

Designer Hen



Did you know? Not all hens look the same.

(But we love them all the same!)

Notes for teachers/ parents:

There are hundreds of different breeds of chickens. Some are bred to be good egg layers and others have simply been bred to look fancy! You can have a look at some of the unusual breeds here: poultryclub.org/breeds/chickens/

How did we end up with all these different breeds?

The answer is **selective breeding**. Selective breeding takes place over many generations:

- decide which characteristics you want to see
e.g. feathery head, smaller comb, yellow legs
- choose parents that show these characteristics
- choose the best offspring to produce the next generation
- repeat the process until you have your designer hen

It's hard to imagine, but all these amazing breeds of hens originated from one type of bird - the jungle fowl.



Your task:

Using the worksheet attached, can you come up with some of your own "designer" hens?

You will need:

- BHWT Designer Hen Worksheets
- Pens or pencils

Taking this further:

Research wild jungle fowl. What similarities and differences are there between them and modern chickens?

Designer Hen



What will this designer hen will look like?

Look at these 'posh' breed chickens. When they breed, some of the hen's characteristics and some of the cockerel's characteristics will be passed on to their offspring (babies).

Can you draw the offspring of the hen and cockerel?

Pick your favourite characteristics from the two chickens. Below draw what their offspring will look like once they have grown up:



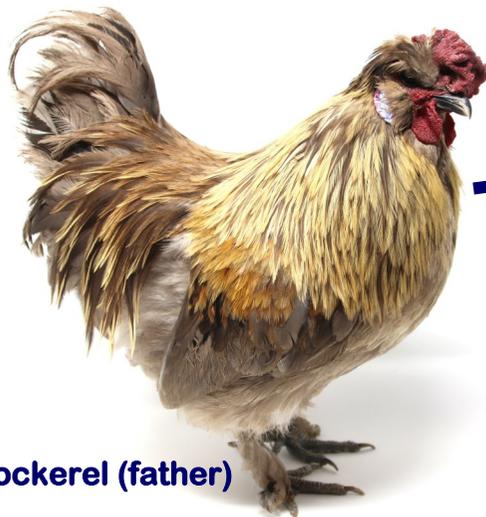
Hen (mother)

Characteristics:

- Black skin and legs
- No comb or wattles
- Mostly large, black feathers
- Upright, feathery tail



Chick (offspring)



Cockerel (father)

Characteristics:

- Feathery legs
- Red, wrinkly comb and wattles
- Multicoloured, thin feathers
- Upright, fluffy tail

Designer Hen



What will we grow up to look like?

Design your own hen!

Draw your own 'designer hen' in the chick's thought bubble.

Think about: **Does my hen have a large comb?**

What feather colour? Fluffy feathers?

What size is my hen?

Leg colour?

