

Hatching Good Lessons

Alternatives To School Hatching Projects



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Hatching Good Lessons is a guide booklet for elementary school teachers and other educators including parents. Following a brief overview of the problems involved with classroom bird-hatching and mechanical incubation, you'll find a variety of exciting learning activities for students in grades K-6 on the development and life of chickens and other birds. In addition to the activities presented in this booklet, we invite you to visit www.upc-online.org/hatching/ for more program ideas.

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Photo: Davida G. Breier

Why Choose Alternatives to Chick-Hatching Projects?

Some teachers place fertilized eggs in classroom incubators to be hatched within three or four weeks as a lesson in embryonic development. Chickens, ducks and quails are typically used in these projects. We urge teachers to replace bird-hatching projects with learning activities that teach life processes without the use of live animals.

Hatching projects encourage the view that animals are disposable objects instead of requiring a lifetime of care and commitment. They encourage children to want to bring more baby animals into the world, like litters of puppies and kittens no one wants when the animals grow up. They place a burden on animal shelters and busy parents who can't keep the birds, and zoning ordinances often prohibit the keeping of chickens, particularly roosters, even though more than half of all surviving chickens are likely to be roosters. And while children should be learning the importance of veterinary care for animals who depend on them, most schools do not provide veterinary care for the many birds born sick and deformed in these projects.

Hatching-project birds are deprived of a mother hen. This is a big reason why so many classroom chicks are sickly, dehydrated and crippled at birth. Chick organs often stick to the sides of the shell as a result of not being turned properly in the mechanical incubator. By contrast, a mother hen turns each of her eggs, individually, as often as 30 times a day, using her body, her feet and her beak to move each egg precisely to maintain the proper temperature, moisture, ventilation, humidity and positioning of each embryo she is sitting on. The embryo signals its needs to her, and the hen responds with the necessary adjustment of her eggs.

Salmonella infection of students and teachers is also a factor. More and more children have egg allergies and complications of seasonal flues and vaccines. Dr. Pascal James Imperato, dean of the Graduate Program in Public Health at the State University of New York, says due to "insufficient regulation of the poultry industry," *Salmonella* is "widespread among chickens and other poultry." **The risk of infection, he says, is "especially high for young children who come into contact with baby chicks and ducklings"** ("Salmonella Common in U.S. Poultry," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 23, 2009).

For all of these reasons, teachers are strongly encouraged to replace hatching projects with programs and activities that teach life cycles and inspire students to appreciate, respect, and learn about the amazing life of birds on our planet and in their own neighborhoods.

Classroom programs, activities and products follow. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Classroom Programs * Activities * Products



Activity Worksheet Basics

Do You Know?

Why Roosters Crow?

A. Chickens evolved in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia. Perched in the trees and sensitive to infrared light, they see sunrise almost an hour before we do. During the day, chickens break into small subgroups to forage on the forest floor. Through the dense foliage, the roosters in each subgroup crow back and forth to keep track of one another and send out alerts. Scientists call these communications “locater crows.” As protectors of the flock, roosters are always on the lookout.

Why Hens Lay Eggs?

A. Like all female birds, hens lay eggs in order to hatch chicks so that the species will continue through new generations. In nature, hens and roosters live together in flocks, so wild hens’ eggs are usually fertile. That means there’s an embryo growing inside the egg.

Why Hens Hide Their Eggs?

A. Hens hide their eggs to protect the embryos growing inside from predators – animals such as foxes, raccoons or hawks who would steal the eggs and eat them. In nature, the hen and rooster go together to look for and scoop out a ground nest that will camouflage the hen while she sits on her eggs for 21 days of incubation.

Why Chickens Sunbathe?

A. Chickens – hens, roosters and their chicks – sunbathe regularly in order to obtain vitamin D from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Lying on the ground, chickens spread out their wings, one wing at a time, and raise their feathers up from their skin, so that the sunlight can reach their skin to aid their absorption of calcium and phosphorus.

Why Chickens Preen?

A. Chickens have a preen oil gland at the base of their tail. The oil makes their feathers water resistant. With their beaks, chickens distribute the oil from this gland through their feathers and skin to protect their skin from getting wet. (Remember that chickens evolved in a wet tropical forest habitat. By contrast, desert-dwelling birds such as ostriches and emus don’t have a preen oil gland.) Preen oil also enables chickens to convert vitamin D from the sun into the form they need to keep their bones strong and healthy.

