

Land Hermit Crab Owners Society (LHCOS)

Ethical Hermit Crab Care & Conservation

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Hermit Crab Care Basics: Classroom Context

Classroom Resources for Teachers & Educators

Provided by: Land Hermit Crab Owners Society (LHCOS)

Intended audience: Educators, librarians, homeschool instructors, and informal learning programs

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A Plain-Language Overview for Educators

What this guide is — and is not

This guide introduces basic care concepts for classroom discussion and educator understanding.

It is not:

- A step-by-step setup manual
- A substitute for full care standards
- A guarantee of outcomes for individual animals

Looking for classroom lesson plans?

This guide provides a care-focused overview for educator understanding.

For printable lesson plans, classroom activities, and structured learning materials, visit Crab Street Journal, which hosts educator-ready resources designed to complement ethical classroom discussion.

 View Hermit Crab Lesson Plans on Crab Street Journal
<https://crabstreetjournal.org/teachers-pet/>

Habitat basics (overview)

Land hermit crabs require stable environmental conditions that closely resemble their natural habitat.

At a minimum, this includes:

- Enclosure space that allows movement and burrowing
- Warm temperatures appropriate for the species
- High, stable humidity
- Deep substrate for molting and safety

Insufficient habitat conditions are one of the most common causes of classroom hermit crab deaths.

Nutrition fundamentals

Hermit crabs require a varied diet that supports growth, molting, and shell health.

Key nutritional components include:

- Protein
- Calcium and minerals
- Plant matter and variety

Commercial pellet foods alone are inadequate and often contain harmful ingredients such as copper sulfate or ethoxyquin (fish meal)..

Molting awareness

Molting allows hermit crabs to grow and regenerate body parts.

Important points for classrooms:

- Molting may take weeks or months
- Crabs may disappear underground
- Interference should never occur
- Odor or inactivity is not always a problem

Understanding molting helps prevent unnecessary disturbance and harm.

Shell needs and safety

Hermit crabs do not grow their own shells and must change shells as they grow.

Classrooms must ensure:

- Access to multiple appropriately sized shells
- Natural, unpainted shells only
- No decorative or novelty shells

Painted shells can cause chemical exposure, physical and physiological stress, and are associated with **unnecessary physical abuse** inflicted on hermit crabs during:

- Forced shell removal
- Handling and restraint
- Forced placement into painted shells.

Social needs

Most land hermit crab species are social animals.

Isolation can cause:

- Physiological Stress
- Reduced activity
- Aggression or withdrawal

Classroom discussions should include the importance of social housing when conditions allow.

Care continuity in classrooms

Inconsistent care is a leading cause of suffering.

Educators should plan for:

- Weekends
- School breaks
- Unexpected closures
- Long-term transitions

Animals should never be treated as temporary or replaceable.

Educational disclaimer

This guide is intended to support ethical understanding and classroom discussion. It does not replace professional guidance or detailed care standards.

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