



Lesson 5: Veterinary Response Team

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, Agriculture

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 5 of 5 and serves as the culminating lesson in the *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* unit of the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on the book series by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Students explore the important role veterinarians play in keeping farm animals healthy through a final read-aloud, a Veterinary Response Team simulation, and guided writing. Students learn that the prefix un- means "not," giving them a tool for building opposites, decode patient chart words with long vowel patterns, apply capitalization rules for names and dates, and use a comma correctly when writing today's date on their veterinary report.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across the unit, purposeful final rereading, describing connections between events and information in a text, identifying the author's reasons, understanding antonyms, using the prefix un- to build opposites, decoding one-syllable words with long vowel patterns, using question words to gather information, collaborative teamwork with shared materials, decision-making based on textual evidence, hands-on simulation, capitalizing names and dates, using a comma in a date, recalling information from experience, and phonetic spelling.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

RF.1.3.b Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.

RF.1.3.c Know final -e and common vowel team patterns for representing long vowel sounds.

RI.1.3 Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

RI.1.8 Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

RI.1.11.b Use affixes to determine the meaning of a word or phrase.

W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

W.1.11.a Capitalize dates and names of people.

W.1.11.c Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series. (This lesson focuses on the date-comma application only.)

W.1.11.e Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.

National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes

Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy

T2.K-2.b Identify animals involved in agricultural production and their uses (i.e., work, meat, dairy, eggs).

T2.K-2.c Recognize that farmers and ranchers are responsible for raising animals that provide food and fiber for people.

Objectives

Agriculture Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain that farmers and ranchers sometimes need a veterinarian to help keep their animals healthy.
- Examine a toy patient using simple veterinary tools and connect the animal's symptom to an appropriate treatment.
- Identify what an animal needs to stay healthy, such as water, shade, food, or medical attention.

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the connection between veterinary care and animal health.
- Identify a reason the author gives to support why farmers and ranchers care for their animals.
- Demonstrate understanding of antonym pairs and use the prefix un- to build additional opposites.
- Decode patient chart words with the final -e long vowel pattern.
- Use question words to gather information about their patient.
- Capitalize dates and names of people on their veterinary report.
- Use a comma correctly when writing today's date on their veterinary report.
- Recall information from the simulation to complete a veterinary report.
- spell untaught words phonetically when completing their veterinary report.

Materials Needed

Final Read-Aloud:

- Book: *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson, physical copy or author read-aloud on the unit landing page

Veterinary Response Team Simulation:

- Plastic or stuffed farm animals: cow, pig, sheep, horse (one set of four per team)
- Patient charts — one per student per animal (companion document; same four cases used at every team)
- Veterinary report sheets — one per student (companion document)
- Treatment picture cards: water, bandage, feed, brush (one set per team)
- Shared veterinary tool kit per team: toy stethoscope, thermometer, bandage roll, gauze, feed bucket, water bucket, brush, flashlight
- Color-coded folders (red = cow, blue = pig, green = sheep, yellow = horse) — one folder per student containing their animal, patient chart, treatment cards, and report sheet
- Pencils and crayons
- Chart paper for modeling

Note: Organize students into teams of four. Every team receives the same four patient cases (cow, pig, sheep, horse), with each student on the team assigned a different case. All four

patient charts include a silent-e word, so every student practices the RF.1.3c pattern regardless of which case they receive: The cow has a hot nose (fever — the cow feels warm because she is sick, not because of the weather; treatment is water). The pig has a muddy face (a dirty pen or dirty water can increase the chance of an animal getting sick, so the treatment is about cleaning to prevent illness, not just tidiness). The horse has a thin mane (a sign of weakness from poor nutrition; treatment is feed). The sheep has a cut hide (treatment is a bandage). Each case is tied to a different antonym pair and treatment, so students experience the full range of opposites from Step 3. If time allows after the first case is complete, teams may trade folders within their group and complete a second case.

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know

- a. Explain to students: “This is our last lesson in the *Farmers and Ranchers Care About Their Animals!* unit. We have learned that farmers and ranchers care for their animals by sheltering them, feeding and watering them, and identifying them. Today we are going to learn about one more important way farmers and ranchers care for their animals: calling a veterinarian when an animal needs medical help. By the end of today, you are going to become veterinarians yourselves!”
- b. Ask students:
 - “What is a veterinarian? What do they do?”
 - “Have you ever taken a pet to the vet? What happened?”
 - “In our book, there was a page with a vet checking a calf. What do you remember about that page?”
- c. Explain to students: “A veterinarian, or vet for short, is a special kind of doctor — but instead of taking care of people, a vet takes care of animals. When an animal is sick, hurt, or just needs a checkup, a vet examines the animal, figures out what is wrong, and helps the animal get better. Farmers and ranchers call a vet when one of their animals needs help they cannot give on their own. Some ranchers also learn basic animal care so they can help their own animals, just like you are going to do today.”
- d. Ask students:
 - “What does a vet do for an animal?”
 - “How is a vet similar to the doctor you see when you are sick? How is it different?”

