



Lesson 2 Project:

We've discussed in this lesson that the time taken for a herbivore to eat food is really important. For this experiment, we're asking you to choose three different foods that are suitable for your pet and to weigh out an **equal amount** of each food (we have suggested a suitable weight for different pets).

We would then like you to give one of these foods to your pet and then to time how long they take to eat it. Then do the same for the other two food types. You can run this project on different days if you prefer.

You can use a stopwatch function on a smartphone or watch to make sure your timings are really accurate. Start the timer when you offer the food and stop it when the food is completely finished.

If your pet is getting full and has had enough to eat, stop the project and start it again on a different day. Reduce the amount of the normal food given to make up for the extra calories you have provided during the experiment but otherwise feed your pet as normal each day.

Food for the experiment

You should choose an amount of food that your pet can easily eat in one sitting. Each food should be weighed so an equal amount is given – use kitchen scales to make sure the result is correct. We are suggesting the following amounts:

Rabbits 25 grams

Guinea pig/ rat 15 grams

Hamsters, mice, gerbils 7 grams

Example

Rabbit –

Day 1: 25 grams of brussel sprouts (around 2-3)

Day 2: 25 grams or hay

Day 3: 25 grams of kibble or rabbit mix

Tip

If you find it difficult weighing small amounts of food on your kitchen scales, there are some useful instructions here about making your own scales: <https://sciencing.com/weigh-grams-scale-6001252.html> (a two pence coin weight around 7 grams)



Hands-off check for small pets (1 point for healthy, 2 points for unhealthy)	
Pet's name	
Species (rabbit, guinea pig, hamster etc)	
Pet's age	
Male or female pet?	
Name of Pet Scientist to add to the certificate	
	Points
Position check	
Reaction check	
Listening check	
Movement check	
Sniff check	
Food and water check	
Poop check	
Body size check	
Clean and dry check	
Behaviour check	
Total score	

If you think what you see is healthy give 1 point

Every check that doesn't seem completely healthy, write down 2 points

Add up the totals for each pet

Ask a parent to send your results to Supreme Petfoods so that we can turn your **data** into **information**. In return we will send you a special Level 1 Pet Scientist certificate.



Extra questions to discuss with friends and family

What information do you think these results will provide?

- A. This could tell us how many pets are likely to be unhealthy at any one time across the whole country. It will also tell us if older animals are more likely to be unhealthy than younger ones. It may also tell us whether some species are more likely to be healthy than others (for instance more unhealthy rabbits than guinea pigs).

How else could we use this health check list to make scientific discoveries?

- A. We could use this checklist weekly and chart how healthy an animal remains through their life. This might also tell us things like whether pets are always healthier in the summer than the winter, or during school holidays. We could also use it to make changes, such as providing more hay and see if that results in improvements in health. Do you have any other ideas?

What do you think is a 'healthy' score?

- A. A healthy score would be 10 or less, which would be the whole list filled out with 1s. Any score higher than 10 would show that a 2 for unhealthy was added.

Do you think you are better able to check your pet's health now than before you started this lesson?

Yes: Explain to your parent, brother or sister why you think you are now more skilled in pet care and pet science.

No: Explain to your parent, brother or sister what you think you still need to learn to improve your skills. How might you be able to improve your skills in the future?

We hope you have had fun. Next week's lesson is: Digestion – it starts in the mouth!

Complete the lesson and project for a Level 2 Pet Scientist certificate.