

Is it OK ... to Own a Dog?

Dominic Murphy's guide to a good life

- 1 I grew up with dogs and loved them. Like many households, we gave them sappy names such as Candy and Rupert. We shared holidays with them and sometimes they slept on our beds. Then I moved to London and began to hate the brutes – or so I thought.
- 2 My problem, in fact, was with their owners – and the way they indulged in antisocial habits through their pooches. I'm not just talking about fouling parks, pavements and other public spaces. No, there are the boneheads who keep vicious pets as trophies. And don't forget the otherwise normal types who say, "Don't worry, he won't bite," when their darling creature leaps on your two-year-old and slobbers in his face.
- 3 The owning of a dog can affect your sanity. How else to explain a weird new trend in dog-turd disposal where an owner will scoop their poops into a carrier bag, then throw them into a hedge? Eccentric? Barking, I reckon.
- 4 Perhaps this kind of attitude makes doggy types oblivious to a much bigger ethical problem – the suffering that many dogs (and cats) go through so that we can keep them as pets. There are 6.5m dogs spread across 20% of UK households, making them the nation's most popular pet. Even so, a large number end up



- unwanted. According to Dogs Trust, more than 100,000 strays are rounded up by animal welfare charities each year – 7,800 of which end up being destroyed.
- 5 Dogs keep the RSPCA busy. In a report last month, the charity detailed some of the horrific acts of cruelty inflicted on our four-legged friends. It also described last year as one of the most 'violent' years it had experienced.
 - 6 And what of the breeders who insist on certain characteristics in pedigrees? So many traits that are considered desirable by breeders cause suffering in the animal. British bulldogs, for example, have been bred to have very short noses. "Virtually every British bulldog is deformed in one way or another. They can't breathe properly," says Chris Laurence, veterinary director of Dogs Trust, "and they have legs like Queen Anne chairs so they can't walk properly." He adds that

larger dogs are more prone to bone cancer, and long dogs such as basset hounds and dachshunds have back problems.

7 There is some comfort for the animal rights lobby in new legislation coming up. The new animal welfare bill in effect lowers the burden of proof of abuse of animals by including a welfare offence. This will oblige animal owners to keep their pets in a suitable environment and give them an appropriate diet. It means the police can threaten prosecution as soon as they can prove neglect.

8 But there is still no barrier to owning a dog, other than the fact that it will cost you food and veterinary bills of around £1,000 a year and that it's a big responsibility. The dog licence was abolished in the 1980s and there is little enthusiasm for bringing it back. You'll still be able to get a puppy from the litter next door, or the doggy in the window at the pet shop. Animal campaigners hope that secondary

legislation planned as a follow-up to next year's bill will bring in codes of practice as to who can sell dogs, and that they will be sold with a guide to looking after them – washing machines come with instructions, so why not dogs?

9 So much for bad owners, but what about dogs themselves? 8, they have a lot going for them. Sniffer dogs arguably keep us safer, and save many lives in disaster zones and conflicts by finding injured people in rubble. Dogs improve the quality of life for many. The blind are an obvious example, but don't forget the elderly and housebound who rely on dogs for companionship. Dogs are often involved in daily organised visits to children's wards, nursing homes, hospices and mental institutions.

10 Many studies suggest that dogs have therapeutic benefits. So, there are many excellent reasons for having a dog. It's the owners you need to worry about.

The Guardian

- 1p 3 "... began to hate the brutes..." (paragraph 1)
Which of the following is the main reason for Dominic's statement according to paragraphs 1 and 2?
- A people's behaviour in connection with their pets
 - B the amount of public money involved in people keeping dogs
 - C the number of dog droppings all over the place
 - D the way small children are threatened by dogs
- 1p 4 Which of the following statements is true according to paragraphs 3–5?
- A Dogs are just a little less well-loved than cats in the UK.
 - B Most stray dogs have to be 'put to sleep'.
 - C Possessing a dog might influence the owner negatively.
 - D This year dogs caused more accidents than ever.
- 1p 5 What is the main point of paragraph 6?
There are breeders who
- A are focused on producing more young pups than they should.
 - B are only interested in the financial side of keeping and selling dogs.
 - C consider an animal's appearance more important than its welfare.
 - D will do anything to safeguard the health of their dogs.
- 1p 6 "new legislation" (beginning of paragraph 7)
What will be its effect according to paragraph 7?
- A Authorities will become more involved in monitoring animal owners.
 - B It will help ensure that animals are looked after properly.
 - C More facilities for the training of animal inspectors will be provided.
 - D The costs of keeping animals will rise considerably.
- 2p 7 Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze juist of onjuist is op grond van alinea 8.
Omcirkel achter elk nummer 'juist' of 'onjuist' in de uitwerkbijlage.
- 1 Iedereen die dit wil en het geld ervoor heeft, kan nu nog een hond houden.
 - 2 Mensen die zich voor het welzijn van dieren inzetten, willen graag dat de hondenbelasting opnieuw wordt ingevoerd.
 - 3 Honden mogen in Engeland niet meer zonder vergunning verkocht worden.
 - 4 Mensen die honden kopen, moeten een soort garantiebewijs meekrijgen.
- 1p 8 Kies bij 8 in alinea 9 het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.
- A Consequently
 - B Likewise
 - C Moreover
 - D Obviously
 - E Similarly

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.