

Companion Animal Showmanship Guide



General Rules

- Must be enrolled in 4-H companion animal project
- Follow age division rules:
 - **Junior, ages 8 to 11**
 - **Intermediate, ages 12 to 14**
 - **Senior, ages 15 to 18**
- All animals must belong to exhibitor or a member of their immediate family
- All animals must be free of disease, parasites, or other infectious illness
- Cats and ferrets are **required** to have proof of vaccination

Judging Criteria

- **Appearance of Exhibitor**
 - Appropriate 4-H Dress
 - Handling of animal
- **Appearance of Animal**
 - General Health
 - Preparation/Grooming for Show
 - Enclosure/Carrier
 - Handling of animal
 - Vaccination History (Cats and Ferrets Only)
 - Questions
- **Presentation**

Appearance of Exhibitor



Appropriate 4-H Dress

- Official **4-H t-shirt** or 4-H emblem
- Appropriate safety apparel for you or the animal (i.e. gloves, long-sleeved shirt)
- Keep hair neat



Proper Behavior

- Be attentive while others are presenting
- During your presentation, be friendly towards the judge and speak in a loud, clear voice
- Use good posture
- **Smile!**

Appearance of Animal



General Health

- Healthy skin/coat
- Clean eyes and nose
- Alert
- Activity levels appropriate for species/breed
- If nocturnal, and therefore asleep, mention this in presentation

Grooming/Preparation for Show (as applicable)

- Coat brushed
- Nails trimmed
- Give bath couple days prior to show

The background is dark brown with decorative elements including paw prints in the top left, various circles in shades of brown and grey scattered throughout, and a large, light grey abstract shape on the right side.

Enclosure/Carrier (as applicable)

- Clean, safe, secure enclosure
- Appropriate amount of space
- If transporting pet in separate carrier, provide photo of enclosure set-up

Handling of Animal

- Animal is calm and controlled
- Carried properly, animal not squeezed or let loose
- If animal can't leave cage (i.e. small, naturally skittish), mention this is presentation
- Proper handling technique and equipment (leash/harness)



Vaccination History (Cats and Ferrets Only)

- Bring completed vaccination form, signed by licensed veterinarian
- Make sure pet is up-to-date on all required vaccines

To find the 4-H vaccination form:

<https://4h.unl.edu/documents/CompanionAnimal/SF262-Cat-Ferret-Vaccination-Certification-Form%20Updated.pdf>