Why Chickens Dustbathe?

A. Chickens, turkeys and other groundnesting birds dustbathe to clean and refresh themselves. They create little dustbowls in the earth, loosening the dirt around themselves with their beaks and claws to distribute the dirt particles through their feathers and skin. This practice enables them to remove built-up preen oil, dead skin (dander), and skin irritants, such as mites. Dustbathing helps chickens keep their feathers (their plumage) soft and strong and shiny.

Fact or Fiction?

Chickens are birds. *Yes. Chickens are groundnesting birds known as galliforms, which literally means “cock-shaped.”*

Hens lay more eggs in the spring and early summer. *Yes. Spring and early summer are the best time of year for hens to raise their young. Daylight hours are long, the weather is warm, and the earth is richest at this time of year with the nutrients chicks need to grow strong and healthy – bugs, worms, grasses, seeds, soil, and leafy greens.*



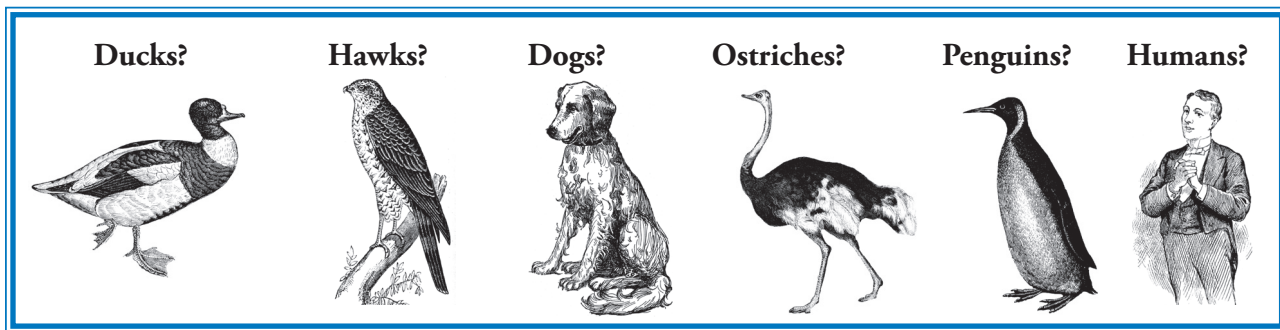
Chickens can fly. *Yes. Most chickens can fly short distances. They fly in an arc up to perches, such as tree limbs and fence posts, then down again. At night, chickens prefer to perch together high off the ground.*

Chickens eat grass. *Yes. As well as eating bugs, worms, seeds and grains, chickens eat grass and leafy greens for vitamin A & other nutrients.*

Chickens see colors. *Yes. Chickens have full-spectrum color vision including infrared and ultraviolet perception. Chickens see morning sunlight almost an hour before we do. This is because chickens can see the infrared end of the color spectrum, which is invisible to humans.*

Chickens have good ears. *Yes. Chickens have very keen ears. Good hearing is necessary to birds and other animals living in the dense foliage of a tropical forest, also known as the jungle. Since jungle dwellers can't always see each other through the leaves, they can hear and communicate with each other through hearing. This is why chickens, parrots, peacocks, monkeys and many other jungle residents scream, crow, cry, screech, and call to one another with very loud, raucous voices. This evolutionary trait persists even when they are removed from their natural habitat to other environments.*

How Are Chickens Different From? How Are Chickens the Same As?



Bird Words & Chicken Diction: Form and Function Activity

Ask your students to define each word. Then ask them to connect each noun (form, thing) with appropriate verbs (function, activity). Next, ask them to write short sentences linking these words – form and function – together in a meaningful way. For example, “A chick *embryo* grows inside an egg.” “A *chick* hatches from an egg.” “Chickens *peck* with their *beaks*.” “Chickens *preen* their *feathers* with their *beaks*.” “*Chicks* *peep* to their moms.” “*Hens* *cluck* to their chicks.” “*Roosters* *crow* before sunrise.” “*Chickens* *roost* at night.” “Chickens *perch* in *trees*.” “Chickens *dig* with their *claws*.”

Next, ask each student to say one of his or her sentences out loud in front of the class and explain out loud why this particular sentence, combining form and function, makes sense.

Finally, have your students create a Big Book or a giant poster in which each word is represented pictorially in its proper place within the whole scene.

