

MY FIRST PET

What to know before bringing home your first pet

April 11th is International Pet Day! Many families have someone really wanting to get a pet, usually a dog or a cat. A pet can be a great companion and enrich our lives in many ways. But apart from our time (dogs need to go out at least two times per day, while cats need regular litter changes), pets require quite a bit of money as well. When getting a pet for the first time, the costs are even greater – our new friend will need somewhere to sleep, eat, drink, and toys to play, while a vet appointment will also be necessary.

Overview “MY FIRST PET – HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?”



Main information

Content	<p>Information about the financial expenses regarding a pet</p> <p>Basic arithmetic operations</p> <p>Order and classify data</p> <p>Online research and digital skills</p>
Target group	Adult learners with basic arithmetic and digital skills
Learning intention	<p>What is the intention of adults to face this problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numeracy for personal and private purposes
Duration	approx.2 lessons
Material and resources	Annexes, calculator, pen and paper, smartphones or laptops with internet connection
Group size	5-12 learners
Problem statement	<p>Living with a pet can have amazing benefits for our mental health. But our companions have their own needs, such as vet appointments, food, medicine, toys and more. Moreover, when getting a pet for the first time, we also need to consider some one-time expenses: adoption fees (if applicable), microchip placement, sterilization etc. So how can we know if we can afford it?</p>
Working questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should we buy before getting a new pet? • What other costs are there? • What are the typical monthly expenses? • Are there any emergency costs we should take into account?
Learning outcomes and results	Preparation of a short-term and a long-term financial plan



Working plan

Time (minutes)	Description of content/activities	Material	Methodical and didactic information ¹
15'	<p>Activation</p> <p>The teacher gets the learners involved in a group discussion to help them engage with the topic.</p> <p>Possible questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have a pet / have you had a pet in the past? - What are/ were the benefits / why do/did you like it? - What are/were the costs? - If you already have a pet, did you buy or adopt? - What are the pros and cons of each? 		Cognitive activation Questioning
30'	<p>Identifying and classifying data</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you need to buy before getting a pet? (Possible answers depending on the type of pet: bed, food and water bowls, litter box, leash and halter, blanket, chewing toys, suitable floor cleaner without chlorine etc.) <p>The learners create a list of all the answers and then sort them in order of importance. Discussion of results.</p>	Pen and paper	Questioning Collaborative learning
	<p>Optional: The learners can be divided into smaller groups and research about a different pet each, i.e. dog, cat, rabbit.) How does each item/service cost?</p> <p>The learners research the cost of each item or service online.</p> <p>The learners can be divided into smaller groups and research different shops/vets.</p> <p>They evaluate the results and select the optimal option based on a quality-price ratio.</p> <p>Finally, create the final list of all expenses.</p>	Laptop / smartphone per team with internet connection (see appendix 1+2)	Collaborative learning

¹ For description and explanation of kinds of tasks, HITS and other background information please consult the user's guide/teacher's guide



Suggestions for the teacher/user

The example presented here should be considered as exemplary and inspirational material, presenting a guideline with a high range of possibilities of adapting those suggestions to a specific group of learners or an individual learner, with his or her very personal requirements.

In concrete terms, the example “My first pet - How much will it cost” could be adapted these ways:

- Duration: The duration of this example can vary greatly depending on the interest of the learners. In classes where most participants already have a pet or are interested in getting one, the discussion can last longer, and the answers can be more detailed.
- Further or additional materials:
 - o comparing packaging prices and prices per kilo of product (i.e. pet food)
 - o understanding vital pet health information (i.e. blood test results)
 - o To deepen the learning about the financial aspects of pet ownership, this example can be combined with the example “Pets cost money”:

Our educational activities aim at numeracy skills being not only memorized, but first of all being practiced and functionally used by the learners in daily life or/and vocational situations. It is therefore recommended to implement the idea of HITS² (higher impacts of teaching skills) as far and often as possible: ...

- ... ask the learners questions and let them raise questions themselves. It can be crucial to discuss numeracy themes, contexts and numbers.
- ... think of possible ways of transfer: The learners should be enabled to do their own research and present their results clearly and briefly.
- ... encourage learners to learn collaboratively.

² For general information and explanation on HITS, please see the user’s/teacher’s guide



Appendix 1

Read the following articles about having a pet and discuss it in class.

Anti-Cruelty, Estimated Annual Cost of Owning a Pet,

<https://anticruelty.org/pet-library/estimated-annual-cost-owning-pet> [20.08.2024]

Battersea (2023), The Cost of Owning a Cat,

<https://www.battersea.org.uk/pet-advice/cat-advice/cost-owning-cat> [20.08.2024]

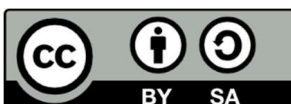
THE COSTS OF OWNING A CAT

There's nothing quite like a cat's purr to melt your heart. Having a feline friend around can help make a house a home. However, everything comes with a cost, and keeping a cat healthy and happy involves expense and long-term financial commitment as cats typically live for around 18 years.

Before getting a cat, it's important to consider the costs associated with taking care of a cat. We estimate the typical annual cost of a cat to be around £1,500 per year.

Item	One Off Expense	Monthly Costs	Annual Costs
Equipment			£145 - £190
- Cat carrier	£25		
- Scratch post	£30 - £50		
- Toys and puzzle feeders	£40		
- Litter tray	£10 - £25		
- Grooming tools	£10		
- Food and water bowls	£10 - £20		
- Cat bed	£20		
Cat Flap	£40 + installation		£40
Microchip	£20 - £30		£25
Food		£20 - £55	£240 - £655*
Litter		£20 - £30	£240 - 360*
Routine Health Care (Fleas, Worming, Vaccinations)		£10	£120
Annual vet check			£60
Insurance		£24	£285
Pet Sitting			£140
TOTAL	£260	£74 - £119	£1587

* In calculating this total, we've assumed an average of £447 per year for food and £300 for litter



Appendix 2

Learners are divided into smaller groups. Each group decides on an animal (dog, cat etc.) and type (breed, average weight). Research online the specific dietary needs of the pet and find the best food in terms of quality and price. Finally, calculate how much food your pet will need daily and monthly, and how much it will cost.

Each group presents their findings to the rest of the class.

Material for further research:

Greenlaw E. (2022), WebMD, Are You Feeding Your Dog Well?, available on <https://www.webmd.com/pets/dogs/ss/slideshow-feeding-your-dog>

Vets for Pets, What food should I feed my dog? available on <https://www.vets4pets.com/pet-health-advice/dog-advice/dog-diet-advice/>

