

# Year 9 Literacy

## Reading Magazine 1



## Animal Talk

### Can animals talk?

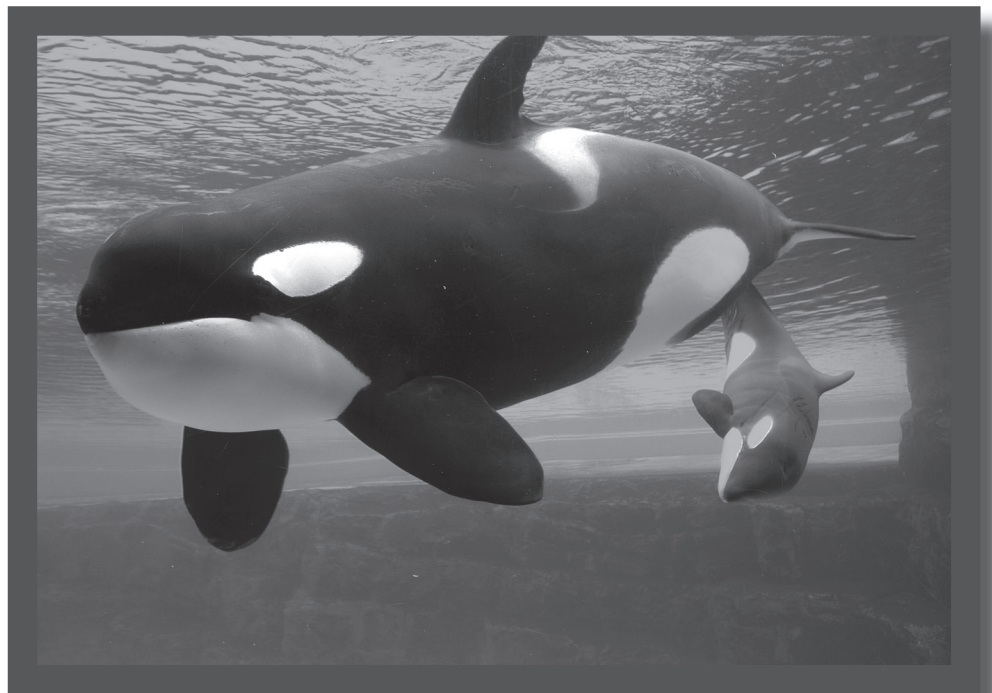
Lots of animals can actually talk, but they communicate differently to the way that we do. Animals don't have a spoken language but instead they communicate with each other using sounds and gestures. That said, some animals (such as parrots and mynah birds) can make noises that sound like words, but they're actually just mimicking us and they don't really understand what they're saying.

### How do animals talk and what do they say?

Well, birds chirp and sing, cats meow and purr, dogs bark, growl, whine and howl and dolphins click and whistle. This is all communication and probably means simple things like: 'I'm hungry', 'I'm annoyed' and 'I'm happy'.

### Do they have conversations?

Possibly – some animal communication is very complex. For example, dolphins give each other instructions when they hunt fish together in groups and bees do a complicated little dance that tells other bees where they have found food. Some sea creatures including whales, dolphins and even the octopus and squid may have language much more complex than we realise. Cuttlefish, for example, can communicate with up to four other cuttlefish at once – by using different sides of their bodies to make patterns of light and colour. Whales have very complex songs that we don't understand, but as they have the biggest brains of any living creature, we figure they must use those big brains for something! As an example of just how big whale brains are, just remember that the next largest known creatures were the dinosaurs – and most large dinosaurs had brains the size of golf balls.



### Tung Ngo

I am an ordinary Australian young guy, and studying to be a teacher. I love my cricket and footy, pizzas from the local, and going to night clubs with my mates.

When I was 22 I ran for local council against the local National Front (a racist hate party) in Enfield in Adelaide, and won. I was sick of the hatred coming from some people and them saying that they represented the people, so I decided to stand up against it and find out who the people really supported. I spoke to a lot of people about this – and they all said if it was what I thought was right, then give it a go.

I faced racism and ignorance myself at school. I came to Australia as a refugee when I was 11 and was picked on heaps. Luckily, I had a teacher who was Greek and she understood what I was going through and really stood up for all of us who were different in some way. I stood up for myself too and after a while we got the bullies sorted. The hardest part for me was getting the English language. Once I had that it was much better – I could face up to the trouble-makers.