(Nouns)	Egg	Claws
Chick	Embryo	Feathers
Rooster	Beak	Wings
Hen	Legs	Trees



(Verbs)	Cluck	Preen
Grow	Crow	Perch
Hatch	Dig	Roost
Peep	Fly	Peck

Chick Life Cycle Exploration Set

Ages 5-9

Grades K+

Crack open this set of 21 eggs and see the day-by-day development of a chick. No incubator required!

Contact Learning Resources: 800-333-8281 or order directly from:

<http://www.learningresources.com/product/chick+life+cycle+exploration+set.do> or <http://bit.ly/bZkp3Q>

Features realistic illustrations of a developing chick in eggs 1-20. Plastic 3-D chick inside the final egg.

Invites children to make hands-on connections to life sciences and life cycles.

Reinforces concepts and related vocabulary with multilingual Activity Guide that includes definitions, chicken facts and a blackline master to label.

Allows for self-checking and easy organization with numbered label on each egg and numbered places in storage tray.

Durable plastic eggs measure 2.75”L each. Plastic tray measures 15”L x 8.5”W.

Product Package Includes:

- 21 durable plastic eggs with stages of embryonic development
- Plastic 3-D chick in the final egg
- Plastic storage tray
- Multilingual Activity Guide with diagram, definitions and facts



Where Does the Chick Belong?

A. *The Embryo*

Step 1. After looking at the development of chick embryos in different media (Chick Life Cycle Exploration Set, videos, books), have each student or team of students draw a specific stage of the chick's development inside the egg – first by looking at a picture or model; next from memory. For example:

- Day 1 when the egg has been laid and the yolk is clear
- Day 3 when blood vessels begin to show
- Day 6 when the eye and beak appear



Photo: Davida G. Breier

- Day 9 when the chick is starting to look like a little bird
- Day 18 when the chick is almost ready to hatch

Caution your students, “Do not tell your classmates which stage yours is. Others in the class must guess which stage you drew.”

Step 2. Next, ask your students to put their embryo drawings inside empty eggshell drawings in the proper sequence. This activity teaches young students to learn by drawing a phase of embryonic development whose accuracy will be tested by the ability of their classmates to identify it correctly. The activity tests students’ ability to represent a specific stage of avian embryology and to place each stage in sequence. While learning by doing, young students have the fun of playing a Guessing Game!

Step 3. Now ask your student to explain WHY this developmental sequence makes biological sense. For example, why do the heart and blood vessels need to develop before the chick’s eye and beak?

B. The Chicken

Step 1. Do a Big Book or Poster by placing drawings and photos of chickens in various parts of a fenced yard or in their natural jungle habitat, doing “chicken” things: digging in the ground with their claws and beaks for food, sunbathing, dustbathing, crowing, clucking, walking and running.

Step 2. Have your students put other things in the yard that complete the picture ecologically: crawling bugs, flying insects, worms underground, other species of birds, plants and roots, sunshine, bushes, grass, trees, a chicken house. Ask your students to explain, orally and in a couple of sentences, how all of these elements interact ecologically. For example, one student could explain how the worms fit into the picture, another how sunshine and chickens “connect.”

Each Big Book should include a Picture and a 2-sentence Verbal Statement describing what the picture is intended to show. The Picture should illustrate the Verbal Statement, and the Verbal Statement should describe the Picture. This teaches young students to show and share information in two interrelated mediums: Words and Artwork.

C. Chickens’ Daily Life Has a Sequence of Activities:

- Crowing – Cock-a-Doodle-Do! Wake up!
- Searching – scratching & digging – for food in the morning.
- Sunbathing and dustbathing in the early to mid-afternoon.
- Searching for food in the late afternoon.
- Going to roost in the evening.
- Sleeping close together all night long.



Ask your students: “Why does this daily sequence of activities make sense for chickens?” Compare and contrast the daily pattern of chickens’ activities with that of other birds or with yourself.

Bird Watching: Observational Journals & Bird Feeders

Level: Grades 2 to 6

Duration: Four to Six Weeks

Humane Education Committee-United Federation of Teachers

This unit explores the problems with classroom chick-hatching projects and presents a variety of alternative projects for young students that focus on bird-watching activities. The goal is to involve young students in the exciting and highly motivating study of birds in their natural environments while developing their skills of precise observation, recording, and analysis of what they see and hear, both verbally and pictorially. Here are two Activities from the unit. For the entire unit, go to www.upc-online.org/hatching/.