2. Final Read-Aloud

- a. Hold up the physical copy of *Farmers and Ranchers Care About Their Animals!*
- b. Quick book review: “This is our last time reading this book. Can you point to the front cover? The back cover? Where is the title page?”
- c. Set a listening purpose: “*Today, listen closely for the page about the veterinarian, and think about how what the vet does connects to keeping animals healthy.*”
- d. Read *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* aloud. Pause at two key moments. Stopping Point Suggestions (2 total, brief):
 - Stop #1 — Connection Between Vet Care and Animal Health: Page with vet using a stethoscope on the calf. Ask students:
 - “What is the vet doing to the calf in this picture?”

- “How does the vet checking on the calf connect to the calf staying healthy? Describe that connection in your own words.”
- Stop #2 — Author’s Reason: Same page, after discussing the illustration.
Ask students:
 - “What reason does the author give for why farmers make sure animals have medical care?”
 - “Why do you think this is one of the reasons farmers and ranchers care for their animals?”

Keep stops brief. This is the final read — the goal is to anchor the veterinary care concept before the simulation, not to reread the entire book in depth. Push students toward more independent responses than in kindergarten.

3. Opposites Review & the Prefix Un-

- Explain to students: “In just a few minutes, you are going to become veterinarians and help a patient of your own. But first, we need to build a few tools you’ll use during your exam. Veterinarians think about opposites all the time — when an animal is sick, a vet’s job is to help that animal reach the opposite: healthy. Today we are going to learn a new way to build an opposite: adding a small word part called a prefix to the beginning of a word.”
- The prefix un-: Explain to students: “The prefix un- means ‘not.’ If I take the word well and add un- to the front, I get unwell — which means not well, or sick.”
 - Model building opposites with un- on chart paper:
 - well → unwell — “Un- plus well means not well. A sick animal is unwell — its body is not working the way it should, and it needs a veterinarian’s help to feel better.”
 - happy → unhappy — “Un- plus happy means not happy. A hurt or scared animal might be unhappy — it may act nervous, hide, or not want to eat.”
 - clean → unclean — “Un- plus clean means not clean, or dirty. An unclean stall or water bucket can make an animal sick, because germs grow in dirty places. Keeping things clean is one way farmers and ranchers prevent illness before it starts.”
 - safe → unsafe — “Un- plus safe means not safe. A broken fence, a sharp object in the pasture, or bad weather without shelter can make a space unsafe for animals. Part of a farmer’s job is checking for anything that could make an animal’s space unsafe.”
 - Ask students:
 - “What does the prefix un- mean?”
 - “If happy means feeling good, what does unhappy mean?”
 - “Can you think of another word we could add un- to?”
- Explain to students: “In a few minutes, your own patient is going to have a problem — maybe hot, hurt, weak, dirty, or unwell. Your job as the veterinarian is to figure out the problem and help your patient reach the opposite. A sick animal with a fever needs cold water to help cool a fever. An injured animal may need a bandage to help the injury heal. A weak animal may need feed to grow strong. A dirty or unclean animal may need to be cleaned to get healthy again.”

