

COMPASS

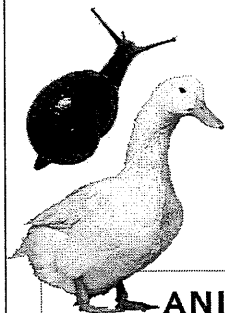
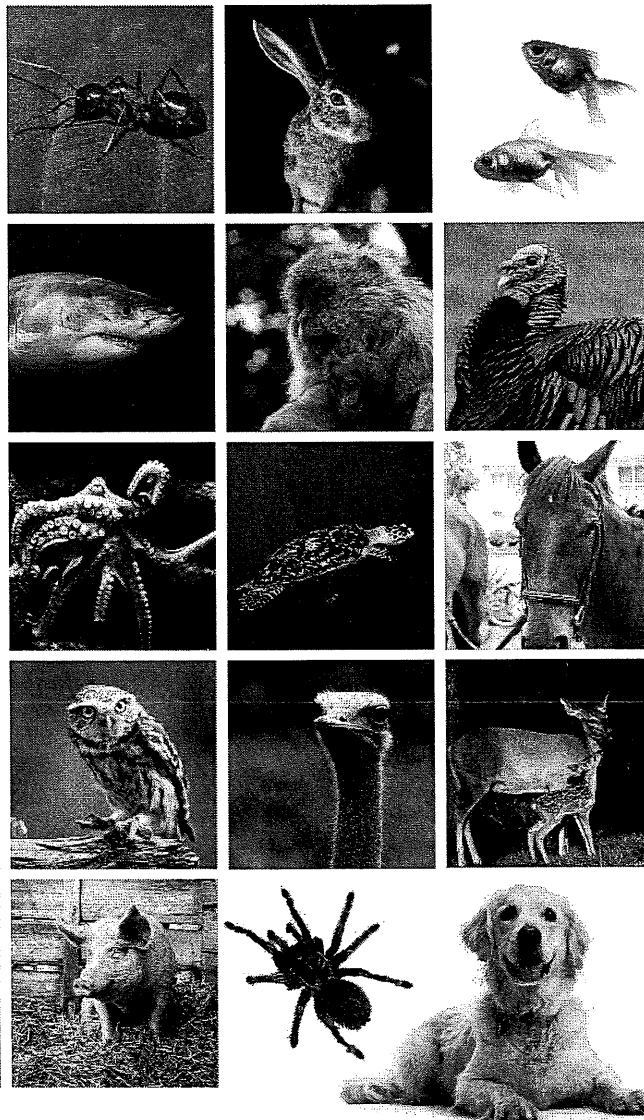
LESSON 3: EATING HABITS

DISCUSSION: CULTURAL EATING HABITS

ACTIVITY 1

With a partner, look at the pictures below.

Can you identify all the animals? Try to divide them into three groups: wild animals, domestic animals and farm animals. Which animals do you eat in your country, and which animals would you consider eating?



ANIMALS I WOULD EAT

ANIMALS I WOULDN'T EAT

ACTIVITY 2

Look at the factors in the box to the right. Which of them might influence what you eat? How might these factors influence your eating habits?

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
| PARENTS | COMMUNITY | PERSONALITY |
| RELIGION | BELIEFS | LOCATION |
| NEIGHBOURS | AGE | WEALTH |

LESSON 3: EATING HABITS

READING: JIGSAW READING

ACTIVITY 1

Read the introduction to the article below and answer the questions.

WHY DO WE LOVE SOME ANIMALS AND EAT OTHERS?

THE BRITISH AND THEIR PETS

We, the British people, like to consider ourselves to be an animal-loving nation. Indeed, according to the annual Pet Food Manufacturer's Association's 'Pet Population Report' that was carried out in 2014, approximately 13 million households are thought to include one or more pets living alongside the human inhabitants. In 24% of these households, at least one of the animal members of the family is a dog, while cats are kept in 18%.

The *Telegraph* estimates that the human members of these 13 million pet-loving households will, between them, spend more than £4.6 billion on their companion animals in 2015 – an increase of 25% when compared with figures from 2010. Yet, according to The Statistics Portal, consumption of meat products has also risen steadily since then, with approximately £19.2 billion spent on these in 2014. The question is, why do we love our dogs and cats but eat our pigs and chickens?

There is no shortage of research demonstrating that all the animals we eat feel pain, are emotionally intelligent, maintain relationships with others of their kind and so on.

Just like we humans and our pets. In fact, pigs are not only thought to be as intelligent as chimpanzees (and often smarter than dogs!) but they are also considered smarter than three-year-old human children. Despite this, if you are born a pig in the UK, your destiny is either to become someone's bacon sandwich or to be kept in a cage so small that you cannot even turn around, in order to carry and give birth to more of your kind to feed the human obsession for meat and meat products. Whereas if you are born a dog, unless you are unlucky, you will be fed and loved and all your needs will be met. ●

Do the people in your country love dogs and cats but eat pigs and chickens? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2

In your group, brainstorm possible reasons for OR against eating pet animals, farmed animals and wild animals. Write your ideas in the table below:

	For	Against
Eating pet animals		
Eating farmed animals		
Eating wild animals		

LESSON 3: EATING HABITS

ACTIVITY 3

Read your section of the article. Can you find any of the reasons you thought of? Are there any that you did not think of? Now ask your partner to tell you about their section of the article. Did they find any new reasons? Tell your partner about your section.