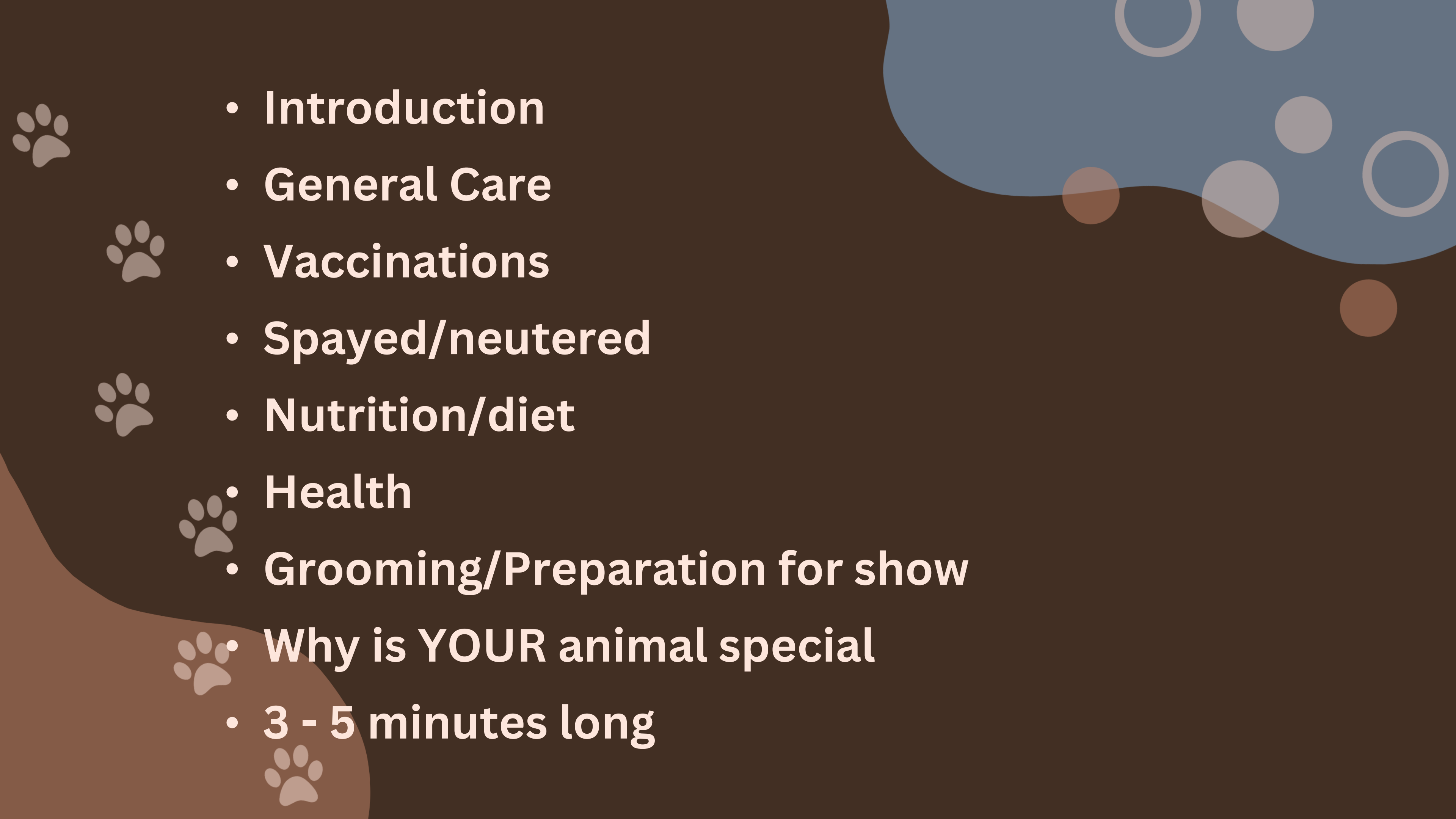


Questions

- Give complete answers
- May be related to:
 - General breed information
 - Health issues
 - Enrichment
 - Domestication
 - Coloration and other traits
 - Personality and handling
 - etc.

Presentation



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- The background is a dark brown color with several light brown paw prints scattered on the left side. On the right side, there are abstract shapes in shades of blue and brown, including circles and a large, irregular shape that resembles a splash or a cloud.
- **Introduction**
 - **General Care**
 - **Vaccinations**
 - **Spayed/neutered**
 - **Nutrition/diet**
 - **Health**
 - **Grooming/Preparation for show**
 - **Why is YOUR animal special**
 - **3 - 5 minutes long**

Introduction

- Introduce yourself (name and age)
- Introduce your animal
 - Name
 - Age
 - Male or female
 - Where bought, found, etc.
 - Breed and coloration/morph
 - Where does this animal originate from?
 - Are they nocturnal/diurnal/crepuscular?

General Care

- Does your pet get any special enrichment?
- How often do you clean their cage?
- Do you take them out to explore or do they stay in their enclosure?

Vaccinations

- Is your animal vaccinated?
- What are they vaccinated for?
- If cat or ferret, provide signed vaccination paper

Spayed/neutered

- Is animal spayed/neutered?
- If so, when and where?

Nutrition/diet

- What do you feed your pet?
- Do you have a feeding schedule?
- Do they get any treats? How often?
- **Don't forget about water!!!**
- Are there any foods they can't have?