It's also important to put something back into the community.

We've received a lot of help but we are now able to put a lot back, so we're 'paying the bills'. I also know a lot of people need support and encouragement, so I can do that in my position on the Council. That will change things – instead of people going home and feeling terrible and blaming themselves if they face problems through poor English, they'll be able to be a lot happier and they'll contribute better to the whole community. I guess I'm a salesman – selling my Vietnamese culture to the Australian community, but also opening up that community to outside influences. We can all benefit from sharing and acknowledging our differences, and developing the rich common ground we have. And when I'm not doing that, I'll just enjoy being a young Australian!



### Fair Trade



#### What is fair trade?

The fair trade movement began in the late 1950s as an attempt to aid Chinese refugees in the US. Today, the International Fair Trade Association includes over one million producers and 3000 organisations in 50 countries.

Fair trade is a response to increasing globalisation. According to Oxfam and other fair trade advocates, large, developed nations like the US, UK and even Australia, pay their farmers to overproduce crops like coffee, corn and wheat. This overproduction drives crop prices down. The excess is then sold to underdeveloped or developing nations at absurdly low prices. This drives local farmers out of business, because they can't compete.

The fair trade movement aims to give these small local farmers a chance. Fair trade organisations work with local producers to sell goods on a global scale. Fair traders produce everything from earrings to chocolate to flour and wheat. So if you're in the market for an organic, ecologically and economically friendly cup of joe, an organisation can act as an agent between you and a coffee farmer in Honduras. Through fair trade, you can buy coffee from that farmer, and she or he will get most of the profits, instead of large corporations.

The fair trade movement also supports equal pay for women, eco-friendly modes of production and safe, healthy work environments.

In this way, the main goal of fair trading is to end world poverty by establishing millions of successful, independent, local producers in developing countries such as Ghana, India, Sri Lanka, Mexico and dozens more. Fair trade is now recognised by many as a way of combating global poverty.

## Goha Gives His Son a Lesson

Goha had a son who was always worried about what people thought of him. The boy could never do anything because he thought other people would think he was foolish.

Goha wanted to teach his son that it was a waste of time to worry about the opinions of other people. He saddled his donkey and told his son he was going to a neighbouring village. Goha got on the donkey and asked his son to walk behind him. On the way they passed some people who pointed at Goha and said, "Look at that cruel man who rides his donkey and lets his son walk. He has no feelings."

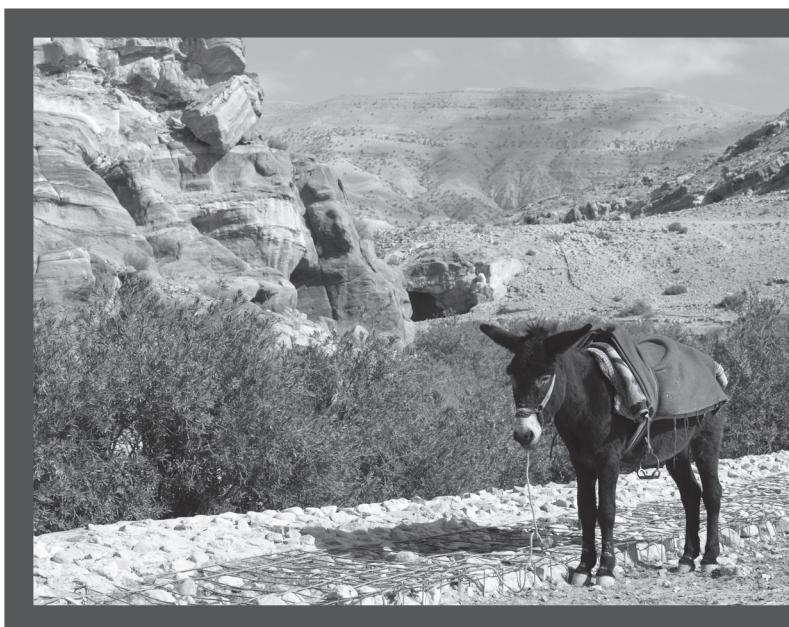
When he heard this, Goha got off the donkey and asked his son to get on, while he himself walked. Again as they passed by, some people pointed at the boy and said:

"Just look at that boy who has no manners and rides that donkey while his old father has to walk."

