
FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

0627/02

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition

October/November 2019

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passages for use with **Section 1, Question 1** on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning.
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This syllabus is regulated for use in England as a Cambridge International Level 1/Level 2 (9–1) Certificate.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Passage A: Why exotic pets are a prickly issue

The following article, written by an ecologist, is about fashions in keeping exotic pets.

Pet fads come and go. Whether it is terrapins, chimpanzees or tarantulas, these fleetingly fashionable creatures cause perfectly normal people to act irresponsibly. The terrapins are overfed, become as large as dinner plates and develop a tendency to bite. Once-adorable chimps end up as huge, aggressive adults, filling the exasperated owner's home. So when I recently saw the headline 'Must-have hogs' with photographs of cute African pygmy hedgehogs, my heart sank.

As an ecologist specialising in hedgehogs, I have spent a lot of time with these creatures out in the wild, following them as they snuffle around their habitat through the night. I have met many people who have dedicated their lives to caring for hedgehogs that are sick or injured, but until recently I had not met anyone who kept them as pets. Then I attended a gathering in Colorado and met some of America's hedgehog pet keepers. All I can say is, if we are to follow where they lead, some strange things are on the way.

In the early 1990s, the US experienced a fancy for hedgehogs, which, as always, soon faded. But at its peak they were the must-have pet of the hour. There were also rich returns for anyone who bred them: an attractive breeding pair could be sold for more than \$1,000. But the intensive breeding that ensued led to the horror that is 'Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome', a nasty condition that affects the nervous system and does exactly what it says. Hedgehogs start to wobble when they walk and eventually die.

However, show us a picture of an African pygmy hedgehog and we go weak at the knees rather than worry about the pitfalls of ownership. A couple of months ago, many newspapers ran photographs of these irresistible hedgehogs. A UK breeder told me, 'It is very worrying. I have had hundreds of emails from people wanting to know where they can get the hedgehogs, or wanting to breed them. One asked for a male and three females, and could he have them fast as he did not want to miss out on this new craze.'

Dr Ros Clubb from the RSPCA's wildlife science department is also concerned. 'Back in the 1990s, our rescue centres filled up with red-eared terrapins as a result of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle craze, and there does appear to be a rising demand for more unusual and exotic pets. This sort of fad gives the impression that pets like these can be bought on a whim. Many of these animals have very specialist requirements and live for many years, so it can be disastrous.'

Mutant turtles aren't the only victims of our fads and whims. No surprises for what happened after '101 Dalmatians' bounded into cinemas in 1996. Rescue centres also reported an increase in abandoned owls as Harry Potter fans began to realise what they had let themselves in for by getting one as a pet. Following the release of the animated film 'Ratatouille', there was a 50 per cent rise in demand for rats.

Some abandoned pets, however, actually thrive in their new wild habitat and go on to cause headaches of another sort. Last month, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that a 'special rapid response unit' will tackle invasive non-native animals, such as ring-necked parakeets and red-eared terrapins, as they can transform habitats, damage eco-systems and threaten native species.

The UK is already naturally blessed with hedgehogs, which will lead to new problems. Some traders will just scoop up these wild animals and pass them off as pets. My other worry is that the existence of a similar animal in the wild may lead bored owners of African pygmy hedgehogs to jettison their unwanted pet into the wild. But to do so will kill them: African hedgehogs need to be kept warm, requiring a temperature of around 20 °C.

Passage B: Exotic animals make good pets? Of course they do!

Melissa Smith is an owner of exotic pets and doesn't think there is anything wrong with that. This is part of her blog.

Many people believe that exotic animals are not adapted to be pets. Those who oppose exotic pet-keeping because they believe such animals are 'unsuitable for captivity' do not consider logically the welfare of traditional pets. Many domesticated cats are kept as house pets, which is a practice promoted by many vets, animal rescue centres, and animal rights organisations for the safety of the cat as well as outdoor wildlife. But no cat is 'built' to live inside a house.

The same conflicts that exist for exotic pets also exist for domesticated animals and it's possible that domesticated animals may be at greater risk. Domesticated animals are over-bred and, just like wild animals, pet birds or hamsters, these indoor cats require a mentally stimulating environment, socialisation relevant to their species, and an outlet for their energy, though not all get these conditions. It's true that a monkey may have more significant problems in captivity than a tabby cat, but a 'lesser evil' is still an evil.

People say that keeping exotic pets is selfish. So what? Keeping any pet is selfish. Exotic pet owners keep their pets for the same reasons that domesticated animal owners keep theirs. We love and care for our pets and develop strong relationships with them, whatever the species. No one intends to harm animals by keeping them as pets even though this can happen. Since it's perfectly feasible that an exotic pet can thrive in captivity, the choice of an exotic pet can be a good one.

Moreover, exotic pets do not harm the environment any more than domesticated pets. Feral cats and dogs are probably more widespread than localised populations of escaped exotic animals and many now familiar species were introduced from abroad many years ago.

The press love to report on stories of exotic pets biting and attacking humans. But domesticated animals hurt people too, and sometimes even kill them. Horses, cows, and other large herbivores cause deaths because of their size and weight, although these incidents rarely make the news. The danger to humans from exotic pets can be minimised. Tigers are not kept in living rooms and dart out of the house whenever the door is opened, after all. There are many exotic pet owners whose care and expertise would surprise even the most fervent anti-captivity advocate.

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