



Special  
Days

# LESSON PLANS

for

Internationally recognized

**SPECIAL DAYS**

*[ with an animal component ]*

**JANUARY**

15

16

17

18

25

**24**

23

31

22

30

29





**International  
Day of Education**

**24 January**

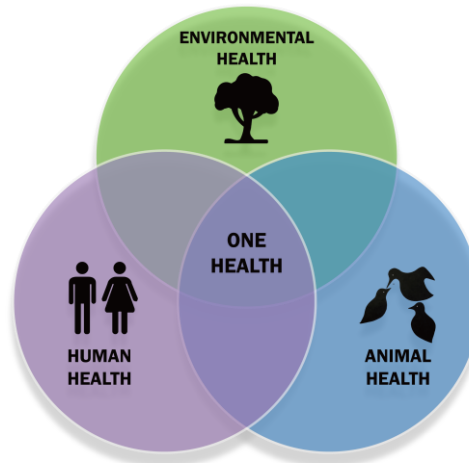


# WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

*Protecting animals, preserving our future*



The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has called for global co-operation to help make animal health a global priority **for the sake of the health of all!**



Since the health and welfare of animals is dependent on the way we treat them, and since the way we treat them is largely dependent on the presence or absence of emotions of respect, compassion and empathy for animals, it is important to note that the **language** we use influences the way we think and act.



A starting point is to understand the power of the language we use.

Recent research published in Aeon Essays puts it this way:

*‘What we feel, how we feel it – perhaps even whether we feel it at all – depends not just on biology but also on context, including the language we use and the culture we come from.’*

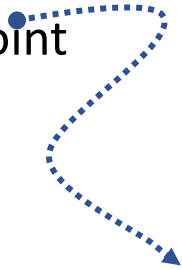
[SEE  
HERE](#)

Thus, in a global culture where concern for human rights trumps concern for all other forms of life and often comes at a cost to the welfare of animals, how best do we educate to support the call by the World Organisation for Animal Health?

# Resource



A starting point



## The Power of Language

One of South Africa's leading language experts, *Professor Rajend Mesthrie* believes everyone would benefit from **linguistic disinfection**.

Linguistic disinfection is a process whereby we seek to eliminate from our language derogatory terminology against others – including animals.



# Derogatory Language

Even the simplest derogatory words hold the power to remove dignity and create the perception that the 'other' is deficient or inferior in some way.

## EXERCISE:

- Give an example of derogatory language that has been used against you
- How did it make you feel?
- Give an example of derogatory language you have used against someone else
- How do your derogatory words make you act towards that person?

Cleansing our language of derogatory terminology is a crucial starting point in linguistic disinfection.



# Derogatory Language

Now think about the derogatory language we use against animals. It reveals our prejudice against them.

Examples:

“He behaved like an animal” (implies animals behave badly)

“They treated me like a dog” (implies it is okay to treat dogs badly)

“You dirty pig” (implies pigs are naturally dirty animals; they are not)

“Don’t be chicken” (implies chickens are weak and afraid; they are not)

“Bird-brain” (implies lack of intelligence)



# The Language of Oppression

Unlike positive language which affirms and strengthens the 'other', derogatory language breaks down the other.

The old adage  
'Sticks and stones can  
break my bones, but  
words can never hurt me'  
is simply not true.

Words have the  
power to inflict  
painful and long  
lasting emotional  
wounds.

Words have the  
power to affect  
the way we act.

Through words we  
pass on our own  
prejudices to others.



# Exercise

Research the intelligence of pigs and their natural habits, and write a paragraph about this.

OR

Research the ancestry of today's birds and write a paragraph about their ability to survive through the millennia.

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# Speciesism

*Peter Singer* is a world-renowned Australian moral philosopher regarded as the founding father of the animal liberation movement. He explains:

‘*Racists violate the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interest of the members of their own race. Sexists violate the principle of equality by favouring the interests of their own sex. Speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the interests of members of other species.*’



# Exercise

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Look up the word **Speciesism**.

Discuss and write a paragraph about its relevance in a world that is beginning to understand the interconnectedness of all things.

# Animals in the South African Constitution

The issue of our human treatment of animals is being scrutinised on a global scale. *South Africa's Constitutional Court* supports a burgeoning awareness that animals are here **with us, not for us** to use and abuse.



On 8 December 2016, Constitutional Court judges took an historic step in handing down a unanimous judgment acknowledging that:



Animals have intrinsic value as individuals



Guardianship of the interests of animals reflects constitutional values and the interests of society at large



Animals are sentient beings capable of suffering and experiencing pain



Animal protection safeguards the moral status of humans and the degeneration of human values

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# Class Discussion

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How would you like to see yourself in relation to your pet - as an animal 'owner' or as an animal 'guardian'?



In what ways do these words influence the way we feel and act towards our pets?

# Exercise

Study the meaning of the words below and use them in sentences that support the call by the *World Organisation for Animal Health* for everyone to help make animal health a global priority for the sake of the health of all!

**Symbiosis**

a mutually beneficial relationship

**Anthropocene**

denoting the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment

**Symbiocene**

hoped-for period of re-integration between humans and the rest of nature

**Solastalgia**

a new word that refers to the distress that people experience when environmental changes like climate change and man-made environmental destruction impact negatively on them

The Five Freedoms are recommended by the  
*World Organisation for Animal Health*  
as fundamental guidelines to the health of the animals in our care.



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH  
*Protecting animals, preserving our future*

# The Five Freedoms for Animals

FREEDOM  
from  
HUNGER  
and  
THIRST

FREEDOM  
from  
DISCOMFORT

FREEDOM  
from  
PAIN,  
INJURY  
or  
DISEASE

FREEDOM  
to  
EXPRESS  
NORMAL  
BEHAVIOUR

FREEDOM  
from  
FEAR  
and  
DISTRESS