4. Question Words for Veterinarians

- a. Explain to students: “Now that we know how to think about opposites, let’s build a second tool: good questions. Veterinarians ask a lot of questions to figure out how to help their patients. Good question words to remember are who, what, where, when, why, and how. Let’s practice asking questions as a veterinarian would.”
 - b. Model each question word with a vet-themed example:
 - “Who is my patient today?”
 - “What is wrong with my patient?”
 - “Where does it hurt?”
 - “Why does my patient need help?”
 - “How can I help my patient heal?”
 - c. Explain to students: “When you get your patient in a few minutes, ask yourself these questions. They will help you figure out how to be a good veterinarian.”
5. Long Vowel Patterns
- a. Explain to students: “There is one more tool you’ll need: the ability to read your patient chart. Some of today’s patient charts have words with long vowel sounds spelled in a special way. A long vowel sound says its own name — like the a in cake or the i in bike. Today we are going to learn one way to spell a long vowel sound: adding a silent e to the end of a word. Let’s practice decoding some patient chart words before we meet our patients.”
 - b. Final -e:
 - c. Write *man* on chart paper, without the silent e.
 - d. Explain to students: “Let’s start with the word man. M-a-n. Say it with me: man. The a makes its short sound, /ă/, like in cat.”
 - e. Add the silent e to make *mane* and explain: “Now watch what happens when I add a silent e to the end: m-a-n-e. This word is mane — the long hair on a horse’s neck. That silent e does not make its own sound, but it changes the job of the a. Instead of the short /ă/ sound, the a now says its own name, /ā/. M-ā-n, mane. One little letter at the end completely changed how we say the word.”
 - f. Write *hid* on chart paper, without the silent e.
 - g. Explain to students: “Let’s try the same thing with hid. H-i-d. Say it with me: hid. The i makes its short sound, /ĭ/, like in sit.”
 - h. Add the silent e to make hide and explain: “Now I add a silent e: h-i-d-e. This word is hide — an animal’s skin or coat. Just like with mane, the silent e changes the i from its short sound to its long sound, /ī/. H-īd, hide.”
 - i. Ask students:
 - “What job does the silent e do at the end of mane and hide?”
 - “Does the silent e make its own sound, or does it change the sound of another letter?”
 - “What was each word before we added the silent e, and how did the vowel sound change?”
 - j. Explain to students: “All four of your patient charts today have a silent e word in them: nose, face, mane, and hide. Now you have all three tools ready — opposites, good questions, and the ability to read your chart.”
6. Veterinary Response Team — Whole Group Model

- a. Explain to students: "Before you meet your own patient, let's practice using all three tools together on one case as a class, so you know exactly what to do."
- b. Announce the emergency (optional prop: farmer hat or bell): "The veterinarian has received a new patient from Green Valley Farm!"
- c. Display a practice patient chart on chart paper (not one of the four real cases): "The hen is wet."
Using a different patient than the four real cases keeps every student's own patient a genuine discovery.
- d. Model the full workflow on chart paper, thinking aloud at each step:
 - Step 1 — Read the chart: "Let me read this. There are some words we see so often that we should know them by sight — we call these sight words. The word the is one of those words — I do not need to sound it out; I just know it. Notice the space after the — that space tells me the word has ended and a new word is about to start. The word "is" is another sight word. Now let's decode hen: /h/ /e/ /n/, blend it: hen. Now wet: /w/ /e/ /t/, blend it: wet. I used my sight words for the and is, and I decoded hen and wet using my letter-sound knowledge. Now I can read the whole sentence: The hen is wet."
 - Step 2 — Examine the patient: "Let me ask my question words. Who is my patient? What is wrong? I will use my tools to check — I look closely at my hen."
 - Step 3 — Choose a treatment: "My hen is wet and needs to dry off and warm up. This is just a practice example, so I am going to pretend I have a towel to dry her off with. When you get your own patient, your treatment card will match."
 - Step 4 — Treat the patient: "I dry off my hen and keep her warm."
 - Step 5 — Complete the report: "Now let me fill in my report, just like a real veterinarian would. Veterinarian: I write my own name — [Teacher Name]. Names are proper nouns, so I always capitalize them. Date: today's date is [example: September 12, 2026]. Watch closely — I put a comma right after the day number, before the year: 12, 2026. That comma separates the day from the year. [September] is also capitalized because it is the name of a month. Animal: hen. Problem: wet. Treatment: towel. Now my sentence: The hen was wet. I gave it a towel. Now it is dry."

This whole-group model is essential before releasing students to their teams. First graders still benefit from seeing the complete workflow — read, examine, decide, treat, record — modeled explicitly before attempting it independently in a small group.

7. Veterinary Response Team — Team Simulation

- a. Explain to students: "You just watched the whole workflow from start to finish. Now it's your turn to be the veterinarian for a real patient of your own — this time working with a team."
- b. Organize students into teams of four. Distribute one color-coded folder to each student (red = cow, blue = pig, green = sheep, yellow = horse) and one shared veterinary tool kit basket per team.
Differentiation note: All four patient charts now include a silent-e word, but overall sentence difficulty still varies. Assign the cow chart (nose) and pig chart (face, though muddy adds a second syllable) to developing readers, and the horse chart (mane, plus

the word thin) and sheep chart (hide, plus sheep's own vowel team) to more advanced readers. Distribute folders individually to keep this seamless within the team structure.