I. Activity: Observational Journals

Your bird unit will rely on your students' observational skills, so an observational journal is very helpful. All children can maintain some kind of a journal. An observational journal includes illustrations as well as words. It includes questions as well as statements. Students can make their own notebooks for this purpose. Younger children enjoy making their own bird-shaped notebooks which they can trace from your template.

In recording information in an observational journal, children learn to collect observational data and begin to make comparisons over time. Students should make entries in their observational journals on a regular basis, at least twice a week for a month. If you are also asking children to make seasonal comparisons, you can decide as a class when to do follow-up observations and enter dates on your class reminder calendar. An example of an observational journal page follows, but create a format that suits the interests and abilities of your students.

Bird Observation

Date: _____

What I See: _____

My Illustration:

II. Activity: Bird Feeders

Build one or more bird feeders near your school and observe the birds from a respectful distance using binoculars.



- Make bird feeders by smearing pinecones with peanut butter. Then roll them in a birdseed mix. Use cord around the top for a hanger.
- Clean large plastic jugs very well. Decorate the outside of the jug with non-toxic permanent markers. Suspend from a cord. Fill with mixed bird seed.
- Suspend plastic salad bowls or wooden salad bowls from cords. Fill them with birdseed.

Note: Be sure to remove the cords and remaining materials from the tree when this project is over. If you have started this project in the fall or winter, be sure to feed the birds until spring when they can more easily locate another food source.

Bird Ecology Projects: Three Cornell University Programs

Cornell Ornithology Lab, an international bird-study center, offers direct observation programs for the classroom.



Three excellent programs developed by the Cornell Ornithology Center – Celebrate Urban Birds, Project FeederWatch, and BirdSleuth – invite young students to learn about the many kinds of birds in their communities. Classroom projects, videos, sign-ups and more are on their websites.

The goal is to involve students and teachers in the exciting, highly motivating, awe-inspiring study of birds in their natural, outdoor environments. It is hoped that students and teachers will come to appreciate the value of observing birds in nature as living beings deserving of our respect rather than as “specimens” in a mechanistic incubator project.



Celebrate Urban Birds

Pigeons are one of the 15 focal species for data collection. Besides collecting data for these 15 birds, Celebrate Urban Birds helps participants in urban areas learn how to appreciate birds through the arts and attract birds by teaching small space gardening practices.

Urban Bird Studies
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
Phone: (607) 254-2455
Email: kap7@cornell.edu
Website: www.celebrateurbanbirds.org

Project FeederWatch

In the U.S.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Phone: (607) 254-2427 or (800) 843-2473 (BIRD)
Email: feederwatch@cornell.edu
Website: www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw

In Canada

Project FeederWatch
Bird Studies Canada
PO Box 160
Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0
Phone: (519) 586-3531 or (888) 448-2473 (BIRD)
Email: pfw@bsc-eoc.org
Website: www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw

Inquiry Science: BirdSleuth

www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/inquiry-resources
Call: (800) 843-2473 (BIRD)

Grades K-12

Need help with student inquiry? Cornell University Lab of Ornithology created this online module to help. This free module includes lesson plans, journal pages, and online resources that will help your students ask scientific questions, craft and test hypotheses, collect and organize data, draw meaningful conclusions, and publish their work. This module will help support you as you support your students through the step-by-step process! You can use this module to get started teaching about birds – or use it as the perfect capstone for any of the other BirdSleuth modules.



Chicken Talk: The Language of Chickens

By Karen Davis

Our rooster, Glippie, sings on the roof of his house, adding to the music of the yard a steady, quiet trill. Living with chickens has made me realize how tuneful and talkative these fascinating birds are. The language of chickens is an essential part of their personalities and of their highly developed social life. Chickens start talking even before they are born.

Peep! About twenty-four hours before a chick is ready to hatch, it starts peeping to notify its mother and siblings it is ready to emerge from its shell. This activity, which biologists call “clicking,” helps synchronize the hatching of the baby chicks. A communication network is established among the chicks, and between the chicks and their mother, who must stay calm and unruffled for as long as two days while all the peeping, sawing, and breaking of eggs goes on underneath her. Since some of the chicks may have aborted in the shell during incubation, the peeps inform her how long she needs to continue sitting on the nest.

Peeps and clucks. As soon as all the eggs are hatched, the hungry mother and her brood go forth eagerly to eat, drink, scratch and explore.

