



EXOTIC PETS

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Introduction

What kind of unusual pets do people have in your country?

Do you have any unusual pets?

Why do people keep these kinds of pets?

Reading

Clive has many pets and some people would argue that his pets are very unusual. Or even dangerous.

“They’re not dangerous,” says Clive. “It’s just that people are ignorant about these animals. I think they’re beautiful.”

Clive lives in a modest two-bedroom house. But he doesn’t sleep in either of the bedrooms.

“I sleep on the sofa in the living room,” he says. “The bedrooms are for my animals.”

He has converted his house to accommodate his menagerie. Clive has nine animals in total. He introduces them all one by one.

“Well, first there’s the Indian python. She stays in the first bedroom. And two monitor lizards live in the same room. I’ve put some special heat lamps in there because they need to feel warm.

Then in the other bedroom, I have four Venezuelan tarantulas. They are full size so I have to keep them in special tanks. I have two tanks because two of the spiders are female and they tend to fight the male ones.

Then I have Billy the rat.”

On cue, a large black rat pokes his head above Clive's shoulder. He sniffs the air and then disappears behind Clive's head.

"And over there we have Doris the African parrot."

And Doris screeches loudly then says hello just like a human being.

"It's not that many," says Clive. "I'm a member of an exotic pet owners group on Facebook and one guy has over thirty animals in his house. He even has a small tiger."

It must be a full-time job looking after all these animals though.

"Not really," says Clive. "The snake only eats once a week. And the two lizards don't eat every day. The spiders eat some fruit. I give Doris some corn to munch on and Billy eats dinner with me."

He eats the same dinner as you?

"Yes. Rats are actually very clean creatures. All those stories about rats being dirty are just a myth."

Clive has a job and works at the local post-office sorting letters. He usually has to leave his house very early in the morning.

"I can't wait to get home after work," he says. "I want to get home and say hello to all my family."

But what if they escape?

"Oh that happened before," says Clive with a serious tone. "The

python got out of her tank. She came downstairs and found Billy's brother."

That must have terrified the poor little rat?

"She ate him," says Clive. "That's the law of the jungle."

How terrible! But how do you invite friends to your home with all these animals?

"Very few people come to visit," says Clive. "People don't really understand animals. And to be honest, I don't really understand people."

So, no girlfriend in Clive's life?

"Oh no," he says. "I'm single. I did invite a young woman here ages ago. She took one look around and ran out. I never heard from her again."

Reading Comprehension Questions

What kind of house does Clive live in?

Where does he sleep? Why?

How many animals does Clive have in his home? What are they?

What special equipment did Clive buy to look after his pets?

Which pet stays on Clive's shoulder?

Is Clive a member of any special clubs or organisations?

How many pets does another person have that Clive knows?
What is the strangest animal he has?

What are the animals eating habits?

Who eats with Clive?

Does Clive think rats are clean?

Where does Clive work?

Have any of the animals escaped? What happened?

Does Clive have any visitors to his home? What happened with a previous visitor?

Essential Vocabulary

argue	unusual
ignorant	modest
two-bedroom house	converted
accommodate	menagerie
python	monitor lizards
heat lamps	Venezuelan
tarantulas	full-size
tanks	on cue
pokes his head	shoulder
sniffs	disappears
parrot	screeches loudly
human being	exotic
full-time job	munch
creatures	myth
sorting	escape
a serious tone	terrified
the law of the jungle	ran out

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

What Kind of Pet is This?

This is a class activity. Look at the list of pets below.

As a class, discuss the good things and bad things about keeping each of the pets on the list.

- **Tarantula**
- **Hedgehog**
- **Capybara**
- **Pygmy Goat**
- **Miniature Donkey**
- **Chinchilla**
- **Ball Python**
- **Fennec Fox**

Discussion Questions

What do you think about Clive's life and his pets?

Would you like to have an exotic pet? What kind of pet would you like to keep?

Should people be allowed to keep whatever pets they want in their homes?

Certain animals are endangered and need to be looked after by professionals. Agree or disagree? Why/why not?

Do neighbours have the right to expect a safe environment? Could they complain about their neighbour keeping dangerous animals?

Are there certain pets we associate with certain people? Look around the room and guess what kind of pets each student would have.

What is the purpose of a pet? Companionship or something else? Discuss.

Should poisonous or dangerous pets be banned? What if the owner had a certificate to prove they can take care of such animals?

Some animals are not domesticated. Do these animals belong in a zoo?

One of the reasons people keep pets is to play with them and pet them. You can't do this with a spider or a snake. Or can you? What kind of pet is a snake or spider?

Do you think all dog owners should live in the countryside? Surely a dog would be more comfortable surrounded by fields?

What is your ideal pet? Why? Give reasons for your choice.

My Family

You are Clive in the reading article.

You have been asked by the local newspaper to write about your pets and your life with them.

Remember, you love all of these animals dearly and you hold them all in high regard.

Write an article that outlines your life living with all these beautiful, exotic creatures and how they make your life complete.

Credits

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