

## A Bird's-Eye View

*Fidgety Friday? Seatwork putting your students in a slumber? Here's an activity that gives kids a bit of perspective when it comes to animals—and gives them a chance to stretch and move around. It's a good precursor to discussions about classroom pets or captive wildlife.*

### Character concept:

We show respect for others by considering their point of view.



### Objective:

Students will recognize that animals are different from people in many ways and have their own fears, comforts, and needs. They will identify ways in which people can respect animals' feelings and needs.

### Curriculum connection:

Students will know that animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different places. They will understand that people need food, water, air, waste removal, and a particular range of temperatures in their environment, just as other animals do. They will communicate observations and understand that perceptions of the same things can vary and that perceptions of objects change, for example, as we move closer to them or further away. (life science)

### National standards addressed:

science (physical science, life science, NS.K-4.2, 3)

### Activity:

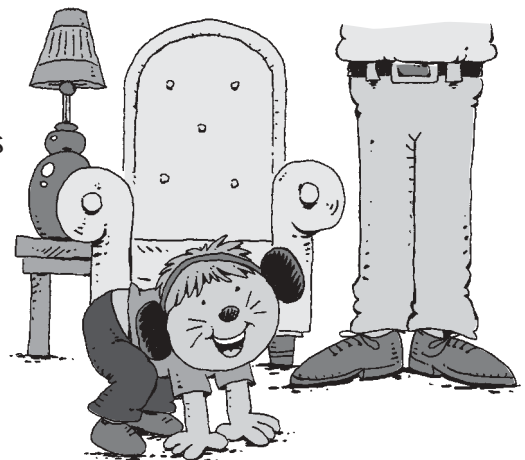
With questions to guide them, students will view their classroom through the eyes of a bird, a mouse, an elephant, and other animals. They will then indicate (by answering "yea" or "nay" or giving a thumbs-up, thumbs-down) whether or not various animals are appropriate pets.

### Procedure:

1. Have students slowly wander around the room, looking high and low. Ask them to quietly and thoughtfully observe their surroundings.

2. After a moment or two, have everyone stop. Tell students, "Let's all pretend we are mice now." Have students crouch down low and imagine what the classroom might look like through a mouse's eyes. Guide them with questions such as these:

- Would the chairs and tables seem bigger?
- Would the room seem wider?
- Would our ceiling seem higher?
- What might a mouse do in a classroom that you or I couldn't do?



- Where could a mouse hide that you or I couldn't?
- What kinds of things or noises in this classroom might be scary to a mouse?
- What kinds of things might a mouse like in this room?
- What kinds of things might a mouse miss if he were stuck in this room?
- Do you think this classroom is the perfect place for a mouse to live? Why?

3. As time permits, you may repeat the activity for various animals: large, small, domestic, and wild. Examples include cats, elephants, dogs, whales, birds, snakes, and bees. Your students should begin to understand that most animals would be uncomfortable in a classroom setting.

4. Emphasize that respect for pets includes providing a safe, comfortable home for them; respect for wild animals means letting them live free. To review, recite a list of animals. After each, have students decide whether or not the animal would make an appropriate pet by responding "yea" or "nay" (or thumbs-up, thumbs-down). Here is a quick list:

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| goldfish     | dolphin    |
| wolf         | dog        |
| cat          | lion       |
| parakeet     | penguin    |
| rat          | raccoon    |
| hippopotamus | guinea pig |



### Extension:

Have students find or make models of different objects that would be the right size for some of the animals you've discussed. For instance, an acorn cap or walnut shell could be a bowl for a mouse, and a small leaf could be a blanket.

### Helpful Resource

"Is a Classroom Pet for You?" addresses the pros and cons of keeping animals as classroom pets. This brochure includes guidelines for choosing an appropriate classroom pet, tips on responsible pet care, and alternative activities to help students respect companion animals and wildlife. Available for 75¢ at [www.nahee.org](http://www.nahee.org).

