

PET OVERPOPULATION
LESSON 4: Grades 4-6
EVERY NUMBER TELLS A STORY

Show Me Standards: Academic Goals: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6 & 4.7; Communication Arts: 1 & 6; Mathematics: 1 & 3; Science: 4 & 8; Social Studies: 7

Objective: To help students understand the work being done by local animal shelters on behalf of the pet overpopulation problem. To help students understand the importance of community involvement in the work to combat pet overpopulation.

Materials:

- Phone directory
- Telephone
- Paper and pencils
- List of questions (those provided and those developed by the students)

Method: The teacher will review details regarding the pet overpopulation problem in their community and throughout the entire United States. Additionally, review the questions presented in Lesson One, exploring the role of humane organizations and animal shelters in your community.

There are thousands of companion animals in shelters throughout the state of Missouri. Each animal is identified by a number, but behind that number is a story of a real life. Why did they get lost? Why were they unwanted? Do they have a name? Why was the bond between the owner and the animal broken? Did anyone ever love and care for them? Do they know what it is like to be loved and happy? Why were some abused and neglected? How do they feel in a shelter or animal control facility? If they could talk, what would they say?

Help students to explore these questions and to realize that animals are not just statistics or numbers, but living, feeling, breathing creatures---just like we are. Each one deserves to have a full life, and the reason that the numbers are so high at shelters is a direct relation to the pet overpopulation problem. Until the number of animals being born is lowered, shelters will be full of unwanted animals---but behind each number, is the story of a life.

Instruct the children to consult the telephone directory for a listing of animal welfare and animal shelters in your local community. After compiling the list, help students to identify pertinent questions regarding animals in your community. The following questions can be used as a starting point:

- What different kinds of animals are brought into the shelter?
- How many animals are brought in every day?
- Why do you call it “adopting” animals instead of “buying” an animal?
- What is the most unique “story” that accompanied an animal to your shelter?
- What kinds of jobs do the employees and volunteers do for the shelter and animals?

Create additional questions to give you insight into the unique and necessary work that animal shelters provide for the community?

Look at the number you wrote down for how many animals are brought in every day. If this number is based on seven days a week, how many animals are brought to the shelter each week? Month? Year? In a period of ten years, how many total animals would be relinquished to the shelter?

- How do you feel about the numbers you just calculated?
- What do these numbers tell you?
- What can YOU do to help end the overpopulation problem and the broken bonds between people and their pets?

Call To Action: Ask the animal shelter personnel (workers) what children your age can do to make the community a safe, more happy and healthy environment for animals. If the shelter could have a “Wish List” for the animals, what might it include? Do they need toys, chew bones or food? How about cleaning supplies, towels or blankets? Make a list of items that would help your shelter in their work for the animals and post it at your school. Put a decorated box or canister to collect the items and deliver them to the animals as a gift from your school.

Attention Teacher: See following activity sheet “Solving a Problem”.

Web sites: For recommended animal-related web sites visit www.apamo.org and choose “Animal Issues” from the left-side menu, then choose “Links” from the top of the page. Or [click here](#) to launch your browser and link directly to the list.

Teacher's box: Remind students that spaying and neutering are operations performed by veterinarians that keep pets from having babies.

KIND Name _____

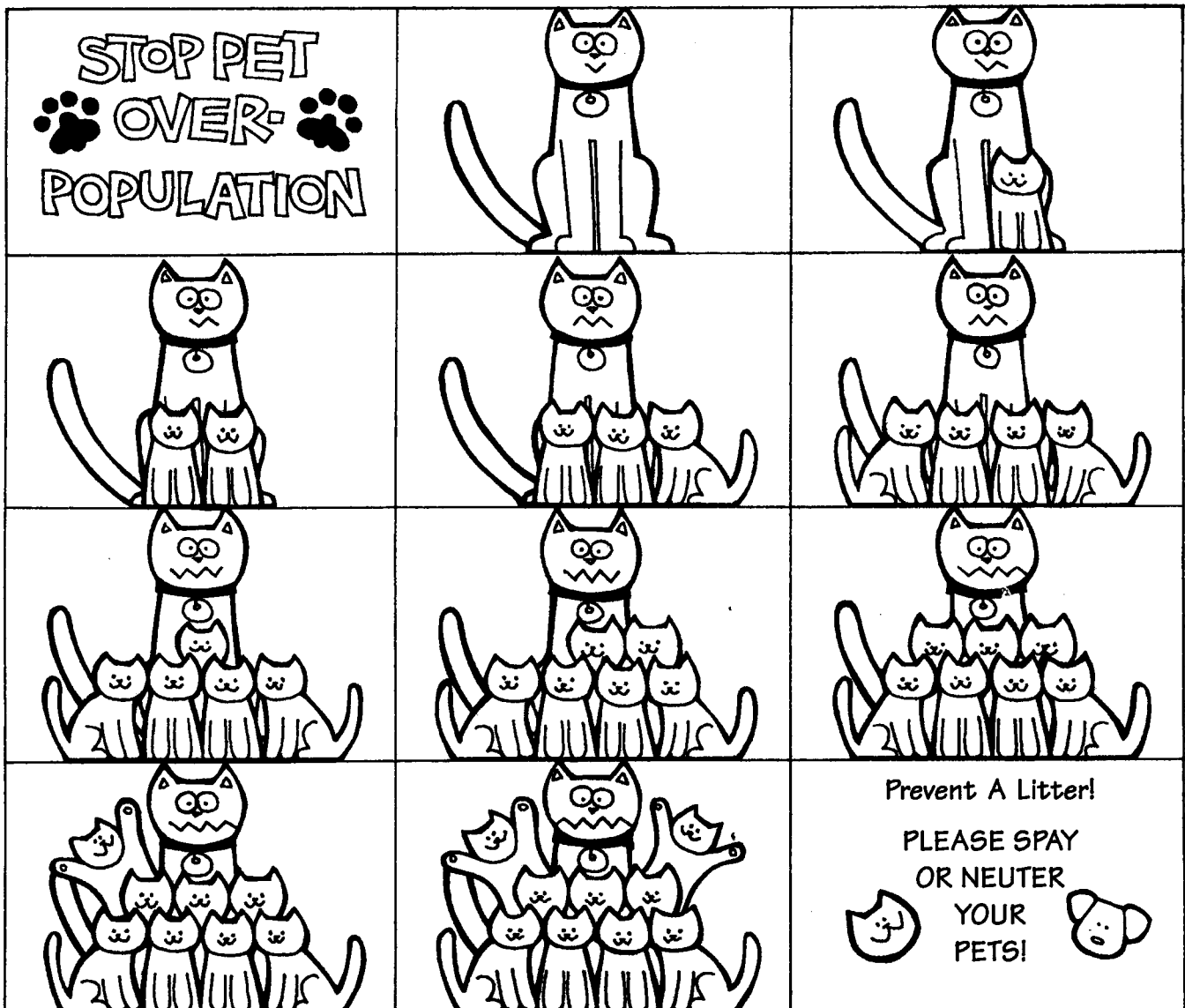
Solving a Problem

Pet overpopulation is a BIG problem! There are too many pets and not enough homes to go around. By having pets spayed or neutered, we can reduce the number of

unwanted puppies and kittens. Help spread this important message by making flip books and giving them to others.

Flip Book Directions

1. Cut out the 12 pages, and stack them in order.
2. Staple the pages together on the left side.
3. Flip quickly through the book. Watch the picture change!



Reproducible: Permission granted to individual educators to duplicate for classroom use. Reproduction for reprinting or resale is prohibited without written permission from NAHEE. © 1994 NAHEE, KIND Teacher.