

A photograph of a large herd of deer in a sunlit forest clearing. The deer are of various sizes, including several adults and many fawns. They are standing in a grassy area with large trees in the background. The scene is peaceful and natural.

ANIMALS

“There is no fundamental difference between man and animals in their ability to feel pleasure and pain, happiness, and misery.”

Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882), British biologist

1. Animals Discussion

1. What is your favourite animal? Which animals do you hate?
2. What are the most beautiful animals? What are the ugliest animals?
3. What are the most dangerous animals? Which animals do you have an irrational fear of?
4. Which animals are the most intelligent? What are some things they do/can do?
5. What is the national animal of your country? Do you know why? Can you name the national animal of any other countries?
6. What animals can you find in your country? What about in your neighbourhood?
7. Have you ever been bird watching? If so, how was it? If not, is this something you think you'd find interesting?
8. What's the difference between a mammal and a reptile?

2. Animals Vocabulary

- **to chicken out (of something)** (idiom) – *when you decide not to do something because you are scared or nervous.*
- **fishy** (adjective, idiom) – *when something appears suspicious.*
- **dog-eat-dog** (adjective, idiom) – *a situation where competition is so fierce that people are willing to do anything to win or survive, especially to other people.*
- **(like) a fish out of water** (idiom) – *when someone appears awkward, uncomfortable or useless doing something they are not familiar with.*
- **when pigs fly / pigs might fly** (idiom) – *used to express that something is highly unlikely or impossible ('and pigs might fly' is usually a response to someone suggesting something unlikely or unbelievable).*
- **(to be) a fly on the wall** (idiom) – *to hear and see what is happening without other people noticing you; used to describe reality TV shows/documentaries.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. My new boss is like **a fish out of water**. He has never done this kind of work before and has no idea what he's doing.
2. I received an email from the Rhodesian government telling me I had won the national lottery. It seems a bit **fishy** to me though, because Rhodesia hasn't existed since 1979.
3. Walter is in the kitchen telling his girlfriend of five years that he wants to split up with her. I would love to be **a fly on the wall** in that conversation!
4. I was going to ask her out on a date, but I **chickened out**. Now she's going out with my best friend.
5. One of my colleagues told my boss that I had been arrested by the police so he could get a promotion ahead of me. Corporate finance is certainly a **dog-eat-dog** world!
6. Politicians will tell the truth **when pigs fly**!

Animals vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What have you chickened out of?
2. When did you think something seemed a little fishy?
3. Do we really live in a dog-eat-dog world?
4. When have you been like a fish out of water?
5. What will happen when pigs fly?
6. When would you like to be a fly on the wall?

3. Video: Do Animals Have Language?

You are going to watch a video by TED Ed called "Do animals have language?"

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishtpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-animals/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. Why do crabs wave their claws at each other?
a) to say hello mate **b) to say they are ready to mate** c) as a warning
2. How do cuttlefish warn rivals?
a) with sounds b) displaying tentacles **c) skin patterns**
3. How do bees communicate the location of food sources?
a) dancing b) buzzing c) stinging
4. What does grammar provide to language?
a) words and sounds b) new ideas **c) rules**

Sentence completion

5. Productivity is when language is used to create an infinite number of **messages**.
6. Displacement allows language to be used to refer to things that cannot be seen, like the past, the future or **fictional** events.
7. Crabs and cuttlefish do not use their signals in **creative** ways.
8. Bees display the property of **displacement** when they describe a location outside the hive.

Short answer

9. Which characteristics of animal predators do prairie dogs communicate to each other? **Size, shape, speed**
10. What language have some great apes learned? **Sign language**
11. How many English words did Coco the gorilla learn? **Around 2000**
12. What is not present in a dolphin's natural communication? **Grammar**

4. Animals Conversation Questions

1. What is the difference between an animal we keep as a pet and an animal we eat?
2. Which animal do you think most represents your personality?
3. If you could be an animal, which animal would you like to be?
4. What do humans need animals for? How do animals help us?
5. If animals could speak, what would they say to us? What lessons can we learn from animals?
6. Do you think animals experience feelings and emotions like humans? What do you think animals dream of?
7. What is the difference between humans and other animals?
8. How did humans come to be the dominant animal on the planet? Are humans the most dangerous animal?

5. Animals Writing Task

Write about animals. In your writing, you could include some of the following topics:

- Your favourite animal and why.
- A description of an interesting animal you can find in your country.
- What humans can learn from animals.

Alternative exam practice question:

Some people say that because humans are animals, they are essentially the same as all other animals on the planet. Others, however, believe that humans are unique and unlike other animals. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.