The chicks venture away from their mother, communicating back and forth all the while by peeps and clucks. The hen keeps track of her little ones by counting the peeps of each chick and noting the emotional tones of their voices.

When a chick becomes separated from its mother, it gives a distress call, and the mother hen dashes out to find it and, if the chick is in danger, to deliver it—hopefully—from the hole in the ground, tangled foliage, or threatening predator.

Nesting calls. When a hen is ready to lay an egg, she gives a pre-laying, or nesting, call, inviting her mate to join her in finding a nest site.

Together, the hen and rooster find and create a nest by pulling and flinging around themselves twigs, feathers, hay, leaves and loose dirt, after they have scraped a depression with their beaks and feet. But first comes the search.



Primeval grumbling growls and gentle squawks.

When the rooster finds a place he likes (under a log, perhaps), he settles into it and rocks from side to side, while turning in a slow circle and uttering primeval grumbling growls which may or may not convince the hen that this is the place. She may accept it, or they may look for another site.

Throughout the search, the hen squawks gently with her beak open, followed by a series of short squawks of diminishing intensity, to keep the rooster coming back to her while she is away from the protection of the flock.

Egg cackles. Upon laying her egg, the hen gives out an egg cackle to announce her happy accomplishment. This brings the rooster quickly to her side, and together they rejoin the flock.

To human ears, the egg cackle resembles the chicken's cry of alarm, but to the birds there's a clear difference. A hen with chicks will continue feeding during the egg call, but will dart for cover when the alarm call goes out.

“... comfortable sounds, chirps and a sweet singing that is full of contentment.”

The “come over here” squawk. Often I have heard one of our hens call out to her rooster partner: “I’m all alone. Get over here!” Our normally quiet hen, Petal, raised a ruckus if her adored Jules was out of her sight for long, even if she had not just laid an egg. Her otherwise demure little voice became *SQUAWK, SQUAWK, SQUAWK*. Hearing Petal, Jules would lift his head up, straighten up, mutter to himself in what can only be described as Chicken Talk, and do an about-face. Off he’d go to comfort Petal. Silence.

Cock-a-doodle-doo. Why do roosters crow? Remember that chickens are originally from the jungle. Their wild relatives have lived in tropical forests for tens of thousands of years. Perched in the trees, and sensitive to infrared light, roosters see morning light at least forty-five minutes before we do.

They also have very keen ears, a distinct advantage when living amid dense foliage. It can be difficult to see a predator and keep track of one’s flock when the sub-flocks are constantly moving from place to place while feeding.

Through their crowing, every rooster can recognize the crow of at least thirty other roosters, probably more. As the protectors of the flock, roosters are always on the lookout.

A shrill cry. If a rooster spots danger, he sends up a shrill cry. The other roosters echo the cry. Thereupon, the whole flock will often start up a loud, incessant, drumbeating chorus with all members facing the direction of the first alarm, or scattering for cover in the opposite direction.

All clear? All clear! When it looks safe again, an “all clear?” query goes out from the rooster, first one, followed by the others, in their various places. Eventually, the “all clear” crow is sent up by the bird who first raised the alarm, and a series of locator crows confirms where every other rooster and his sub-flock are at this point.

The “here’s food” song! The finding of food elicits another kind of vocal communication within the flock. Roosters love to find food and call their hens to the feast while they play deferential host at the banquet. The speed and intensity of the “here’s food” song varies according to the type of delicacy and the amount.

According to a biologist, “Two or three kernels of corn elicit about half the intensity and speed between song peaks that several bugs will be granted. When the hens hear this song they and the chicks come running to check out what the rooster has found to eat.” Soon the good news is excitedly clucked to everybody to come join the party. Hens call their chicks to food in a similar clucking voice.

Soft trills and peeps. My first chicken was a crippled hen named Viva. She touched me deeply with her soft trills and peeps that seemed to come from somewhere in the center of her body, as her tail pulsed at precisely the same time. Chickens have a soft purr of contentment somewhat similar to that of a cat.

The piping voice of woe. In addition to their other vocal languages, chickens have a piping voice of woe and dreariness whenever they are bored or at a loose end. Occasionally, one of our hens has to be kept indoors for a while, perhaps because she’s recovering from an illness or because she’s a newly rescued hen who has not yet joined the flock outside. Wearily, she will wander about the rooms, fretting, or tag disconsolately and beseechingly behind me, yawning and moaning like a soul in the last stages of ennui.

