

Activity Plan

Leopard gecko homes

ACTIVITY LOCATION:

- A Pets at Home store

YOU WILL NEED:

- **Leopard gecko homes** worksheet
- Pens or pencils
- Information leaflets about leopard geckos or access to the Internet
- A map of the world and/or road map
- **The 5 Welfare Needs** ([click here](#) to download a version for the wall, or [here](#) for individual cards to hand out)

PREPARATION

This activity needs to be carried out in a Pets at Home store, so you may need to plan a visit to a local store. You can find one at petsathome.com. The children could use Google Maps or a road map to plan the most direct route to get there. Check whether the store has any leopard geckos and, if not, what other reptiles it has. You can change the activity to suit the reptiles that are available.

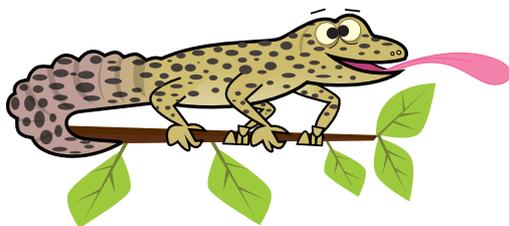
Collect printed leaflets about leopard gecko care (or a different reptile), or download and print from petsathome.com or rspca.org.uk.

Introduction

10 MINUTES

Ask the children what kind of animal humans, dogs, cats, mice and hedgehogs are (mammals). Tell them that in a pet store they are going to find out about another type of animal – reptiles. Ask if they know how reptiles are different from mammals. (They are cold-blooded, which means that their bodies need warmth from the environment in order to keep warm.) Introduce the reptile they are going to find out about. You could tell them where it comes from. The leopard gecko comes from rocky, dry grassland and desert regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan, north-west India and Iran. The children could find these countries on a map and describe their location in the world and what this tells them about their climate.

Explain that mountains and distance from the sea also affect climate in these places, which can have very high temperatures in the daytime. Leopard geckos stay in their burrows during the day but come out at dawn and dusk when it's not too hot. It can be quite cool in the winter – below 10°C. That is when they stay underground and live in semi-hibernation, using their fat reserves for food.



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At the Pets at Home store, give each group of children a copy of **The 5 Welfare Needs** and tell them that anyone who keeps animals should provide all these. Tell them that their task will be to find out how to do this for leopard geckos (or another reptile).

Take them to look at the reptile section of Pets at Home. (Remind them not to tap on the vivarium, because this might frighten the animals).

Ask them to find out:

- What leopard geckos eat and how to store their food
- How to stop them escaping
- The kind of environment that suits them, including temperature, moisture and what they walk on
- How to keep their environment clean
- How to tell if they are ill
- What they like to do
- Whether they should live with other animals/other leopard geckos
- How long they live
- What equipment you need

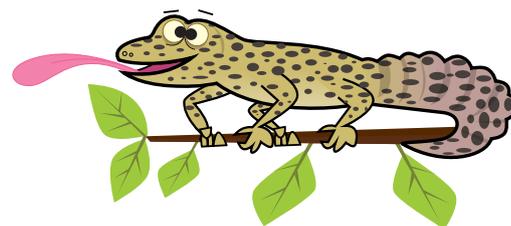
Emphasise that reptiles shouldn't be handled often, and it's important to wash your hands afterwards as they can carry salmonella. The worksheet **Leopard gecko homes** can be completed during or after the visit.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- Science (KS2)
- Citizenship (KS2)
- English (KS2)
- Geography (KS2)

Discussion**10 MINUTES**

Ask the group about anything surprising that they found out about leopard geckos, whether they would consider one as a pet, and why. Underline that geckos and other exotic pets are harder to keep than rabbits or hamsters, and potential owners must make sure they understand and can meet their needs.

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