



Choosing a Classroom Pet

A quick checklist for teachers & homeschoolers

A classroom pet can teach responsibility, empathy, and science — but only if it's the right animal for a busy room. Run through this before you commit.

A good classroom pet is usually one that:

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Is **low-maintenance** and hard for students to accidentally harm.

Stays **calm around noise** and lots of visitors.

Is **safe to house where students can watch** (and sometimes handle, with rules).

Is **affordable** to set up and feed on a school budget.

Can be cared for on a schedule — with a clear **weekend & holiday plan**.

Is **not a common allergy trigger** for your students.

Is **legal in your area and allowed by your school**.

Popular picks: fish, guinea pigs, and — for older classes — a bearded dragon or hermit crabs are common favorites. See our **Best Classroom Pets** guide at whatpetshouldiget.com for the full list and why.



Classroom Pet Care Routine

Daily care + the all-important weekend & holiday plan

Every school day:

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Fresh food and clean water.

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Quick habitat check and spot-clean.

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Check the pet looks healthy and active.

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Log anything unusual in the class pet journal.

Every week:

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Deep-clean the habitat.

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Wash bowls, bottles, and bedding.

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Restock food and supplies.

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Look the pet over for any changes.

Weekend & holiday plan

Every classroom pet needs a plan for weekends, long breaks, and snow days. Fill this in and keep it by the habitat:

Who feeds & checks on weekends:

Who takes the pet home over long breaks:

Backup caregiver:

Vet name & phone number:



Classroom Pet Job Chart

Rotate the jobs so everyone helps care for our class pet

Print a fresh chart each week and write in who has each job. Sharing the care is how a class pet teaches responsibility.

Job	This week's helper(s)
Feeder (measures & gives food)	
Fresh water	
Habitat helper (spot-clean)	
Observer (writes in the pet journal)	
Supplies monitor (tracks what's running low)	
Weekend/break caregiver	

Tip: pair this chart with a class pet journal so students track feeding, behavior, and health over the year — a ready-made science and writing activity.

Classroom guidance based on NSTA and CDC recommendations for the responsible, humane use of animals in the classroom.