

Ideas for Cavy Learning Activities

Beginning Level

Need more ideas for your cavy project? There are hundreds of things you can do! This list is organized by topics that match the chapters in the 4-H *Cavy Resource Handbook*. You are being asked to complete **at least five** activities each year. Use this list and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your *Cavy Project and Record Book*. Have fun!

General

- Photograph your cavy. Be creative. Show your pictures at a club meeting.
- Keep a scrapbook of your cavy project from the beginning to the end of your project year. Share this at your 4-H club meeting.
- Become a 4-H PetPAL with your cavy and visit people in assisted living and skilled nursing facilities.

Animal Care and Well-Being

- Develop a veterinarian/client/patient relationship (VCPR) within three weeks of acquiring your cavy.
- Discuss a cavy wellness or health plan with your veterinarian.
- Working with your veterinarian, write a health plan for your cavy.
- Research what medicines and drugs are approved for use in cavies. Make a chart listing the name of the drug, indications for use, possible reactions. (Remember never to administer medication to your cavy without discussing this with your veterinarian.)
- List as many drugs and medications toxic to cavies as you can find.
- Contact a small animal veterinarian and ask him/her to talk to your 4-H club.
- Explain sportsmanship and how it applies to your cavy project.

History

- Visit your local library and check out some books on cavies.
- Tell your project helper the history of today's cavy.
- Describe the theories on how cavies got the name of guinea pig.
- Study the history of one breed of cavy and explain this at your club meeting.

Anatomy

- Describe the function of a cavy's molar teeth.
- Describe five characteristics of a cavy.
- Name five skeletal parts of a cavy. Show where these are on a picture of a cavy skeleton.
- Name five external parts of the cavy anatomy. Show where these are on a live cavy.
- Explain to your project helper why it is important to learn the external, skeletal and internal parts of a cavy.
- Name five internal parts of a cavy. Show where these are on a picture of a cavy's internal anatomy.
- Name five external parts of an Abyssinian cavy's coat. Show where these coat parts are on either a live Abyssinian or a picture of one.



- Name five external parts of a Peruvian cavy's coat. Show where these coat parts are on either a live Peruvian or a picture.
- Name five external parts of a Silky cavy's coat. Show where these coat parts are on either a live Silkie or a picture.
- Locate an ARBA Standard of Perfection (2011-2015). Select one breed of cavy and review the judging requirements for that breed. Discuss these with your project helper.

Selection

- Describe five things you and your family should consider before selecting a cavy.
- Describe five things you should consider before buying a cavy.
- Research information about three breeds of cavies, and these breed's varieties, on the Internet at either the ARBA or ACBA website. List three characteristics about each of the breeds you learned about.
- Discuss the difference between a purebred cavy and a crossbred cavy, and two pros and cons of each.
- Visit a pet shop to see what breeds of guinea pigs they sell. Ask the pet shop manager/employee to explain the genetics of the cavies they sell.
- Describe three characteristics of each of the following groups of cavies: self, agouti, solid, and marked.
- Name the six show classes for each group of cavy, including the age of the cavies that can show in those classes.
- Create a visual display (poster, power point, photographs) on two breeds of cavies and present it at a club meeting.
- Select three breeds of cavies and name five characteristics of each breed.

Housing and Equipment

- Describe two advantages and two disadvantages to your pet's location in your house.
- Inspect a room in your house for hazards to your cavy. List the hazards.
- Give a talk at your 4-H club meeting about selecting a location in your home for your cavy.
- Describe two types of suitable pet bedding and two types of unsuitable bedding, and explain why they are good or bad for your pet.
- Describe one type of suitable cage and one type of unsuitable cage for your cavy, and explain why they are good or bad for your pet.
- Explain why hard plastic food bowls are not good to use for your pet's feed.
- Describe what a gravity flow water bottle is and how it works.
- Describe how to clean and disinfect a water bottle.
- Draw a "blueprint" or floor plan of your cavy's cage, including where the food, water, and cage accessories are located. Explain why you chose this cage and its accessories.
- Learn how to clean and disinfect your cavy's cage.
- Design your own cavy cage using cubes and Coroplast.

Records

- Explain how to properly ear tag your cavy.
- Explain the importance of keeping feed, care, and health records for your cavy.

Nutrition

- List five acceptable treats to give your cavy in small quantities.
- Describe the nutritional requirements of a cavy.
- Discuss what will happen to your cavy if it does not receive Vitamin C in its diet.

- Name the six categories of nutrients for cavies. Choose two of these nutrients and describe their functions in more detail.
- Make a checklist of the steps recommended to ensure a healthy cavy. Present this at your 4-H club meeting.

Health

- List four precautions you should follow to prevent getting Salmonella from your cavy.
- List five signs of an unhealthy cavy and discuss what you should do if your pet has one or more of these signs.
- Select two diseases and/or health problems of cavies and learn more about them. Research these conditions in relation to your cavy.
- Create a poster on two common diseases of cavies and present it at a cub meeting.

Reproduction

- Discuss three considerations before breeding a cavy.
- Show the proper method of sexing a cavy.
- Visit a cavy breeder and his/her caviary. After the visit discuss with your project leader five things you learned. Send a thank you note to the breeder.
- Explain to your project helper why you should breed a sow before she is 7 months old.

Grooming and Showing

- Contact your county Extension professional to find out what the county rules are for your cavy project.
- Contact your county Extension professional to find out what the rules are for showing your cavy at the state level.
- Learn how your small animal/cavy show is conducted in your county.
- Describe how to prepare your cavy for your county fair show/judging.
- Describe how to prepare your cavy for showing it at the state fair.
- Describe how to enter your cavy at the state fair.
- Learn and practice the steps to properly handle a cavy, and demonstrate these steps.
- Show your project helper the steps in cavy showmanship.
- Show your cavy in showmanship at your county fair.
- Show your cavy in showmanship at the state fair.
- Attend an ARBA rabbit and cavy show. Watch the show procedure and evaluation of the cavies. See how many breeds you can identify.
- Learn how to properly examine your rabbit for disqualifications, faults, and general conformation, according to the ARBA Standards of Perfection. Show what you have learned.
- Name and describe three disqualifications that cause cavies not to be placed at an ARBA show.
- Teach your cavy to stay on a show board.
- Learn how to wrap a long-haired cavy for show.
- Learn how to properly bathe your cavy. Describe how to groom a Texel cavy.
- Describe how to groom a Teddy cavy.
- Properly groom an American cavy.
- Describe the six show classification for exhibition cavies.

Marketing

- Describe why it is important to market a pet cavy responsibly.

- Make a list of what should be included with a cavy when selling it as a pet. Discuss why these items are important.

Careers

- Select two careers in animal sciences that interest you. Learn what you would do in these careers and the requirements of becoming employed in these careers.
- Select one career that interests you. Interview a person employed in that career. Discuss what you learned with your project helper.