readers the interconnectedness of all living things.





Conservation Canines: How Dogs Work for the Environment by Isabelle Groc (Orca Book Publishers, 2021)
Grade level: 4-8

Author Isabelle Groc, an environmental writer, conservation photographer

and documentary filmmaker, shares stories of how wildlife experts use the power of a dog's nose to help endangered animals. Along with learning about detection dogs, readers can discover concrete ways to get involved in conservation.

What Animals Want: The Five Freedoms in Action by Jacqueline Pearce, illustrated by Julie McLaughlin (Orca Book Publishers, 2021)
Grade level: 4-8

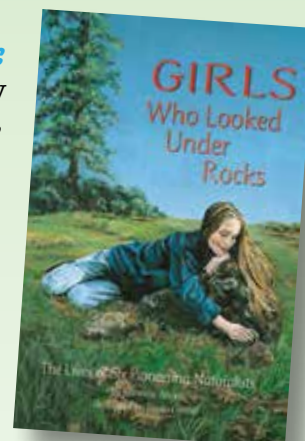
This comprehensive book not only introduces students to the Five Freedoms, but also teaches them how to apply this tool for evaluating animal welfare to both pets at home and other animals



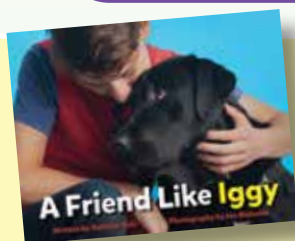
under human care. Readers will also find inspiring examples of youth who are making a difference for animals in their communities.

Girls Who Looked Under Rocks by Jeannine Atkins, illustrated by Paula Conner (Dawn Publications, 2011)
Grade level: 5-10

This book explores the lives of six women – all drawn to the natural world from a young age – who overcame sexism and gender biases to become world-renowned scientists, artists and writers. Readers are encouraged to connect with their surroundings while exploring issues of gender, the environment and embracing uniqueness.



Find more recommended books, vetted for humane content, at spca.bc.ca/teacher.



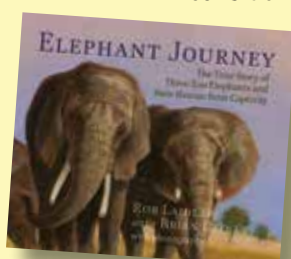
A Friend Like Iggy by Kathryn Cole with Boost Child & Youth

Advocacy Centre, photography by Ian Richards (Second Story Press, 2019)
Grade level: 1-3

Iggy is an accredited facilitator dog who aids children during difficult, unfamiliar events such as police interviews and counselling sessions. This true story can help students understand the world of working dogs, as well as comfort youth who are navigating a difficult time in their lives.

Elephant Journey: The True Story of Three Zoo Elephants and Their Rescue from Captivity by Rob Laidlaw, art by Brian Deines with photographs (Pajama Press, 2015)
Grade level: 2-5

In this book, readers follow the experiences of elephants Toka, Thika and Iringa over three days and 4,100 kilometres as they move from zoo to sanctuary. Students may be asked to consider why zoos cannot meet the needs of elephants, perhaps leading to further discussion of other animals in captivity.



Gwen the Rescue Hen by Leslie Crawford, illustrated by Sonja Stangl (Stone Pier Press, 2018)
Grade level: 3+

When a tornado breaks Gwen the hen free of her small cage where she has lived her whole life, she encounters new dangers around every turn. With time, however, she finds safety along with the ability to do things chickens are supposed to be able to do. *Gwen the Rescue Hen* teaches readers about the natural behaviours of chickens along with other fascinating facts.



Animal-themed teacher resources

Class presentations for K-12

Kindness Counts (Gr. K-2) – Focuses on empathy for animals and people.

Making the Right Choice* (Gr. 3-6) – Focuses on pet care, guardian responsibility and choosing the right pet.

You Can Make a Difference* (Gr. 3-7) – Connects youth to animal issues in their community. Ideas for projects in which students can learn skills in responsible advocacy are included.

The Farm Animal Connection (Gr. K-2) – Explores what farm animals need to lead happy, healthy lives, and draws connections between some similar needs of people and animals.

The Farm-Food Connection* (Gr. 3-10) – Explores the lives of farm animals, what the labels on our food mean, and how our actions can make a difference for farm animals.

Wildlife Wonders* (Gr. 3-7) – Through stories of real BC SPCA wildlife cases, explores how students can create a kinder world for wild animals.

Including Animals in Social Justice* (Gr. 6-12) – Uses animal issues to discuss social justice issues and eases students into more sensitive social justice topics such as racism, inequality and stereotyping.

Bite Free (all grades) – Teaches children how to behave safely around dogs and helps those afraid of dogs.

Cat Tales* (Gr. 3-6) – Connects students to real-life issues facing free-roaming cats. They will be challenged to use critical thinking skills to question socially accepted norms and find creative solutions to the issues.

* These presentations can be booked as a single or three-session presentation.

NEW! All class presentations are available virtually for students across B.C. In-person presentations may also be booked in select communities. Visit spca.bc.ca/teacher for details.

Additional teacher resources

Book reviews – A list of recommended picture books, novels and non-fiction books, all of which have been reviewed and vetted for humane content.

Bark! – BC SPCA youth magazine about animal care, welfare issues and more for students ages 13 and under.

AnimalSense – Adult-directed magazine featuring articles about the BC SPCA and animal issues.

The Violence Link – Background resources on the link between animal abuse and family violence.

Student resources: spca.bc.ca/youth



Lesson plans and resources designed to meet the B.C. curriculum are provided with each presentation to expand learning and deepen understanding.

School Club Manual – Ideas and activities to help students take action for animals.

Pet care guides – Care sheets on companion animals.

BC SPCA camps – Spring and summer day camps offered virtually and in person in communities across B.C.

School holiday workshops – Animal-themed activities both virtually and at select BC SPCA shelters.

BC SPCA Kids Club – A \$20 membership for youth ages 13 and under. Includes *Bark!* (4 issues/year), e-Kids newsletter (12 issues/year) and a welcome package.

Stay informed with e-Teacher

Sign up for **e-Teacher**, our email newsletter for educators, to get new ideas on bringing animal themes and discussions into your classroom. Receive monthly book reviews and activities as well as BC SPCA school program information and news updates. Subscribing to **e-Teacher** also gives you the chance to order a free class set of *Bark!*, the BC SPCA's quarterly magazine for youth, as soon as it is released. Sign up at spca.bc.ca/eteacher.

BCSPCA



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