Goha thought about this and decided they should both ride the donkey. So they both climbed onto the donkey's back and set off again. Again they passed by some people who pointed to them both riding on the donkey and said: "What a cruel man he is. He has no pity for his donkey and allows both him and his son to ride at the same time."

Again Goha thought about what the people had said and so he and his son got off the donkey. They both walked behind it. This time as they passed some people he heard them saying to themselves:

"What a couple of fools they are! Imagine walking when you have a donkey you could ride."



This time Goha was at a loss. Finally after a lot of thought he said to his son:

“Come on. Let’s carry the donkey between us.” So they lifted up the donkey and staggered along the road. Some people saw them and started laughing.

“Look at those two mad people, carrying their donkey instead of riding it!”

So they finally put the donkey down and Goha said to his son

“You must know my son, that whatever you do in life, you will never please everyone.”

## Preschool Teacher

Margaret Cook, 'Goodbye, MrToms...', *The Age* | December 1, 2008

*For Kristin Cantwell, deciding to become a preschool teacher was instinctive – even in her teens.*

'We had a family friend who worked in a preschool and talked about it. I liked what I heard,' she says. 'I'd also done babysitting and I liked young children.'

At 18, she enrolled at the Kindergarten Teachers College in Kew. Now 54, she is about to retire from her last job, Blue Hills Preschool in Bayswater. This is despite parents having 'begged, bribed and bullied' her to stay, according to the preschool's president, Tanya Young.

Since Mrs Cantwell graduated 33 years ago, she has worked in six centres, all in the City of Knox, with about 1700 children. 'Some are now nearly 40', she says, 'and many have children'.



During those years, Mrs Cantwell also raised four of her own children. The job is challenging but never boring – although she admits some parents ask her: 'How do you stay sane?'

'In one day, I'm an educator, psychologist, social worker, nurse, mentor, administrator, purchaser and cleaner,' she says. 'You need to have patience and tolerance, and be able to work through a child's inappropriate behaviour to understand the underlying reason why.'

Mrs Cantwell especially enjoys the honesty, innocence and enthusiasm of young children. 'They love you unconditionally and, apart from Mum and Dad, you're the most important person in their lives.'

Equally important is the respect that families give to preschool teachers. 'We're the first educational body they come to, and a big part of our job is working with them. Sometimes children are leaving their parents for the first time, and you get a lot of concerned Mums and Dads.'

Mrs Young says Mrs Cantwell is much loved by the children and has infinite patience.

'Preschool involves play-based learning', says Mrs Cantwell. 'For example, by playing with blocks, children learn about counting, size and shape. They also pick up pre-reading skills through songs, poems, listening to stories and making up their own.'

'However, it's not structured and each day, and each preschool, is different. We work on each individual's learning and we plan the program around their interests and skills level: physical, emotional, cognitive and social.'

The aims are to promote a love of learning, encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and teach them skills they can use throughout their lives. During their year at preschool, they develop enormously, and this is another joy of the job.

## Think Twice Before You Slam That Can!

When we exercise we start to warm up, and as you get hotter your body starts to sweat.

If you're not careful sweating can drain your body of all the salts and water it needs to stay hydrated.

So after a big event you'll see lots of athletes drinking these. They're promoted as giving them lots more power than plain water. It's because they contain salts, carbohydrates and sugar to replace the important stuff your body needs to recover.

So if these drinks are so good for athletes they must be good for us, right?

Well, nutritionists say if you don't do much exercise and only play a bit of sport they're not the best thing for your body. You see if you don't burn up all those ingredients they'll just sit in your body – and turn into fat.

And if you don't enjoy going to the dentist you also might want to think twice. Studies have found drinking too many sports drinks can damage enamel on teeth and lead to decay.

Ouch!

But there is another group of drinks out there that looks just as exciting. Energy drinks are everywhere. Last year 3.5 billion cans of one particular brand of energy drink were sold in 140 countries.

So why are they so popular?