PART A: A PARADOX?

A dog born in Asia, however, may not be so lucky. If you visit China, South Korea and other Asian countries, you will learn that dog meat is one of their traditional dishes and has been for as long as four or five hundred years. In 2015, as in other years, moral outrage was expressed in western social media, including in the UK, with numerous petitions that called for the Yulin Dog Meat Festival in China and the 'Dog Eating Days' (or Bok Nal) in Korea to be discontinued being widely circulated online.

It is not only the consumption of dogs and other pets that disturbs Britons, though. I remember going on holiday with a meat-eating friend of mine, Camilla. We were staying in a safari lodge in Botswana, and she was horrified to see items such as kudu meat, impala meat and ostrich meat on the buffet table at

dinner. Expressing her disgust at the other options, Camilla took some beef and vegetables. Yet, as far as meat-eating goes, in Botswana it is probably more environmentally friendly to eat these meats when you are in the north than it is to eat beef, the country's biggest export. Why? Because encouraging meat farming in the north means infringing on wild animals' habitats and brings with it farm animal parasites and diseases, such as the tsetse fly or foot-and-mouth.

Thus, not only do Britons eat animals while simultaneously claiming to love them, but they pass judgement on people who choose to eat different meats (that the British prefer to avoid) for reasons no better nor worse than their own. I ask again, why is eating dog meat or wild animal meat so much worse than eating pig or

cow meat? Why is it any worse than forcibly impregnating cows so that their milk – meant for their calves who are taken away at birth – can be consumed by humans? The consumption of cow's milk and other so-called 'food animal' products is considered normal in British tradition. What does this mean? Why is there this gap between what the British believe – 'we are animal lovers' – and what they do – eat animals?

Dissonance, according to the Macmillan Dictionary, is 'a situation in which ideas or actions are opposed to each other'. In the situation described above – that is, the British situation – the idea of loving animals is opposed to the action of exploiting them: pets are loved, while farm animals are exploited. ●

ACTIVITY 4

Read the conclusion to the article and answer the following questions:

CONCLUSION

So, if, as a nation of animal lovers, avoiding moral dissonance is as simple as avoiding the exploitation of animals, why does British meat

consumption continue to increase? Is culture and tradition stronger than reason? Are we as a nation blind to the cruelty we condone by eating

meat and other animal products? Is it time to reconsider the food we put on our plates? ●

- i. Is the author for or against the consumption of animals?
- ii. If you were the author's friend, would you have eaten the wild animal meat on the buffet table? Tell your partner and give reasons for your answer.
- iii. The author concludes by asking four questions. What are they? Discuss your answers to these questions.

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ACTIVITY 3

Read your section of the article. Can you find any of the reasons you thought of? Are there any that you did not think of? Now ask your partner to tell you about their section of the article. Did they find any new reasons? Tell your partner about your section.

PART B: A WAY OUT?

Claiming to be an animal lover yet eating animals is a paradox that can be found lurking at the centre of the British population's relationship with animals. Indeed, it has been widely written about. However, this paradox is not only a British characteristic. Hal Herzog, in his book *Some we love, some we hate, some we eat* questions how 60% of Americans can simultaneously be of the belief that animals have the right to life and that humans have the right to consume them, and in his writing he explores this conflict.

Herzog tells us that the goal of his book is 'to encourage [us] to think more deeply about the psychology and moral implications of some of our most important relationships: our relationships with the non-human creatures in our lives' but admits to occupying 'the troubled

middle' in terms of his own ethics: he consumes meat but not veal and opposes animal testing, except when it comes to cancer research.

Some people, however, become aware of this human-animal paradox and recognize that the only way to avoid this moral dissonance, in terms of animals, is to avoid all exploitation of them. These people are known as vegans. According to the UK's Vegan society (formed in 1944), veganism is 'a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.' Veganism is growing increasingly popular in the UK: between 2011 and 2014, the Vegan Society's membership increased by 20%. This is reflected in the appearance of an increasing number of prospering vegan-friendly

eateries, food shops and other businesses in the UK, but it is not a UK-specific phenomenon: the vegan junk food industry is booming in the US (yet McDonald's profits are in decline), Berlin boasts a 'vegan quarter', while 4% of Israelis are said to be vegan.

I went on to a Vegan Facebook group and asked its members why they decided to become vegan. 'I was eating chicken when my cat Sammi suddenly jumped up on the chair and kept staring at me. I looked into her eyes and realized there was absolutely no difference between her and the chicken I was eating. I went vegan immediately,' explains Mary Ann.

'Meat eaters are in denial; they can't face the truth and are not interested in how their food gets on their plate,' adds Jilly. ●

ACTIVITY 4

Read the conclusion to the article and answer the following questions:

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