



Yehudis and the Class Hamster

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities

Yehudis and the Class Hamster

On Thursday, Morah Aliza holds up a small cage. Inside, a fluffy brown hamster is running on a wheel.

"This is Nibbles," she says. "He's our class pet. And every weekend, one of you will take him home to take care of him. This week's helper is Yehudis."

Yehudis's eyes light up. "Me?"

"You. I know you'll do a wonderful job."

All afternoon, Yehudis can barely sit still. She reads the care card Morah Aliza gives her: Fresh water every day. A small scoop of food in the morning and at night. Clean the cage on Sunday. Keep him away from drafts. Give him quiet time.

"Do you think I can do it?" she asks her mother at home.

"I think so. Let's make a chart."

They draw a big chart with the days of the week and a box next to each task. Water. Food. Play. Quiet time. Yehudis hangs it on the wall next to the cage.

On Friday night, Nibbles runs on his wheel until bedtime. The squeaky sound makes Yehudis giggle. She has never had a pet before. She puts her hand near the bars, and he sniffs her fingers with a twitchy little nose.

On Shabbos morning, she wakes up early. She checks his water. It is low. She fills the little bottle with fresh water. Then she measures out a scoop of food and sprinkles it into his dish.

"Good morning, Nibbles," she says.

But as the day goes on, she notices something. Nibbles seems sleepy, curled in a ball in his little house. He doesn't run on the wheel at all.

"He's not moving," she says to her mother, worried.

"Maybe he's just resting," says Mommy. "Hamsters sleep a lot during the day. They're awake at night."

Yehudis feels silly. She puts a little blanket over the top of the cage to make it dark and quiet. Then she tiptoes away.

That night, at about nine o'clock, a loud squeak echoes from the cage. She runs in. Nibbles is spinning on his wheel like a tiny racecar, with his cheeks stuffed with food.

"There you are!" she laughs.

On Sunday, she and Mommy clean the cage. Yehudis takes out the old bedding and puts in new, soft shavings. She wipes down the wheel. Nibbles sniffs the fresh cage, then runs into his little house and out again, over and over.

"I think he likes it," says Yehudis.

On Monday, she carries the cage back to school, wrapped in a blanket to keep it warm. Morah Aliza looks it over. "Everything looks perfect. Did you have any trouble?"

"Just one thing," says Yehudis. "He sleeps in the daytime. I didn't know that."

"That's a good thing to learn," says Morah Aliza. "You asked and figured it out. That's what a good caretaker does."

All the girls crowd around to see him.

"Tell us everything!" says Tzivia.

Yehudis describes the wheel, the cheeks stuffed with food, and the squeak at nine o'clock. The other girls hang on every word.

Later, Morah Aliza pulls her aside. "Yehudis, you took such good care of him. I'd like you to be the head hamster helper. You can teach the next child what to do."

Yehudis glows. "I'd love to!"

That night, she writes a little note for the next girl: Nibbles sleeps in the day. Don't worry. He wakes up at night. Say hi to him from me.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. What is the class hamster's name?

2. What do Yehudis and her mother make?

3. Why doesn't Nibbles run during the day?

4. What does Morah Aliza ask Yehudis to be?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Nibbles stuffs his cheeks with food at night. Fact / Guess
2. Yehudis forgets to take care of him. Fact / Guess
3. They clean the cage on Sunday. Fact / Guess
4. Yehudis writes a note for the next helper. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. What does it take to care for a pet?

2. How does Yehudis solve her worry about Nibbles?

3. What is a job you could do every day?



Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: HAMSTER, WHEEL, CAGE, WATER, CHART, CARE

T	B	M	W	H	E	E	L	W	A	L
I	A	H	R	A	F	E	M	H	A	Y
G	O	M	E	T	F	O	H	H	V	U
A	V	P	T	S	H	K	M	R	N	N
M	L	S	S	A	P	C	O	E	J	G
L	P	J	M	C	B	V	H	T	R	O
H	R	O	A	F	P	T	L	A	R	J
K	I	B	H	C	D	U	K	W	R	M
M	N	M	E	N	A	L	K	P	N	T
T	D	E	S	S	K	R	O	I	U	W
E	C	A	G	E	N	K	E	I	Y	E



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. SEAHMRT = _____

2. ELHWE = _____

3. AGCE = _____

4. ARTCH = _____

5. KLNTBAE = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'll take good care of you."

"What does he need?"

"I learned something new."



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Care Chart

Task	Done?	What I noticed
Water		
Food		
Quiet time		



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw Nibbles running on his wheel with stuffed cheeks.





Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Nibbles
2. A care chart
3. Hamsters sleep a lot during the day
4. Head hamster helper

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: HAMSTER, WHEEL, CAGE, CHART, BLANKET

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.