

## Pet mania

**Topic:** Describing animals

**Aims:**

- To develop speaking and reading skills
- To revise language of describing animals

**Level:** Mixed

**Introduction**

This lesson is about pets and focuses on the recent British trend of having a small dog as a fashion accessory.

**Procedure**

- Start a word snake on the board using animals. To continue the snake you must use the last letter of the following word. For example:  
  
CAT – TIGER – RABBIT – TURTLE – ELEPHANT – etc. etc.
- Then get the students to group the animals according to habitat. Draw some big circles on the board labelled, FARM, ZOO, WILD, HOME etc. and ask students where they'd be most likely to see these animals. From here, look at the HOME circle and ask your students the name for animals we keep at home, to introduce the word PETS and the topic for today.
- **Pets – class survey**  
This is a simple speaking activity for low levels. Put the table on the board for students to copy and demonstrate with a couple of students. Ask them, 'have you got a pet?' and then ask a follow up question.
- For students who haven't got a pet, ask them 'would you like to have a pet? If so, what pet would you like?' or 'have you ever had a pet?' Even students who say no should have some extra information.
- For students who do have pets the follow up questions can be, 'what's its name?' or 'how old is it?' For very low levels leave these questions written up on the board to support the students throughout. When students have the idea, get them all to stand up and walk around the room to carry out the survey. When they have finished, ask them to put the results into a bar chart or a pie chart.
- Put an example of these types of charts on the board to give them the idea. When all students have the chart representing their results ask them to write a little paragraph summarising their findings or they can do this orally.



**Tip:**

To find some ideas for unusual pets type 'unusual pets' into a search engine on the Internet. This could also be the basis for other activities about weird and wonderful pets.

**Worksheet B – Can I have a pet? Role play**

Student A

You really want to have a pet. You would love to have a \_\_\_\_\_ . You think you are old enough now to look after it.

First think of three advantages of having a \_\_\_\_\_ as a pet.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You must use these advantages to try and convince your Mum or Dad to let you have a pet.

Student B

You are the parent of student A! You really don't want any pets in your home, especially not a \_\_\_\_\_ but you had pets when you were younger and you can understand the attraction.

First, think of three disadvantages of having a \_\_\_\_\_ as a pet.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You must use these disadvantages to try and convince your son or daughter that they really don't want to have a pet.

**Puppy Love – Reading task**

- This is a reading task for higher levels about the trend of having dogs as a type of fashion accessory! On a recent trip to London I actually picked up a dog jacket in a normal clothing shop thinking it would be a good present for a friend's new baby!  
The assistant pointed out that it was in fact for a dog! The fact that clothing for small dogs is now in the normal stores shows that this trend has really taken off.
- Put students into groups of four to read the text together. Give each student a number, 1 to 4, and they should read just that paragraph and then tell the rest of the group about it.
- To give students some visual support for understanding the article, download a few photos of celebrities with their pampered dogs.
- You will find some good ones here:  
<http://pets.aol.com/galleries/celebrity#>  
For more information about Trend UK:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/indonesia-common-trend-uk.htm>

**Worksheet C – Puppy Love – Reading task**

Work in groups of four. Read a paragraph each then tell your group about it.

**Puppy love**

Exactly how far do people in the UK go to show their love for their canine companions?

**1. Dogs as accessories**

We are already a nation of dog lovers. However the UK's love for their pets is evolving into obsession as they are becoming more than family pets but one of the latest fashion accessories.

The recent trend, mainly in female celebrities, is to take your dog with you everywhere in your handbag whether you are going shopping or out to dinner. Her Majesty the Queen is famous for her corgis but these days you are just as likely to see singers Geri Halliwell and Cheryl Tweedy travelling with their dogs.

**2. Accessories for small dogs**

High street shops like Next and Top Shop are making money out of the trend by selling items of dog clothing alongside their women's collections. They are entering the 'dog clothing' market by making it easy to buy for your dog while buying for yourself. There is no need to shop online at one of the dedicated dog clothing websites or go to a specialist shop dog-fashion is now out in the open.

'The closest my dog gets to clothes is a new collar at Christmas' Amanda, 27, Birmingham

'I think it's cute I have a coat for my little dog although I don't carry her around in a bag. What's the point of having a dog if you don't take it for walks where they are actually walking.' Elaine, 26, Liverpool

**3. Doggie retreats**

And people are not just pampering their pets with the latest clothes and accessories. More people are taking their pets away with them for holidays. UK hotels and holiday parks are catering for the animal lover by allowing people to holiday with them. If you are travelling abroad you could leave them at a doggie retreat or spa where they will be pampered.

'We send our dog to a special spa kennel that pampers them while we are away – they even have their own TV' Liz, 24, Manchester

**4. Dogs are for life...**

Famous campaigns like 'Dogs are for life and not just for Christmas' highlight the responsibility of owning a dog and so it's important to remember that when you see people and their pets what you don't see is the time, money and love invested in man's best friend. Actress Sienna Miller recently took a responsible attitude by returning two young dogs to ex-partner Jude Law because she can't give them the attention they need.

Source: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/indonesia-common-trend-uk-puppylove.htm>

**Pet pictionary / bingo / guess the pet...**

For these games you can either use the word cards below or you could make your own.

**Tip:**

For younger learners you could download the flashcards from the British Council Learn English Kids website and use them instead. There are colourful flashcards for both zoo

animals and sea animals. All the downloadable flashcards can be found here: <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/worksheets>

Activities related to the topics can be found here:

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/category/topics/zoos>

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/category/topics/sea-animals>

For more materials on pets:

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/category/topics/pets>

- **Pictionary** – divide your group in two teams and get one member of each team up to the board to be the ‘artist’. Divide the board in two and give each artist a word card or a flash card. They must draw the animal for their team to guess what it is. First team to guess correctly wins a point.
- **Bingo** – Get students to draw a three x two square bingo board and write six animals in it from the flashcards or word cards you are using. Randomly pick out animals and students cross them off when they hear them. The first to cross all out calls ‘bingo’ and takes the role of bingo caller for the next round. For higher levels, instead of calling out the name of the animal, describe it instead!
- **Guess the pet** – Put students in pairs and give each pair a bunch of word cards or flashcards. Set a time limit of one minute for students to define as many as they can for their partner to guess in one minute. The winning pair has guessed the most correctly from their partner’s definitions.

**Worksheet D – Pet pictionary / bingo / guess the pet...**

|               |                         |                      |                       |                 |                |                 |               |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Budgie</b> | <b>Hamster</b>          | <b>Dog</b>           | <b>Cat</b>            | <b>Lizard</b>   | <b>Snake</b>   | <b>Guinea</b>   | <b>Rabbit</b> |
| <b>Mouse</b>  | <b>Tarantula spider</b> | <b>Tropical fish</b> | <b>Potbellied pig</b> | <b>Goldfish</b> | <b>Chicken</b> | <b>Tortoise</b> | <b>Parrot</b> |

**Dog discussion**

- Cut up the strips of discussion statements and use them either in small groups or for a whole class discussion.
- Add some more statements to personalise the topic to where you live depending on the general attitude towards dogs.

**Worksheet E – Dog discussion**

|   |
|---|
| It's cruel to keep dogs in flats.                                       |
| Dogs should be banned from city centres.                                |
| Dog owners who don't clean up their animals' excrement should be fined. |
| Dogs are excellent companions.  |
| Dogs can be 'man's best friend'.  |
| Dogs that wear clothes look ridiculous!                                 |
| Dangerous dogs shouldn't be kept as pets.                               |