

Ideas for Pocket Pets Learning Activities

Intermediate Level

Need more ideas for your pocket pet project? There are hundreds of things you can do! You are being asked to complete **at least five** activities each year. Use this list, the *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*, and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your *Pocket Pets Project and Record Book*. Have fun!

For all pocket pets

- Contact a current pocket pet owner and ask about the successes and challenges with owning and caring for a pocket pet.
- Define “diastema” and its function.
- Describe the dental structure of a rodent.
- Define “malocclusion” and explain how to correct and prevent it.
- Show a video on responsible pet ownership at your 4-H club meeting.
- Contact a pocket pet organization and ask to receive information about your pet.
- Donate a new book about pocket pets to your local library.
- Visit a pocket pet breeder, then write a summary of what you learned.
- Interview a pet shop manager about the care of pocket pets.
- Interview a breeder about the care of pocket pets.
- Read a book about your pocket pet and share what you learned at your 4-H club meeting.
- Describe 10 things you and your family should consider before selecting a pocket pet.
- Visit a small animal veterinary practice.
- Visit a breeder to see what kind of pocket pets they sell.
- Give a talk at your 4-H club about what you should consider before buying a pocket pet.
- Describe how you prevent getting Salmonella from rodents.
- Select three cages and list the advantages and disadvantages of each one.
- Take a picture of your pet’s cage, describe the cage, and list the advantages and disadvantages of this type of cage for your pet.



- Visit a pet supply store and look at the different types of pocket pet bedding. Read the labels to see how they compare with the information on pages 12-14 of your *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*.
- Define communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, and zoonotic diseases.
- Select two general diseases and/or health problems listed on pages 18-19 of your handbook and learn more about them. Research these conditions in relation to your pocket pet.
- Find a picture of three types of external parasites that might be found on rodents. List the health problems each parasite causes.
- Make a first aid kit for your pet.
- Discuss six considerations before breeding a pocket pet.
- Identify all external parts of your pocket pet. Using your pet, show these parts to your project helper.
- Help a new 4-H member learn the parts of a pocket pet.
- Teach your pocket pet a trick. Record the trick(s) taught and your pet's progress.

Gerbils

- Describe six characteristics of a gerbil. Show these characteristics to your project helper.
- Observe your gerbil(s) once a day for five days and record how they communicate. Discuss two ways gerbils communicate.
- Review the Mongolian Gerbil Profile on page 28 of your *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*. Learn 10 profile characteristics and tell your project helper about them.
- Teach someone how to properly handle a gerbil.
- Teach someone how to properly sex a gerbil.
- Research Tyzzer's Disease and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Describe the appearance of newborn gerbil pups to your project helper, and discuss the milestones (fur starting to appear, etc.) during the first 20 days of their lives.
- Participate in a virtual gerbil show.
- Explain what a judge is looking for in show gerbils by describing the six points included in the show standards.
- Tell your project helper five reasons gerbils are penalized when shown in a sanctioned show.
- Tell your project helper five reasons gerbils are disqualified from a sanctioned show.

Hamsters

- Describe five characteristics of a hamster. Show these characteristics to your project helper.
- Review the Syrian Hamster Profile on pages 35-37 of your *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*. Learn 10 profile characteristics and tell your project helper about them.
- Teach someone how to properly handle a hamster.
- Teach someone how to properly sex a hamster.
- Research Wet Tail and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Describe the appearance of newborn hamster pups to your project helper, and discuss the milestones (fur starting to appear, etc.) during the first 21 days of their lives.
- Explain what a judge is looking for when judging pet hamsters.

Mice

- Describe six characteristics of mice. Show these characteristics to your project helper.
- Review the Fancy Mouse Profile on page 46 of your *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*. Learn 10 profile characteristics and tell your project helper about them.
- Teach someone how to properly handle a mouse.
- Teach someone how to properly sex a mouse.
- Describe the appearance of mice pups to your project helper, and discuss the milestones (fur starting to appear, etc.) during the first 21 days of their lives.
- Research Ataxia and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Name the seven varieties of mice that are recognized by the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association standards. Describe the characteristics of each of these varieties.
- Research three or more varieties of mice. Record your findings, including pictures, and share with project helper.
- Access the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association website to learn the faults, eliminations, and disqualifications that apply to show mice. Tell your project helper five reasons mice are disqualified from a sanctioned show.

Rats

- Describe six characteristics of rats. Show these characteristics to your project helper.
- Review the Domestic Rat Profile on page 55 of your *Pocket Pets Resource Handbook*. Learn 10 profile characteristics and tell your project helper about these.
- Teach someone how to properly handle a rat.

- Teach someone how to properly restrain a rat.
- Teach someone how to properly sex a rat.
- Compare and contrast the housing requirements for a rat versus a mouse. Record your findings.
- Research Red Tears and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Research Ringtail and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Research two types of respiratory infections common in rats and write a report or discuss it with your project helper.
- Teach someone how to bathe a rat.
- Describe the appearance of newborn rat pups to your project helper, and discuss the milestones (fur starting to appear, etc.) during the first 21-25 days of their lives.
- Name the six varieties of rats that are recognized by the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association (AFRMA) standards. Describe the characteristics of each of these varieties.
- Research three or more varieties of rats. Record your findings, including pictures, and share with project helper.
- Access the AFRMA website to learn the faults, eliminations, and disqualifications that apply to show rats. Tell your project helper five reasons rats are penalized when shown in a sanctioned show.