- c. Explain to students: "Your team is now a Veterinary Response Team! Each of you has a different patient today. Remember, your toolkit is shared — just like real veterinary teams, you will take turns using the tools with your teammates. Keep in mind that these are make-believe cases designed to help you learn. Real veterinarians carefully examine animals before deciding on a treatment."
- d. Announce the emergency: "The veterinarian has received new patients from Green Valley Farm!"
- e. Guide teams through each step together as a class, pausing after each instruction so every team completes that step before moving to the next:
 - "Open your folder and read your patient chart. Decode any words you do not know by sight."
 - "Ask your question words. Examine your patient using your team's tools — listen with the stethoscope, take the temperature, check closely."
 - "Look at your treatment picture cards. Which one is the opposite of your patient's problem? Choose your treatment."
 - "Treat your patient! Give the water, wrap the bandage, offer the feed, or brush your animal."
- f. Circulate and support:
 - "What does your patient chart say? Can you decode that word?"
 - "What question word could help you figure out what is wrong?"
 - "What is the opposite of your patient's problem? Which treatment matches that?"
 - "Remember to share your tool kit with your team."

Teacher option: if a team finishes early, students may trade folders within their group and complete a second patient case using the same workflow.

8. Veterinary Report — Independent Writing

- a. Distribute the veterinary report sheet if not already included in the folder.
- b. Explain to students: "Remember how I filled in my report during our practice case? Now it's your turn. Fill in your name as the veterinarian and today's date — both need a capital letter, and don't forget the comma in your date. Then fill in your animal, the problem, and the treatment. Then write your sentence and draw your patient after treatment."
- c. Report format:
 - Veterinarian: ____
 - Date: ____
 - Animal: ____
 - Problem: ____
 - Treatment: ____
 - Sentence: The ____ was _____. I gave it _____. Now it is _____.
- d. Circulate and support:
 - *Support for recall:* "Think back to your patient. What was the problem? What did you do to help?"
 - Support for capitalization: "Did you capitalize your name? Did you capitalize the month in your date?"
 - Support for commas: "Did you put a comma between the day and the year in your date?"

- Support for untaught spelling: “Say the word slowly and write the sounds you hear, even if we have not learned that word yet.”

Differentiation note: Students who need additional support may dictate their report while the teacher or a classroom helper scribes. Students ready for a challenge can add an additional sentence describing how their patient felt before and after treatment, using one of the opposite pairs or an un- word from Step 3.

9. Closing Discussion — Unit Wrap-Up & Kansas Connection

- Gather all teams together with their completed reports.
- Invite teams to share: “Who was your patient? What was wrong? How did you help?”
- Ask students:
 - “What is the opposite of sick? What is the opposite of hurt? Can you use the prefix un- to make an opposite too?”
 - “Who had the cow patient? What did a fever tell you about how the cow was feeling?”
 - “Who had the pig patient? Why does keeping a stall or water bucket clean help an animal stay healthy?”
 - “Why is it important for farmers and ranchers to call a veterinarian when an animal needs help?”
- Explain to students: “Throughout this whole unit, we have learned so many ways farmers and ranchers care for their animals. They build shelters to keep animals safe from weather. They feed and water their animals every single day. They identify each animal. And when an animal gets sick or hurt, they call a veterinarian — or sometimes they are trained to help their animals themselves, just like you did today. What do all of these jobs have in common?”
Anticipated response: farmers and ranchers caring for their animals.
- Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Across Kansas, farmers and ranchers work with veterinarians every day to keep their animals healthy. Some ranches are far from town, so ranchers learn basic animal first aid themselves, just like our Veterinary Response Teams today. Still, they might need to call a veterinarian when an animal is sick, injured, or needs medical care beyond what they can safely provide. Whether it is a big animal hospital or a rancher’s own toolkit, keeping animals healthy is one of the most important jobs on a farm or ranch.”
- Ask students:
 - “Do you know anyone who is a veterinarian, or anyone who takes care of sick or hurt animals? What do they do?”
 - “Of everything we learned in this whole unit — shelter, feeding, ear tags, and veterinary care — which was your favorite? Why?”

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through teacher observation during the final read-aloud, antonym and prefix instruction, question word practice, whole-group model, team simulation, and veterinary report. Teacher should note whether students can describe the connection between veterinary care and animal health, identify a reason the author gives for why farmers care for their animals, demonstrate understanding of antonym pairs and use the prefix un- to build opposites, decode patient chart words with long vowel patterns, capitalize dates and names of people on their report, use commas correctly in today’s date, recall information from the simulation to complete their veterinary report, and spell untaught words

