

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?"

Context

Everyday life Health and Care Finances

Content

Quantity and numbers Using digital skills

Pets can be great companions. But how much money will you need to get one?

Target group (incl. necessary prior skills and competences)

Adult learners wanting to learn more about creating a financial plan (short-term and long-term)

Outcomes and results

Learners will be able to come up with a financial plan to see how much their pet will cost them (when they first get it and then for each month).

Cognitive processes

Managing situations Processing information

DispositionsAffection
Math difficulties



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Teaching and learning examples

Main information					
Content	Information about the financial expenses regarding a pet Basic arithmetic operations Order and classify data Online research and digital skills				
Target group	Adult learners with basic arithmetic and digital skills				
Learning intention	What is the intention of adults to face this problem? - 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	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?				
Working questions	 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'	Activation The teacher gets the learners involved in a group discussion to help them engage with the topic. Possible questions: 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'	Identifying and classifying data Questions: - 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.) The learners create a list of all the answers and then sort them in order of importance. Discussion of results.	Pen and paper	Questioning Collaborative learning
	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? The learners research the cost of each item or service online. The learners can be divided into smaller groups and research different shops/vets. They evaluate the results and select the optimal option based on a quality-price ratio. Finally, create the final list of all expenses.	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





30'	Identifying and classifying data They then repeat the same process, but this time consider the long-term costs associated with pet ownership. Questions: - How many times per year does a pet need a vet appointment? - What are some emergency situations that might happen and how much money could they cost? (i.e. health procedures) - How much food will the pet need per month? (Research the best offer — usually bigger packages cost less). - What other costs may arise? (i.e. ear and teeth cleaner, vaccination, protection against insects, arthritis,) The learners research the cost of each item or service online. The learners can be divided into smaller groups and research different shops/vets. They compare and evaluate the results and select the optimal option based on a quality-price ratio. Finally, create the final list of all expenses.	Pen and paper Laptop / smartphone per team with internet connection (see appendix	Collaborative learning Collaborative learning
15'	Transfer Participants discuss what they have learned in this learning unit. They are able to realistically estimate the costs of buying and keeping a pet. They can also use this knowledge for other purchases in their everyday lives.		

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) Annual vet check		£10	£120 £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/

