

Students using animals or parts of animals in school

Introduction

You need to realize that using living, dead or even parts of animals in school is a privilege with responsibilities. Not only must you obviously avoid being cruel to animals, but you should also be genuinely concerned about the wellbeing of the animals used, and have respect for how they are adding to your education. Here are some things you should think about, talk about with your friends, and discuss with your teachers;



Australian and New Zealand
Council for the Care of Animals
in Research and Teaching

www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART

Principles to Consider

1. Why are animals or their parts being used?

Animals should only ever be used to teach something in schools if that is the only way you can learn about it. You should think about whether it really is *the only way* to learn that particular thing, or could it be done without using animals or animal parts? Students and teachers should follow the “Three Rs” - **R**eplacement of animals with something else (eg. videos, models, computer programs etc.), **R**eduction of the number of animals used (eg. sharing animals with more students etc.), and **R**efinement (improvement) of how the animals are used (eg. can the animals be made more comfortable, can the same thing be done without having to upset, harm, or kill the animal etc.).

2. Are the animals being looked after properly?

Teachers aren't the only ones responsible for looking after the animals, you are too! This is called a "duty of care" – in other words, it is your duty to care for the animal. If you have to touch the animals it's important to pay close attention to your teacher when they show you how to properly touch or hold the animal.

3. Are you obeying the law?

There are laws about how animals can be used in schools, and part of that means that your teacher must have been given permission by an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). To get this permission your teacher has to tell the AEC what kind of animals are going to be used, how many, what will be done with them, and why they need to use animals. You should ask your teacher about this – because the laws apply to you too!!

4. What do you think about using animals or parts of animals?

You should talk about using animals in school with your friends and teachers. You should listen to their opinions and tell them yours without getting into a fight about it! Feel free to come up with ways of making your classes better. Schools must also make sure that any students who don't want to use animals don't have to, and that they are given something equally useful to do instead. You can even contact the AEC if you have other questions.

5. Are you making the most of topics that use animals?

Your teacher should give you plenty of warning and practice before you use any animals or their body parts. Make sure you pay attention to these practice sessions so that you understand exactly what you will be learning once you use the animal.

ANZCCART has the following objectives:

- to promote excellence in the care of animals used in research and teaching and so reduce any discomfort that they may experience;
- to ensure that the outcomes of the scientific uses of animals are worthwhile; and
- to foster informed and responsible discussion and debate within the scientific and wider community regarding the scientific uses of animals.

If you want more detailed information you might like to look at the “Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes” (Seventh edition, 2004), which is referred to in the relevant animal welfare laws for each Australian State and is available online at <http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/research/awc/code.htm>