

Pet Paradise

The changing world of pets.

1 Pre-reading

Try to answer these questions with a partner.

- Which pets are the most popular?
- What pet names are popular for dogs?
- Which dog breeds have been banned?
- Which dog breeds are popular?

2 Reading I

Read the article once to compare your answers from the Pre-reading activity.

3 Reading II

Read the article again and complete the information with a word from the text.

- Pit Bull Terriers are now **ba**_____.
- _____ are now the most popular pet in the UK.
- These days, people prefer **s**_____ breeds of dog.
- Many people use popular **b**____ names for their pets.
- Many pet owners regard their pets as part of the **f**_____.
- Cesar Millan believes that our mood can affect our pet's **beha**_____.

4 Language focus

The Present Perfect Continuous

Look at the extract from the article on this page, "...Pet names have also been changing..." The writer has used the Present Perfect Continuous ("have also been changing"). Say whether the following sentences are true for you (write "yes" or "no" next to each one).

- I've been reading a really good book recently.
- I've been working a lot these days.
- I've been doing a lot of exercise lately.
- I've been sleeping really badly these past few days.

5 Discussion

- Have you got a pet? What is it?
- Which pet would you like to have?
- Is it right to keep pets? Why? Why not? Under what circumstances?



Dogs. Cats. Hamsters. The world of pets is a multi-million pound industry in the UK. But things are changing.

For a start, a number of dogs are now **banned**. These include Japanese Tosas, Dogo Argentinos, Fila Brasileiros and the Pit Bull Terrier. Also, under new laws, a dog classed as being "dangerously out of control in a public place" can be destroyed, the **owner** can be **fined**, and if a dog **injures** someone, the owner can be **jailed** for **up to** two years.

The type of pets that people keep is also changing. The big news is that cats are no longer the most popular pet in the UK. Figures from analysts Mintel show that the cat population **peaked** in 2004 at 9.6 million but has since **dropped** to 8.6m. And the dog population has risen from five million in 1970 to 8.3 million today.

And these days, the most popular dogs are smaller **breeds**. "With more of us living in cities, those who might have **gone for** a cat are choosing to have a small dog," said an industry expert. "You can feed four Yorkshire Terriers for the same cost as one Labrador, so in the **current climate**, small dogs are more **appealing**," she added. And thanks to celebrities such as Paris Hilton, small dogs are also seen as a **fashion** accessory.

Pet names have also been changing. Traditional names for pets such as Spot and Rover are being replaced by popular ones for babies such as Charlie, Poppy, Molly and Alfie (which all appear in the list of baby top 10 names). "Pet owners now regard their **beloved** animals as part of the family, and will **go as far as** naming them in a similar manner," said an expert.

Finally, more and more people are interested in animal psychology. Cesar Millan's TV show *Dog Whisperer* is popular all over the world. Millan (1969) was born in Mexico but lives in the US. His philosophy is based on the idea that healthy dogs require strong **pack leadership** from their owners, specifically in the form of exercise, discipline and affection (in that order). He also encourages owners to understand the effect their own attitudes have on a dog's behaviour "It's not about the dog. It's always about the owner. **It's up to us** to create an environment and circumstances in which the dog can **thrive** and be itself," Millan explained. "To be happy, (dogs) basically need exercise, good food, and a **pat on the head**," he added.

There's never been a better time to be a pet! 🐾



Other popular pets include reptiles and amphibians (almost eight million, with the five most popular species being leopard **geckos**, bearded dragons, corn snakes, royal **pythons** and Hermann's tortoises), rabbits (1.4 million), indoor birds (0.8), hamsters (0.5), horses and ponies (0.3), snakes (0.2), **gerbils** (0.14), tortoises and turtles (0.12) and rats (0.1).



GLOSSÁRIO

a gecko *n*
uma lagartixa

a python *n*
uma jiboia

a gerbil *n*
um gerbo

to ban *vb*
proibir

an owner *n*
um proprietário

to fine *vb*
multar

to injure *vb*
ferir

to jail *vb*
aprimorar, prender

up to *exp*
até

to peak *vb*
atingir o nível mais alto

to drop *vb*
cair, diminuir

a breed *n*
uma raça

to go for *exp*
escolher, selecionar

current *adj*
atual, corrente

climate *n*
clima

the current climate *exp*
o momento atual

appealing *adj*
atraente

fashion *n*
moda

beloved *adj*
querido

to go as far as *exp*
chegar ao ponto de

a pack *n*
uma matilha

leadership *n*
liderança

behaviour *n*
comportamento

it's up to us *exp*
depende de nós

to thrive *vb*
prosperar

a pat *n*
uma palmadinha