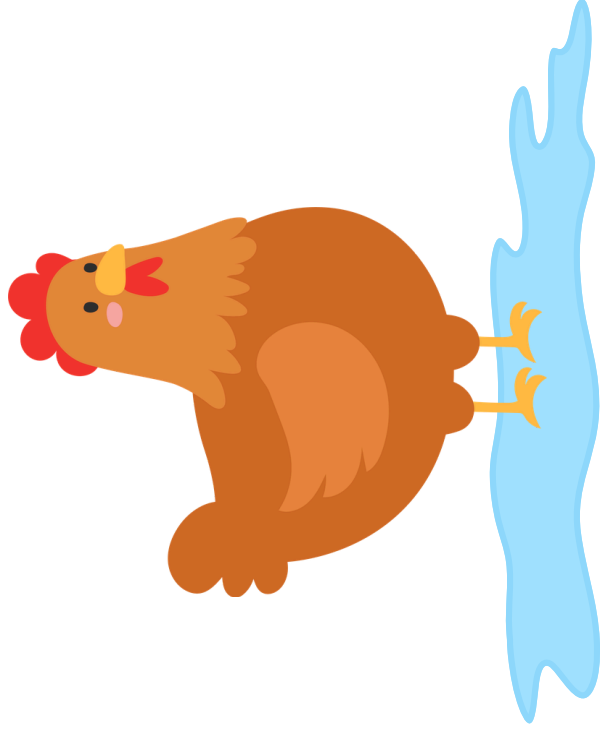
phonetically. The completed veterinary report serves as the primary written artifact for this lesson and the unit.

Supplemental Activities: Display the completed veterinary reports alongside the charts and artifacts from Lessons 1–4 to create a complete visual timeline of the unit. For an extension activity, set up a dramatic play veterinary clinic in a classroom center using the veterinary tool kits, stuffed animals, and blank patient charts so students can continue practicing the veterinarian role during choice time throughout the week. Challenge students to build additional opposites using the prefix un- and add them to a classroom “Un- Words” chart.

Author: Kelsy Sproul, M.S., Literacy Specialist, 2026 KFAC Teacher of the Year, KFAC Curriculum Advisory Council, Former Elementary Teacher, Graduate Teaching Assistant and doctoral student at Kansas State University College of Education. Edited by Marissa Cook, KFAC intern, Kansas State University Secondary Education.

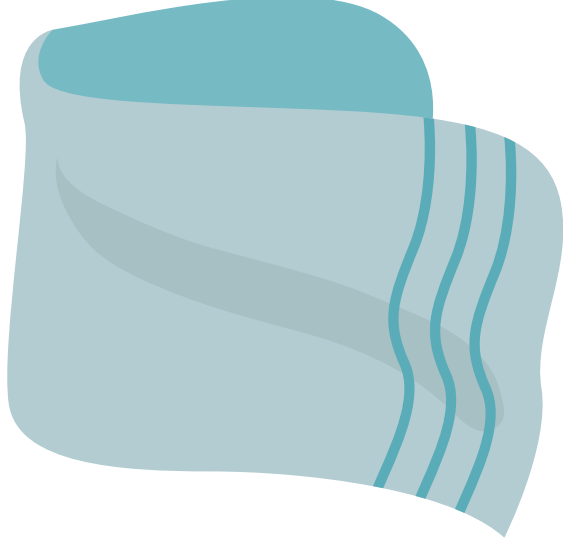
Teacher Example

Patient Chart



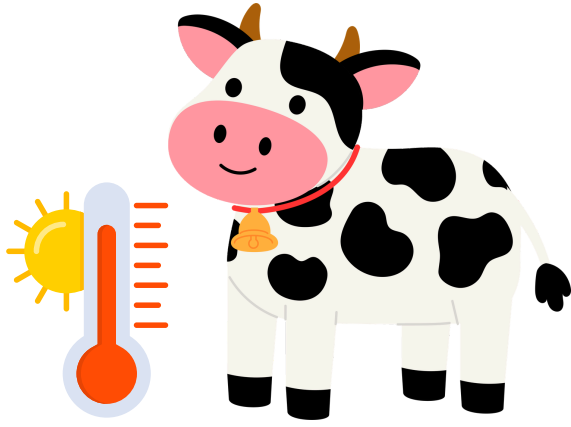
The hen is wet.

Treatment



Towel

Patient Chart



The cow has a hot nose.
🩺 Who? What? How can I help?

Patient Chart



The pig has a muddy face.
🩺 Who? What? How can I help?

Patient Chart



The sheep has a cut hide.
🩺 Who? What? How can I help?

Patient Chart



The horse has a thin mane.
🩺 Who? What? How can I help?

Student Name: _____

Veterinary Report Sheet

Animal:

Problem:

Treatment:

Sentence:

The _____ was _____

I gave it _____

Now it is _____

Draw your patient after treatment.