Like their name suggests, energy drinks give you – energy. But they use some different



ingredients. Two are called caffeine and guarana. They're pretty funny names but they both come from plants and can be found in a lot of products. Caffeine is in coffee, some teas and chocolate. Guarana is also in some snacks. They both stimulate your nerves and make you feel more alert. They can help people stay awake longer and are sometimes used by students when they're studying.

But there is a downside.

Doctors are worried that energy drinks could cause health problems. The concern has grown so much that energy drinks have been banned in France, Denmark and Norway.

Researchers have also just found that when people drank energy drinks their blood cells got sticky and clotted together. Once the blood sticks together it can block veins and arteries, which can lead to stroke or even death if someone has a weak heart.

There's more research that needs to be done but the advice is be careful about how much you drink. And next time you look into the fridge, take a second to think about what's really hiding behind the label.



## A Mistake

*Lisa McNeice*

I made a mistake when I was three or four:  
I thought that Elvis Presley came to our house  
and tuned my brother's ukulele.  
Years later, during Love Me Tender, I turned to Mum  
and said, remember when he...  
And so I make my first quick click  
of readjustment as a nine-year-old  
sitting on our swirly loungeroom carpet.  
Then just last night Dad told me of a kid  
who had a room at the Eureka  
and worked at the Post Office  
he might have slept nights on the telephone exchange.  
Not there long, but yeah, he did  
look like Elvis come to think of it  
and by crikey he could play the guitar.



## Should We Ban Plastic Bags?

### YES

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in the hope that your readers will join the growing movement dedicated to seeing plastic bags banned from our lives. Plastic bags are a hazard to animal and human life and destructive of our environment.

Plastic bags are mistaken as food and consumed by a wide range of marine species, especially those that consume jellyfish or squid, which resemble plastic bags when floating in the water. In August 2000, an autopsy of a whale beached at Trinity Bay near Cairns revealed a tightly compacted ball of plastic debris in the animal's stomach. The contents included 33 different items made up mainly of plastic bags, as well as noodle packages. In total there was nearly six box metres of plastic in the whale's stomach.

Emissions associated with plastic bag manufacture and distribution are a major health hazard. These toxic emissions contribute to acid rain, smog and numerous other harmful effects associated with the use of petroleum, coal and natural gas. By clogging sewer pipes, plastic bags also create stagnant water; stagnant water produces the ideal habitat for mosquitoes, which have the potential to spread diseases, such as encephalitis, dengue fever and malaria.

The manufacture of plastic bags uses large quantities of non-renewable resources, especially petroleum.

If you care about your children's and grandchildren's futures, then you will say YES to banning plastic bags.

Emily Dunn

### NO

Dear Sir/Madam,

The 'no plastic bags' lobby make a lot of noise and quote a lot of figures, but when you look at what they say closely, they are simply being hysterical!

Plastic bags represent only 0.1% of Australia's landfill waste. In terms of Australia's total waste plastics problem, plastic bags make a negligible contribution. Approximately 6.9 billion bags are currently consumed in Australia per year – equivalent to over 37 tonnes of polymer. However, 37 tonnes of polymer is equivalent to only 2.5% of total plastics consumed in Australia per year.

Many plastic shopping bags are used beyond their 'single use' life. They are reused as waste bags or bin liners, lunch bags and general carry bags. It is estimated that approximately 60% of the bags taken home are reused.

The current plastic shopping bag is cheap, lightweight, functional, moisture-resistant, allows for quick packing at the supermarket and is very strong for its weight. Plastic bags perform an important task in product and food safety, keeping uncooked meat or cleaning products separate from other foods.

Plastic bags have environmental advantages. Plastic bags help contain other forms of litter and prevent it leaching out and polluting the soil and contaminating the water table. For example, organic matter such as food waste emits tonnes of greenhouse gases when degrading. Containing this waste in plastic bags may protect the environment.

Alternatives to plastic bags cause environmental harm. A cotton bag is made from a crop that is the most expensive fibre grown in terms of water use, pesticide and energy input. The 'green' bags, which are made from non-woven polypropylene, are designed to have a relatively long life but they are not designed to break down. Polypropylene is a byproduct of oil refining, so not only is it not biodegradable, but it adds to the depletion of fossil fuels and the creation of greenhouse gases.

You want facts? You've got facts. Now, get on with life and enjoy the convenience, versatility and safety a plastic bag offers you.

John Keating