

That Looks Like a Chicken!

Cut out the pictures and put them into sets: **chickens** **other birds**

How are the birds alike? Fill in the words. **They all have** _____.

They all need _____. **They all** _____.



Natural Life Cycle of Chickens

Put the different life stages of a chicken in order by writing a number in each box. Then at the back of this page, draw a diagram of a chicken's life cycle using arrows and your own pictures.



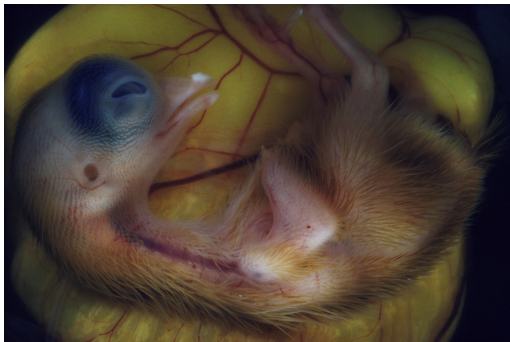
For the first 12 months of life, young female chickens are called pullets and young males are called cockerels.



The chick hatches out of the egg. It will grow all of its feathers in 6–8 weeks.



A hen lays a fertilised egg. She sits on it to keep it warm for 21 days until they are ready to hatch.



The embryo starts to grow inside the egg. It takes around 21 days to develop and then is ready to hatch.



The chick uses its 'egg tooth' at the end of its beak to make a tiny hole and then break through the shell.



At 12 months, an adult female is called a hen and a male is called a rooster.

Natural Behaviours of Chickens

Read the passage and then circle true or false for the statements.

Chickens have natural behaviours, which are things they like to do in a natural setting. These are things that make them happy and help them function properly as a chicken. Humans domesticated chickens around 10,000 years ago, so the modern-day chicken no longer lives in a natural setting. Today they usually live on farms, but they still like to perform their natural behaviours. One behaviour is dust bathing, where they roll around in the dust to clean their feathers. They also like to sunbathe to keep warm. Chickens will lie down in a warm and sunny spot and stretch out one wing and sometimes a leg. They also like to perch high on a tree branch or in a chicken coop to sleep at night. This makes them feel safe from any predators below.



Chickens perform natural behaviours, which are things that make them feel happy and function properly biologically. **true false**

Chickens were domesticated less than 10,000 years ago and can mostly be found in the wild. **true false**

Today most chickens live on farms. **true false**

Chickens roll around in the dust to get their feathers dirty. **true false**

Chickens like to keep warm by lying down in a sunny spot and stretching out their wing. **true false**

Chickens perch at night to feel safe from predators. **true false**

Chickens that live on farms do not need to perform any natural behaviours. **true false**

Amazing Mother Hens!

Chickens are very good mothers, which is how the term 'mother hen' came about! Read the passage below and then complete the writing activity.

When I was growing inside my egg, my mum sat on me to keep me warm. She clucked to me and I peeped back so I learned her voice early on. When I hatched, I already knew to listen out for her voice and follow it everywhere. She taught me how to find food and water and even let me climb on top of her with my siblings!



My Life Story

Imagine you are a chicken. Write your life story starting from the day you were hatched. Go back to the life cycle and natural behaviours activities if you need.

First _____

After that _____

Life Cycle of Chickens on a Farm

Most chickens on egg farms do not have a natural life cycle. They cannot perform many natural behaviours. Circle whether you think the statements are true or false then check the answers to see how many you got right.



When a fertilised egg is laid, it is put inside an incubator instead of being raised by its mother. **true false**

After the chicks hatch, the females (pullets) are raised to lay eggs. The males are discarded because they cannot lay any eggs. **true false**



At 16 weeks, the pullets are moved to a laying house to produce eggs in either a cage, barn or free range system. **true false**



Cage hens are confined in a very small space where they cannot spread their wings or turn around. **true false**

Cage hens are sometimes called battery hens. They never see sunlight or breathe fresh air. **true false**



Free range hens lay their eggs in the morning and then roam around outside during the day. **true false**

The average lifespan of a hen on an egg farm is only 72 weeks. **true false**

How many statements did you get right? _____. What surprised you the most? _____.

Second Chances

Some people choose to adopt ex-battery hens. These lucky hens live on farm sanctuaries and in people's homes and backyards. Read Edie's story then draw a picture of what she might look like today.



Edie's first day at her new home.

Edie spent her first 18 months on a cage farm where she never saw sunlight or stepped on grass. When she was adopted by Alex and Val she was very sick with breathing problems. The first moment she stepped out of her box, she kept moving her foot up because she wasn't used to walking on the soft dirt. After a few minutes she was already dust bathing! Edie eats a lot of vegetable scraps, leafy greens, grass and bugs. She loves to sun bathe and perch in her coop at night. She still lays eggs from time to time. Alex and Val collect them, cook them and feed them back to her (including the egg shells!) so she can get lots of healthy nutrients.

Draw a picture of Edie in her new home.