Health

- Explain how to tell that your animal is healthy (size, eyes clear, skin/hair clean, etc.)
- If something wrong (i.e. missing toenail, blind) mention this, don't lie and say it isn't there
- Explain what happened if possible (i.e. adopted, came with before-mentioned issue)
- What you are doing to fix/adapt to the issue?

Grooming/Preparation for Show

- Did you bathe your animal before show?
- Brush hair?
- Trim nails?

A graphic of a paw print in shades of brown and tan, located in the upper left corner of the slide.

Why is YOUR animal special

- Talk about your pet!
- Why do you like them?
- What is their personality?
- Do they have a unique coloration or feature?
- Can they do any tricks?

3 - 5 minutes long

- Points deducted for every 30 seconds under or over time
- Aim for about 4 to 4-1/2 minutes long, gives you time to pause or speed up

Getting Started

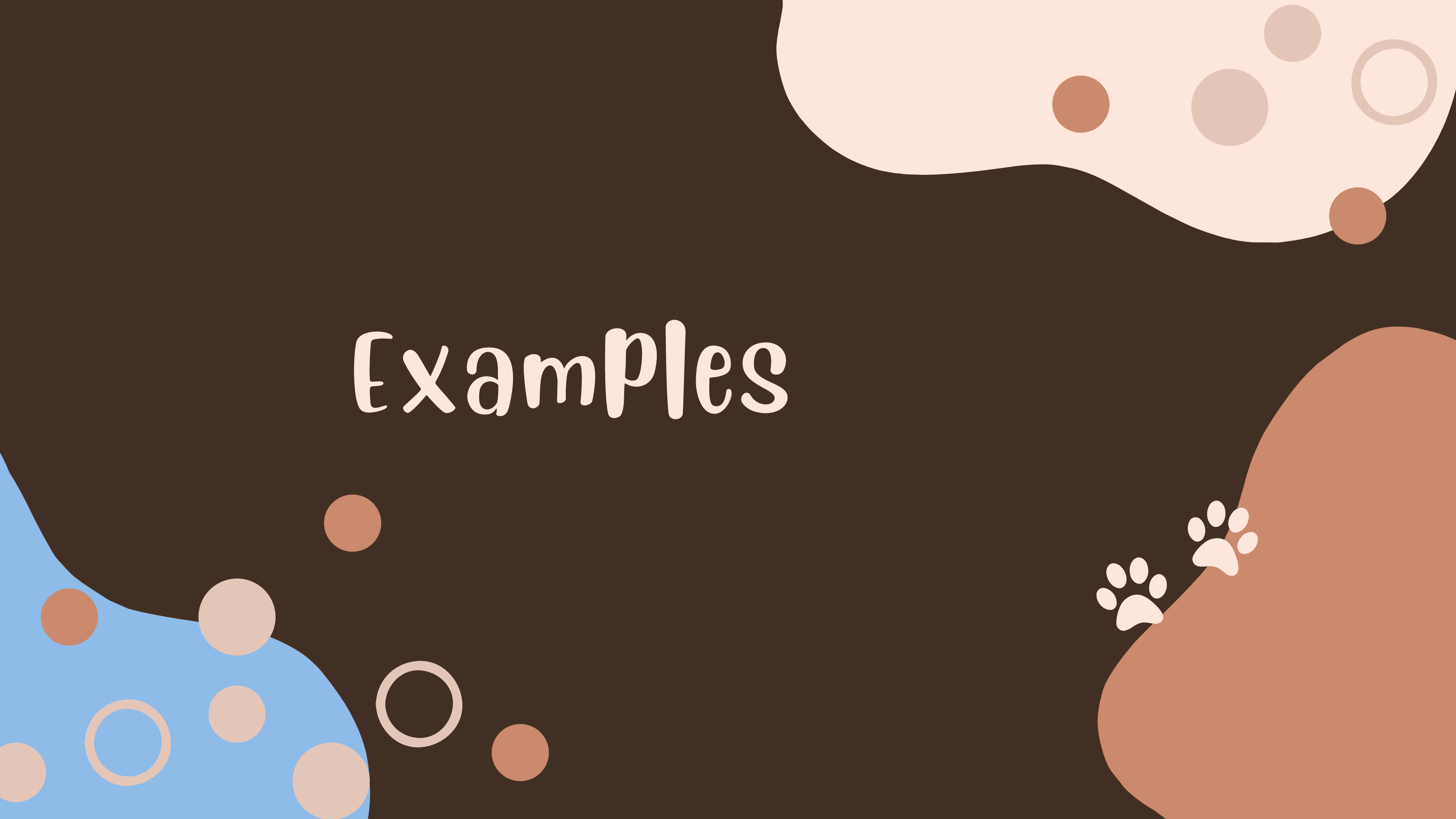


Starter Questions

Class

1. Species, breed, coloration
2. Name, age, sex
3. Diet
4. Special Needs
5. Preparation for show
6. Spayed/neutered
7. Vaccinations
8. Any health issues
9. Fun fact!

