

Possible Guiding Questions for Inquiry and Research

The following questions can be used to initiate inquiry and to guide students in identifying paths for investigation. Some questions are generic, with the idea that a particular animal species may be identified by the teacher and/or student as the focus of inquiry. Others delve into subject areas that deal with multiple species, or identify an overarching topic such as ethical treatment of animals.

1. What is the history of (a selected animals) interaction with humans?
2. What are the general characteristics of the animal species that have been domesticated by humans? Are they always the same? Are there exceptions?
3. How are ethical standards applied in the use of animals for agriculture and medical research?
4. What species of animals are currently being affected by destruction of the rainforests of South America? How is that destruction affecting animals (birds) that spend a portion of their lives in North America?
5. What animals were worshipped by the ancient Egyptians? Are there religions today that worship or hold certain animals sacred? What are the reasons animals were/are worshipped?
6. What are subsistence, market and sport hunting? What are the ethical ramifications of each type?
7. Why do wild animals and domestic animals in the same family behave so differently toward humans?
8. How can we protect dwindling species that migrate to different parts of the world where they are subject to unregulated commercial hunting or fishing?
9. Who pays for wildlife conservation and what are the financial responsibilities of local authorities vs. federal authorities? (e.g. Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act).
10. What legal protections do animals have and in what areas of animal use? (e.g., hunting seasons, medical experiments, etc.)
11. What international treaties have been signed, and by what countries, that protect endangered or other wildlife? (e.g. CITES, Migratory Bird Treaty Act)
12. How have various artists or authors depicted animals in their work? Why are animals such popular subjects of art and literature?
13. Who are the leading researchers of (selected animal or group of animals)?
14. What careers involve the use or treatment of animals? How does the use or treatment differ from career to career?