A huddle of peace and well-being. As boisterous as chickens often are in the resurgent dramas of their daily life, there is a stillness in them which includes singing, often at the end of a busy day as they settle down on their perches for the night.

The historian Page Smith says of the hen in *The Chicken Book* that she is “rich in comfortable sounds, chirps and chirrs, and, when she is a young pullet, a kind of sweet singing that is full of contentment when she is clustered together with her sisters and brothers in a huddle of peace and well-being, waiting for darkness to envelop them.”

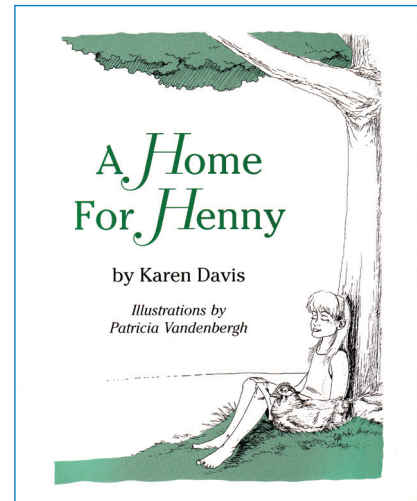
“Chicken Talk,” by Karen Davis, first appeared in the Young Friends section of *Best Friends Magazine*, published by Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah.

Books for Young Students Grades K-6

***A Home for Henny.* Grades K-4**

By Karen Davis. Illustrated by Patricia Vandenberg.

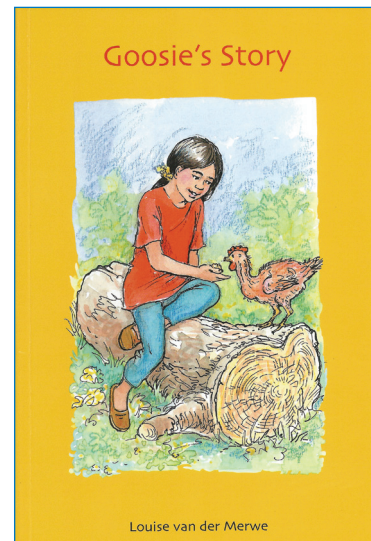
A 3rd-grade child named Melanie adopts a hatching-project chick she names Henny when the project is over. The project seemed like a good idea at first, but unexpected problems arise. *A Home for Henny* explores these problems while evoking the lively personality of Henny and her relationship with Melanie. “Henny was the first friend Melanie ever had who spoke another language and who saw the world from a different viewpoint, yet they shared so many things. One Spring day when the green leaves were starting to come out, Melanie came home from school, and there was Henny, standing on the screened-in porch, singing to beat the band. How pretty she looked among the trees, and how happy Melanie felt at that moment, knowing that Henny was her friend.” \$4.95. 40% off bulk orders of 5 (\$1.98 each) = \$9.90 for 5.



***Goosie's Story.* Grades 4-6**

By Louise van der Merwe.

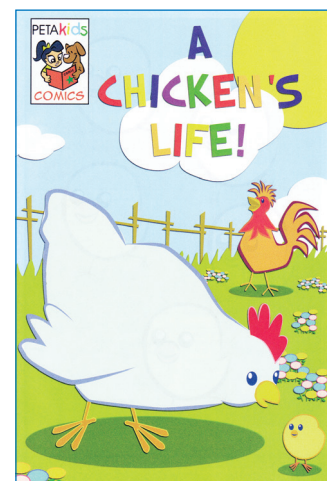
Goosie's story is about a hen from an egg factory who gets a second chance at life when a young girl named Gabrielle adopts her. “Up until that evening,” says Goosie, “I had thought that there were only three kinds of animals in the world: thousands of chickens, hundreds of rats and a few humans. But on the first night in my new home I discovered another creature altogether. . . . Gabrielle put me in the stable for the night, allowing me to roost on top of some bales of straw which were stacked in one corner. How nice that straw felt.” \$4.95.

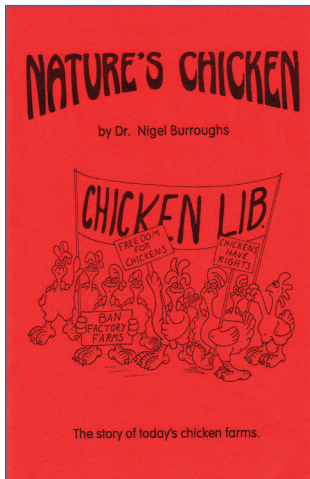


***A Chicken's Life!* Grades 4-6**

By PETAkids Comics.