Examples



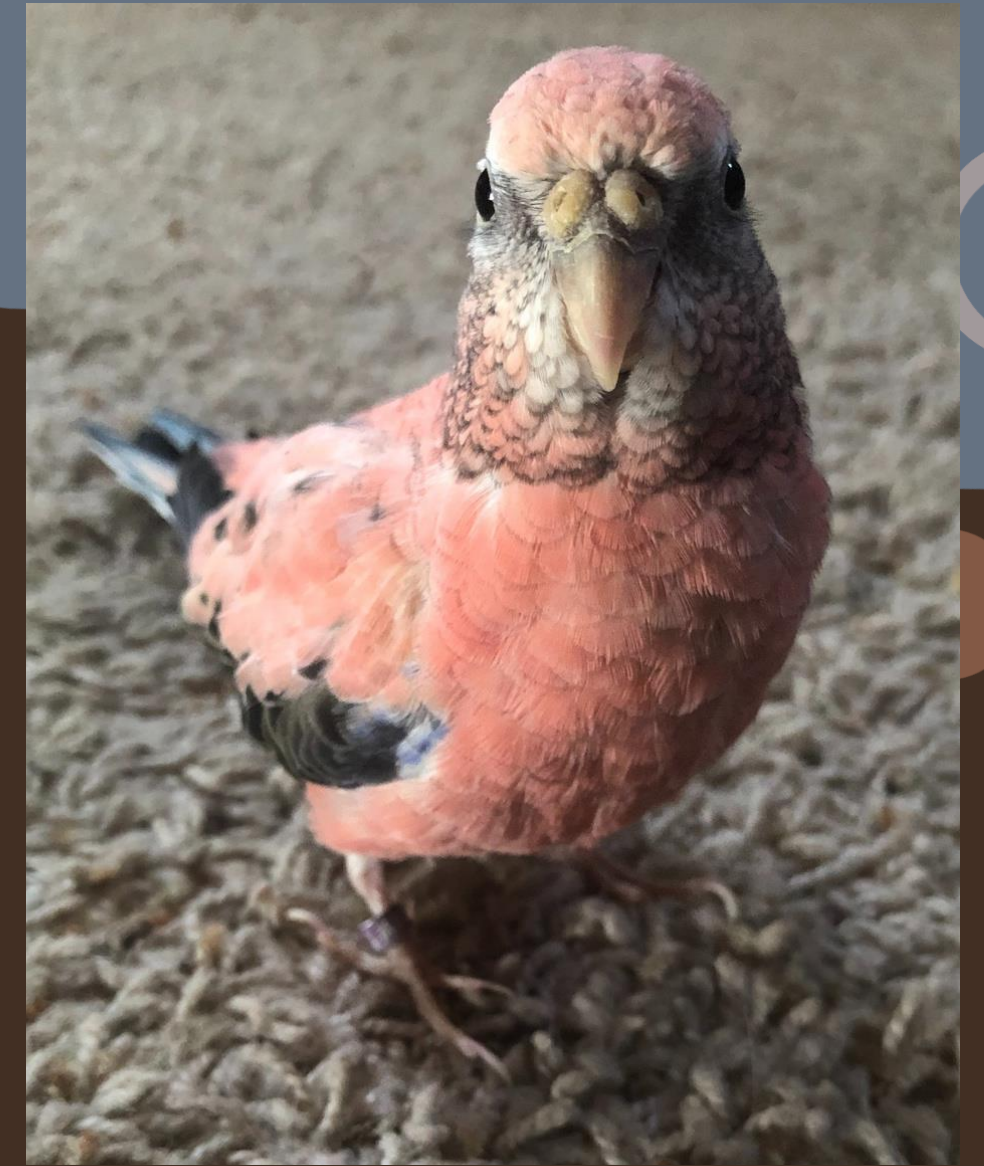
Finalized Showmanship Presentation



This is a video of my 2022 showmanship presentation with my pet leopard gecko, Apricot. I earned 1st place Senior Video Companion Animal Showmanship with this presentation. For more information, go to <https://4h.unl.edu/companion-animal-showmanship>

Bird

1. Rosy Bourke Grass Parakeet
2. Jellybean, 11 years old, male
3. Seed mix and fresh chopped veggies,
occasional dried fruit treat
4. Free access to fresh water and cuttle bone
5. Made sure both him and his cage were clean
6. Spayed/neutered: N/A
7. Vaccinations: N/A
8. Was banded as a chick, marking him as captive bred
9. Likes to dance on his perch and mimic my whistles



Reptile

1. Crested gecko, orange flame partial pinstripe
2. Coconut, 1-1/2 years old, male
3. Repashy Crested Gecko Meal, live crickets as
4. Tank must be misted each night for 60-80% humidity
5. Made sure both him and his tank were clean
6. Spayed/neutered: N/A
7. Vaccinations: N/A
8. Dropped tail at 6 mo. old, now a frogbutt, as Crested gecko tails don't grow back
9. Enjoys jumping from one side of tank to another, nocturnal



