"In ancient times cats were worshipped as gods; they have not forgotten this."

Sir Terry Pratchett (1948 – 2015), the greatest author of modern times

1. Pets Discussion

1. Do you have any pets? What are they and what are they called? Why did you choose that name? If you don't have any pets, what pet would you prefer and what would you call it?
2. Did you have any pets when you were a child? If yes, what did you have? If no, did you ever want one?
3. Why do people keep pets? What are the pros and cons of having a pet?
4. What are the best animals to keep as pets? What are the worst animals to keep as pets?
5. What are the most popular pets in your country?
6. Are you a dog person or a cat person? Why?
7. Why do people say that dogs are a man's best friend? Do dogs look like their owners?
8. How would you describe the personality of a cat? Do cats really have nine lives? Why do people say that?

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2. Pets Vocabulary

- **(to) breed** (verb, noun) – *to produce offspring; a type of animal or plant.*
- **emotional support animal** (noun) – *an animal that provides comfort to people with mental health issues.*
- **dog muck** (BrE), **dog poop** (AmE) (noun) – *slang for dog excrement.*
- **dangerous dog** (noun) – *a legal definition used to define a breed of dog that puts the lives of humans at risk.*
- **puppy dog eyes** (idiom) – *a cute or innocent facial expression, often used when pleading or asking for something to convince the person to say yes.*
- **natural instinct** (noun) – *the tendency to behave in a particular way; the tendency of animals to behave as they would in the wild.*

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. Don't blame the cat for bringing a dead bird into the house; that's just its **natural instinct**.
2. Whenever I tell my daughter she can't do something, she gives me **puppy dog eyes** and then I let her do whatever she wants!
3. Buying a pure **breed** is a status symbol in many cultures; however, these breeds have many genetic health problems.
4. **Emotional support animals** provide a lot of comfort to people, but a peacock might be taking it a bit too far.
5. When I went to play football in the park earlier, the pitch was covered in **dog muck**. It was disgusting!
6. After several horrific dog attacks in 1991, the British government passed a law banning certain breeds of **dangerous dog**.

Pets vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What are the health problems associated with breeding dogs?
2. Should emotional support animals be allowed on planes?
3. Should there be a fine for people who don't pick up dog muck in the street or in parks?
4. Are there really any dangerous dogs, or are there only dangerous dog owners?
5. When would you give puppy dog eyes to someone?
6. What are the natural instincts of a cat?

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3. Video: The History of Dogs

You are going to watch a video by TED Ed called "A brief history of dogs."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-pets/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. When did modern humans first emerge?
   a) over 200 years go ***b) over 200,000 years ago*** *c) over 2,000,000 years ago*

2. What was the relationship between early humans and grey wolves?
   a) mutually beneficial *b) friendly* ***c) adversarial***

3. What could a grey wolf bite do?
   a) break an arm *b) crush rocks* *c) cut iron*

4. What did grey wolf packs use to hunt large animals?
   a) social skills *b) intelligence* *c) superior strength*

Sentence completion

5. When hunting their prey, grey wolves did not rely on **outrunning** it, but on chasing it until it was exhausted.
6. Early humans represented a threat to the grey wolves' **territory**.
7. Early humans shared their food with wolves that showed less **aggression**.
8. Docile wolves integrated easily into human families because of their similar **social structure**.

Short answer

9. The first domesticated dogs looked similar to what? **Their wild cousins**
10. What are thin and sleek dogs used for? **Racing**
11. During which era were dogs categorised into breeds? **Victorian**
12. Dogs can understand our what? **Emotions and body language**

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4. Pets Conversation Questions

1. How much of a responsibility are pets? How should pets be cared for? Why is there a campaign every year reminding people that a dog is for life, not just Christmas?
2. Do the people in your culture respect animals? Or are they often mistreated? What are some cruel ways people treat their pets?
3. Is it cruel to keep any animal in a small, confined space, for example hamsters or snakes? Can a spider or snake really be considered a pet?
4. What do you think of people who own tiny dogs?
5. Should people be allowed to take their pets in shops and restaurants?
6. Have you ever been to a cat café? Would you like to? Does this seem like an interesting idea?
7. Do some people have pets instead of children? If so, why?
8. What can people learn from their pets?

5. Pets Writing Task

Write about your opinion of pets. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Why people keep pets.
- Which animals make the best and worst pets.
- How pets should be cared for.

Alternative exam practice question:

People have kept pets as companions throughout history, and it is common for children to be given pets as presents. What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving pets to children?

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