

1. A home by the Thames

This week's lesson is about a much-loved and quite famous London institution that provides a temporary home for lost or abandoned pets: Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students if they have ever had any personal involvement with (or merely heard any kind of story about) a lost or abandoned domestic animal, and if so, ask them to describe what happened. Introduce the term 'stray' and ask your students how many stray cats and dogs their city/country has. How do such animals become strays in the first place, and what generally happens to them?
2. Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Give one copy of Worksheet A to each student in Group A along with the corresponding part of Worksheet C, and one copy of Worksheet B to each student in Group B with the corresponding part of Worksheet C.
3. Tell your students they have the same text on the Battersea Dogs & Cats Home but that different information is missing from each worksheet. Explain that they are going to ask a member of the other group some questions to help them complete the text, but first they need to prepare the questions.
4. Give the students at least ten minutes to read through the text and check any new vocabulary, then give them at least another ten minutes to work together in their groups to prepare and write down the questions they need to ask in order to complete the text. Monitor this activity to make sure that the students are formulating the questions correctly (see suggestions below) and provide prompts if necessary.
5. When all the students have prepared their questions, divide them into pairs so that each student from Group A is working with a student from Group B. They should take it in turns to ask and answer the questions they have prepared and write the answers in the spaces in the text. Tell students not to look at their partner's text.
6. When both students have finished asking and answering, allow them to compare worksheets. Then check answers in open class.
7. Keeping the students in their pairs, ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheet A, or to hand them back to you temporarily. Then ask them to attempt Exercise 2 on Worksheet D, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twenty incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write more than one additional word.
8. Check answers in open class. You could also hand out copies of Worksheet E, which contains the full, correct version of the text.

Answers:

Exercise 1 (questions/answers)

1. How many people work at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home (BCDH) as volunteers? (about 200)
2. What does BCDH receive huge amounts of? (money in donations from the public)
3. Who does BCDH provide services for? (those with four legs)
4. Where is BCDH? (by the south bank of the river Thames)
5. What does BCDH provide for lost (and abandoned) pets? (a temporary home)
6. Why do people/owners take their dog or cat to BDCH? (because they can't look after it any more)
7. What is it quite rare for people to do? (leave an unwanted pet in the street)
8. What is there no limit on? (how long abandoned animals are kept at BDCH)
9. How quickly are new owners generally found? (within a few weeks)
10. When was BDCH started? (1860)
11. What did Mary Tealby see when she was walking to a friend's house? (a lost, starving puppy)
12. What was Mary Tealby so worried about (after the experience with the puppy)? (the other stray dogs on the streets)
13. When did 'The Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs'/BDCH move south of the Thames to Battersea (1871)
14. How many animals does BDCH take in per year? (over 12,000)
15. How many dogs does BDCH have at any one time? (around 350)
16. What does 'socialising' animals mean? (making them more used to being around humans and other animals)
17. Why couldn't staff understand why they often arrived in the morning to find dogs running around in the corridors (etc)? (Because all the animals are locked in their kennels overnight)
18. Where was there a terrible mess? (everywhere)
19. When was the mystery solved? (when the staff set up a CCTV camera)
20. What was the first thing Red did when he got out of his kennel? (unlock the kennel doors of various other dogs)

Exercise 2 (correcting the mistakes)

2. lovers 3. volunteers 4. donations 5. bank 5. crowd 7. kept 8. profile
9. reputation 10. starving 11. stray 12. set up 14. treating 15. behaviour
18. overnight 19. staff 20. missing 21. mess 22. CCTV 23. mystery
24. solved 25. picked up

Words in bold that are correct: 1. image 6. claim 13. per 16. being 17. for

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.battersea.org.uk/>

The website of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. Accessible to intermediate level.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/animals/newsid_3717000/3717790.stm

The charming story of Red (2004), one of the Home's more mischievous residents, as told in a short article by BBC *Newsround*. Appropriate for intermediate level

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3712960.stm>

A longer article about Red from BBC News. Challenging for intermediate level.

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