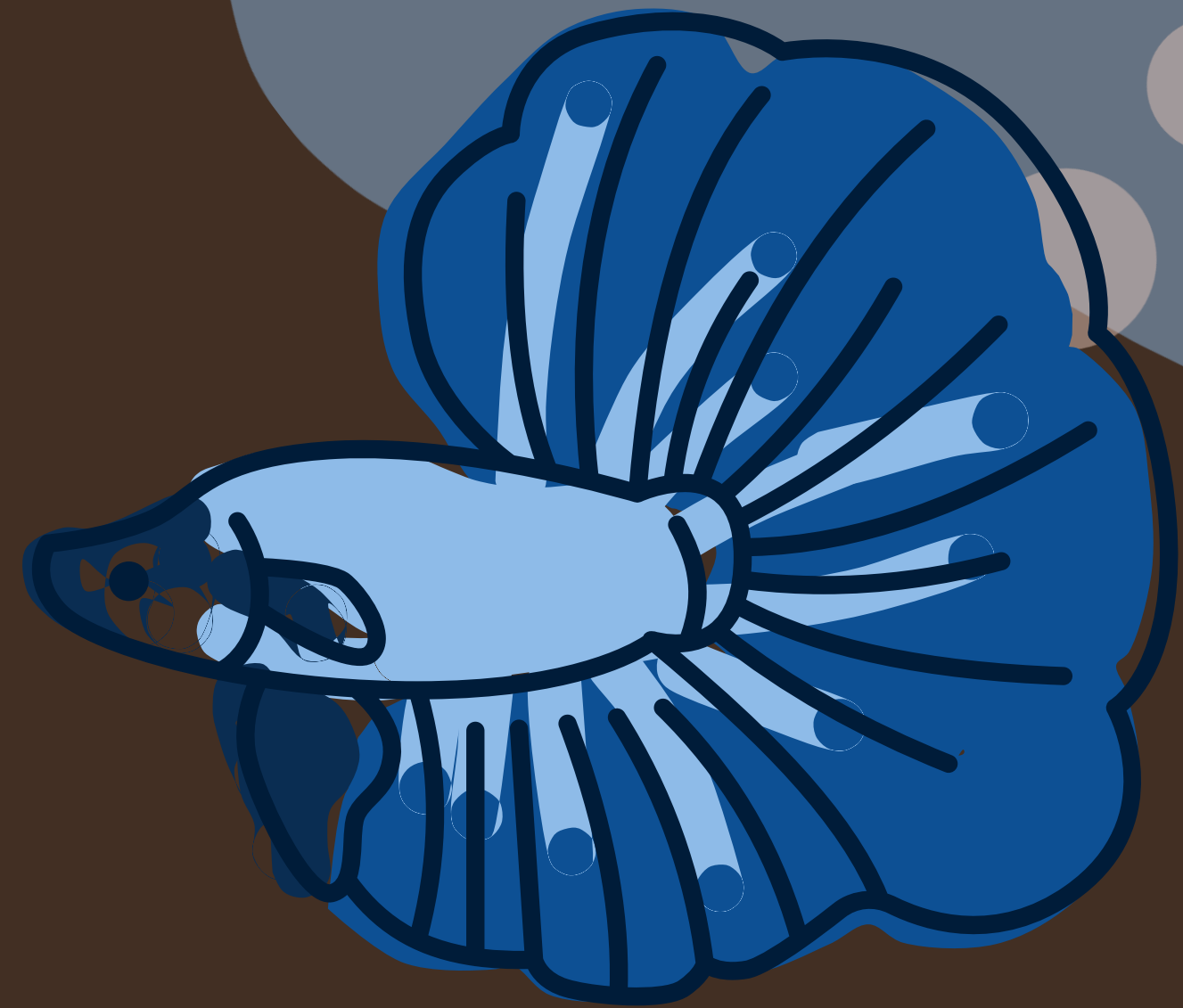
Guinea Pig

1. American Guinea Pig, tortoiseshell and white
2. Jiggy, 4 years old, male
3. Guinea pig pellets, hay, fresh water
4. LOTS of attention
5. Make sure he is clean, nails trimmed, brushed
6. Spayed/neutered: No
7. Vaccinations: No
8. Give sticks and paper towel rolls to prevent malocclusion
9. Squeals when wants attention



Other - fish

1. Veil-tail Blue Betta Fish
2. Indigo, 3 years old, male
3. Betta protein pellets
4. Uncirculated water
5. Made sure tank was clean
6. Spayed/neutered: N/A
7. Vaccinations: N/A
8. Any health issues: N/A
9. Will flare when I talk to him, likes to sleep on leaf of fake plant



Mouse

1. Mouse, broken fawn
2. Sunstrike, 1 year old
3. Mixed seeds
4. Special Needs
5. Preparation for show: None
6. Spayed/neutered: N/A
7. Vaccinations: N/A
8. Cardboard and sticks to prevent malocclusion
9. Enjoys exploring on hands when held, unique colors



Other - Rabbit

1. Lionhead rabbit, sable point
2. Lightning, 6 years old
3. Rabbit pellets, timothy hay, and fresh water
4. Exercised at least once a week
5. Trimmed nails and brush hair
6. Spayed/neutered: No
7. Vaccinations: N/A
8. Given toys to chew to prevent malocclusion, and brushed to prevent hairballs
9. He likes to binky (jumping straight up and twisting) when excited



Cat

1. American Shorthair cat, black and white cap and saddle
2. Holly, 6 years old
3. Meow Mix dry cat food, fresh water
4. None
5. Bathed and brushed
6. Spayed
7. Yes, see vaccination sheet
8. Declawed in front
9. Loves to watch water go down tub drain



Resources

For more information on Nebraska 4-H Companion Animal Programming, go to:

- <https://4h.unl.edu/companion-animal>

To learn more about the Nebraska 4-H Video Companion Animal Showmanship Contest, go to:

- <https://4h.unl.edu/companion-animal-showmanship>