This cute comic book illustrates a group of children visiting an animal sanctuary where they meet a flock of chickens and learn all about them including the differences between Nature's Way and The Factory Farm Way. “Are these chickens really your *friends*?” they ask. “I've never met a chicken before.” *A Chicken's Life* includes a puzzle for elementary school students to unscramble words including barn, beak, cluck, feathers, grass, hatch, peck, peep, wings, and lots more. \$1.50 each. 10 for \$10.



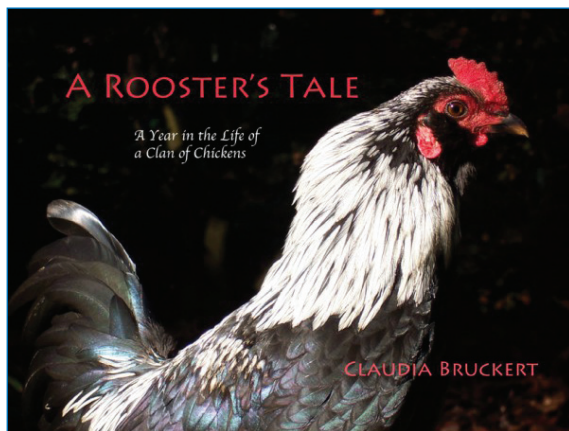
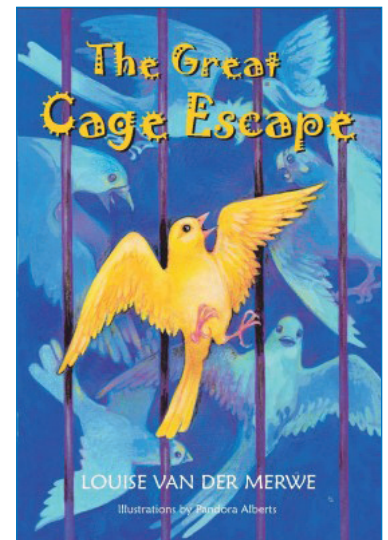


Nature's Chicken, The Story of Today's Chicken Farms.
Grades 4-6 By Nigel Burroughs.

This cleverly illustrated children's book is an informative guide to the realities of modern chicken farming. Clearly written with a touch of humor, it's a wonderful way to teach compassion and respect for animals. "Spending the whole day roaming around and scratching the ground are things chickens love doing best." \$1.50 each. 10 for \$10.

The Great Cage Escape. Grades 4-7
By Louise Van Der Merwe.

The birds in a pet shop think they are happy until a brown box punched full of air holes is left overnight on their front door step. The creature inside looks very weird at first. But as his feathers begin to grow, his true identity becomes apparent, and the stories he tells inspire the pet shop birds to pull off a Great Cage Escape. This is a story that encourages respect for all forms of life and helps learners realize that heaven can be right here on earth if we choose to make it so. \$4.95.



A Rooster's Tale: A Year in the Life of a Clan of Chickens.
Grades 3-12

Story and color photos by Claudia Bruckert.
www.claudiabruckert.com

Can chickens talk? What does a rooster do all day? Would a mother hen attack a hawk? What happens within a family of chickens?

This soulful and humorous book takes the reader to a fascinating foreign world. The young rooster Change tells the real life story of his family. Enchanting events and intriguing facts, chronicled and photographed over the course of one year, convey deep insights into daily chicken life. \$20.

All books are available from United Poultry Concerns.
All prices include postage. To order indicated books,
send check or money order to:

United Poultry Concerns
PO Box 150
Machipongo, VA 23405 USA

Or order online at
www.upc-online.org/merchandise/humane_child.html.



Video Resources

Marsha the Hen

Produced by the Massachusetts SPCA (MSPCA)

Watch: http://youtu.be/T6bC_6Hs_mc

This short YouTube video features Marsha, a friendly brown hen and sole survivor of a classroom chick hatching project, who was surrendered to the MSPCA's Nevins Farm in Methuen, Massachusetts. While at the shelter, Marsha bonded with several staff members as well as with one of the shelter's adoptable goats. Meet Marsha and hear her story as told by Humane Education programs coordinator Jennifer Dupras at the farm.



