

Jan Herzog's Pig Lesson Plan

Grades 1-2



Objectives

This activity is designed to help students understand that many common beliefs about pigs are untrue. Start by reading Susan Jeschke's book *Perfect the Pig* to your class, then follow with a discussion. The discussion will help students identify which portions of the story are fantasy and which could really happen. Students will also learn to make connections between this story and other fairy tales or folk tales that they have heard and to identify the characters' feelings, as well as their various traits.

Directions

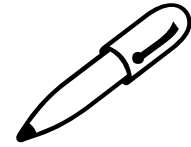
1. Read the book *Perfect the Pig* by Susan Jeschke to the class.
2. Discuss the story line, characters, emotions, story elements, and similarities between this story and others such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *Cinderella*, etc.
3. Discuss the parts of the book that are fantasy, such as the character of the fairy godmother and the pig's ability to fly. Then discuss the elements that could be true, such as a human's exploitation of an animal for profit, or the affection between the woman in the story and the pig.
4. Give the students copies of the worksheet "Pigs—Fact or Fiction?" and have them work in groups to complete it. Move from group to group to observe their work. When all the groups are finished, compare answers and ask the students to support their choices with reasons. If there is disagreement about whether an item is "fact" or "fiction," guide the students to research in beginners' reference books or other appropriate literature to find the answer. (*Note: Be sure to include at least one strong reader in each group, and make sure that all members of each group are participating in their group's discussion.*)
When all the items have been correctly identified as either fact or fiction, ask the students what they learned. What misconceptions did they have? Let each child tell one thing that he or she learned or what he or she likes best about pigs.
5. If possible, arrange to have mini-sandwiches made from Lightlife Smart Bacon or another vegetarian mock-meat product. Discuss the nutritional problems with bacon and other pig-derived foods.

Optional related activity:

6. Read the story about President Lincoln's "pet" pig and his poignant description of the incident in which his father slaughtered his pet. Explain to the children that President Lincoln was an advocate of animal rights, as well as of equal rights for all human beings.



Pigs—True or False?



ANSWER SHEET

Read each statement and discuss with your group whether you think it is true or false. Be sure to give your reasons for your choices! Then mark your answers by circling “true” or “false.”

1. Pigs are intelligent.

True: Pigs are actually more intelligent than dogs but, like dogs, are friendly and sociable. They enjoy play and are extremely active and inquisitive.

2. Pigs are dirty.

False: Pigs are actually very clean animals. They are not able to sweat and therefore take to the mud (or water) primarily to cool off and evade flies. Actually, if available, pigs tend to prefer water to mud. They keep their sleeping area clean and will find a spot for their “restroom” as far away from their sleeping place as possible.

3. Pigs are related to warthogs.

True: Pigs are closely related to warthogs, but warthogs have teeth that have grown into dangerous tusks and wart-like bumps on their faces that give these hogs their name.

4. Pigs are mammals.

True: The pigs we know today are actually descendents of wild pigs who can be found on every continent except Antarctica.

5. Pigs’ noses help them find food and dig it up.

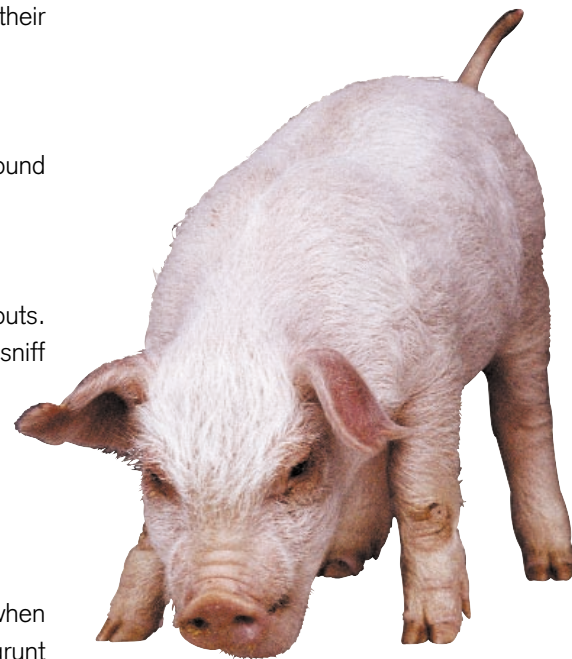
True: When free to roam, pigs will sniff and root around in the soil with their snouts. Their powerful but sensitive snouts are highly developed sense organs that can sniff out treats and other “buried treasures” deep beneath the soil.

6. Baby pigs are called “calves.”

False: Baby pigs are called “piglets.”

7. Pigs love to be scratched and petted.

True: Pigs actively seek out and enjoy close contact and will lie close together when resting. They like to be scratched behind the ears and shoulders and will grunt contentedly when you treat them to a belly rub—just like a dog or cat.



8. Pigs sing to each other.

True: Pigs are vocal and communicate constantly with each other through various grunts—20 different known vocalizations have been identified. Mother pigs even sing to their piglets while they are nursing.

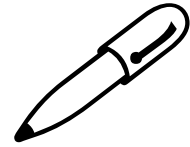
9. Pigs are slow movers.

False: Adults can run at speeds around 11 miles an hour and can trot for relatively long distances.

10. Meatless hot dogs, bacon, and ham taste great and are good for you.

True: Veggie burgers, “ham,” “hot dogs,” and “turkey” made out of soy and other meatless ingredients taste close enough to the real thing to fool any die-hard carnivore, plus they’re actually much healthier for you. Animal products are laden with fat and cholesterol and devoid of fiber and complex carbohydrates. Soy not only is rich in important nutrients but can be delicious, too.



Pigs—True or False?

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True False

2. Pigs are dirty.

True False

3. Pigs are related to warthogs.

True False

4. Pigs are mammals.

True False

5. Pigs' noses help them find food and dig it up.

True False

6. Baby pigs are called “calves.”

True False

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