

The scientific name for the guinea pig is *Cavia porcellus*

Guinea pigs come from South America but are kept as pets all over the world. Some people breed them so they can re-sell the young ones to earn money. Guinea pigs have a greenish-grey or brown fur normally, but because of interbreeding and cross breeding you will find white, brown, black and mixed colour pigs.

In the wild they live in forests, savannas and swamps. They burrow and come out mainly at night for feeding. They will enjoy greens, fruits and vegetables.



Guinea pigs eyes are beautiful, but with all their charm it has not stopped scientists from using this animal for scientific purposes, like medical research. The eyes of a healthy guinea pig should be bright and alert with no sign of discharge or cloudiness. The eyesight of a guinea pig is extremely good at picking up quick movements. Birds of prey are among their natural predators.



Guinea pigs have four toes on each front foot and three toes on each back foot. Wild guinea pigs can run very fast. Guinea pigs bred in cages are a lot slower. When you listen to a guinea pig you can hear the squeaky talking noises they make.

The male guinea pigs are ready to breed when they are only a few weeks old. Females need to be a little older before they are mature enough to carry their young. They live about six years if looked after properly. They enjoy eating fresh vegetables and fruits and appreciate a clean bed of straw or hay in a well-sheltered hutch. Did you know that the Indians of the Andes in South America rear guinea pigs for food? They like eating them just like you may eat chicken meat.



Biological Data

females	sows
males	boars
normal body temperature	38. 6°C (101°F)
heart beats per minute	280
normal respiration rate	80 per minute
weight adult boar	900-1180g
weight adult sow	860- 900g
birth weight	57-85g
life span	5-8 years
daylight requirement	10- 12 hours
litter size	2-4 at first, 3-8 subsequent litters

Different breeds

There are many different breeds. Guinea pigs can have long fur, short fur, crowns and many other distinct features. Some guinea pigs can look ugly to some people but when you look at them closely or even far away you will see that they always have some very pretty features and special characteristics.



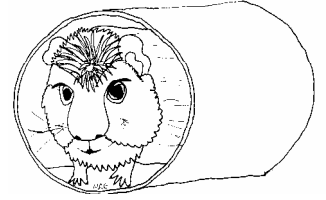
SHORT HAIREDBREEDS	Rex
	Satin
	Standard Self

ROUGH COATEDBREEDS	Abyssinian
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SMOOTH COATEDBREEDS	Agouti
	Crested
	Dutch
	Himalayan (Standard&Crested)

LONG COATEDBREEDS	Coronet
	Peruvian
	Sheltie

RARE BREEDS	Alpaca
	Argenti
	Bicolour
	Brindle
	Dalmatian
	Harlequin
	Magpie
	Merino
	Roan
	Texel
	Tortoiseshell



Name _____

Write the guinea pig breed in each box!

Long coated breeds		

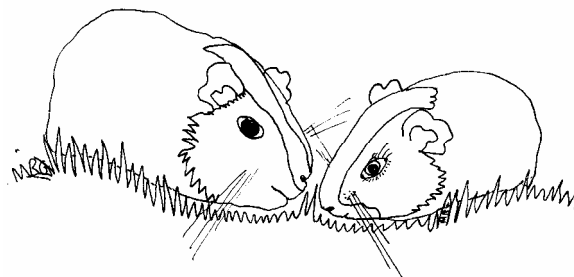
Short haired breeds		

Smooth coated breeds			

Name_____

Complete the biological data list!

female	
male	
normal body temperature	
heart beats per minute	
normal respiration rate	
weight adult boar	
weight adult sow	
birth weight	
life span	
daylight requirement	
litter size	



Learn about guinea pigs - General Knowledge, chapter 7

The following outcomes could be achieved by completing the entire guinea pig theme; *beat boredom, breeding, caring for guinea pigs, diseases and disorders, feeding guinea pigs healthy foods, feeding guinea pigs unhealthy foods, general knowledge, holding guinea pigs, housing guinea pigs, males and females, photos, taming guinea pigs.*

English

- reading
- writing
- alphabetical order
- develop further research skills

Science

- learn about guinea pigs in captivity
- breeding, males and females
- familiarize oneself with diseases that affect guinea pigs
- breeding
- feeding habits
- biological data

Mathematics

- problem solving
- learn about data

Health

- personal hygiene when handling animals
- guinea pig health related issues

Technology

- design, cage and feeding utensils
- research using the Internet
- basic computer knowledge
- Use of camera (or digital camera)

Art

- design and layout
- creative playtime planning for pets
- drawing

Cross curricula based learning