Chickens at Play

Produced by United Poultry Concerns and The Image Productions

DVD 10:04 minutes. Grades K-6

\$5.00. 50% off bulk orders of 5 (\$2.50 each) = \$12.50.

Order from United Poultry Concerns.

Watch: <http://vimeo.com/13210456>

This vibrant video shows chickens at the United Poultry Concerns sanctuary in Virginia. Starting in the morning, we see them eagerly waiting to be let outside in the yard, then racing through their door to pounce on lettuce and start their day. We watch and listen to the chickens through their daily activities into the evening as, one by one, they hop up to their perches for the night. Accompanied by lively music, this DVD includes brief explanations of what the chickens are doing in particular scenes, narrated by a young child.



Our Feathered Friends - Adventures On a Chicken Farm

DVD 28 minutes. Grades K-6

Subject Areas: Science, Nature, Animals, Birds

Special Features: Photo Gallery – Downloadable Lesson Plan Guidebook

Spend a year on a farm with the chickens! From the producers of the acclaimed *City of Bees*, this DVD explores the fascinating and complex world of chickens from a child's point of view. The youngsters watch new chicks emerge in the spring and follow their progress while learning all about the birds' origins, what they eat, and how they develop. With close-up photography, vibrant music and an interactive "chicken dance," viewers of all ages will be enchanted and informed by *Our Feathered Friends*. "An excellent source for elementary science educators." - The Ohio State University



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Henny's New Friends

The Story of Henny, Penny & Sweet Pea



Photo: Karen Davis

When Henny arrived at the sanctuary for chickens, she found many new friends. However, Penny and Sweet Pea became her special pals. When they saw Henny, they chirped to her in Chicken Talk, “*Come on. We’ll show you around.*”

Penny and Sweet Pea had a terrible life before they came to the sanctuary. They spent their entire lives stuffed in a tiny wire cage. The cage was stacked among rows of cages filled with thousands of other unhappy hens in a long building like a factory warehouse full of boxes. They weren’t allowed to do anything but lay eggs and eat powdery food to be turned into more eggs. Penny and Sweet Pea never even saw the sun until they were rescued one day in March.

Three months later in June, these sad little hens were completely changed. In March, their feathers were scraggly, their combs were sickly, and their eyes were murky. They had never walked or spread their wings. They could hardly stand up, let alone fly!

Now they run around the yard on their strong little legs with snowy feathers, red combs, and bright eyes. They dart around like dancers. Their food at the “henitentiary” was horrible, like sawdust mixed with medicine. Yuk. Now they eat sunflower seeds, grass, grapes, and even spaghetti!

With fresh air, exercise, good food, and friends, Penny and Sweet Pea got so strong they could soon fly up to the roof of the chicken house and back down to the ground. Chickens don’t fly straight ahead like pigeons or geese. Instead they fly in an arc, like a rainbow. Now that they could fly, Penny and Sweet Pea began to perch in a big tree next to the kitchen porch. Imagine walking outside and seeing these two beautiful hens resting quietly in the branches of a tree!

One day, Henny flew up to the tree with her new friends. Henny, Penny and Sweet Pea are now so happy together in that tree that sometimes Karen, the director of the sanctuary, has to climb up a ladder to bring them down at night so they’ll be safe from raccoons and night owls. “*Oh, Cluck,*” they grumble when they see her coming through the branches.

One by one, she brings down Henny, Penny and Sweet Pea. She set them carefully on their perch inside the chicken house and locks the door. Soon, Henny, Penny and Sweet Pea are asleep with their heads tucked under their feathers until tomorrow. When Karen unlocks the chicken house the next morning, all the chickens come bursting out. They cover the grass like wildflowers. Henny, Penny and Sweet Pea are ready for another great day. Pola, the gorgeous red and black rooster, runs over. He stands on his tiptoes and stretches up his head. “*Cock-a-Doodle-Do!*” he cries. “*I’m here to protect Henny, Penny and Sweet Pea!*”

This story, by United Poultry Concerns president Karen Davis, is based on four actual chickens – Henny, Penny, Sweet Pea, and Pola – who came to live at the United Poultry Concerns sanctuary in Virginia. It’s a follow-up to Karen’s children’s book, *A Home for Henny*, available from United Poultry Concerns. See Books for Young Students Grades K-6, on page 12.



Photo: Karen Davis

Acknowledgements

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