

**New
Internationalist**

ZOOS

New Internationalist Easier English Ready Lesson- Intermediate

This lesson:

- Discussion / role play / planning
- Reading
- Vocabulary
- Grammar review: singular / plural / articles
- Writing

Have you ever been to a zoo?

Which animals did you see?

Which did you like best?

What conditions were the animals living in?

In small groups, make a list of as many zoo animals as possible in 5 minutes (keep this list for later!)

Can you think of 5 arguments for zoos and 5 arguments against? Make a list in pairs



Which of these 2 women do you think will argue for zoos, and which is arguing against?

- **Linda Kimotho.** Linda is a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist at the Born Free Foundation. She is a passionate conservationist, she has an MA in Project Management from the University of Nairobi and is studying for an MSc in GIS at the University of Twente. She uses geospatial technology to offer solutions to current social, economic and environmental challenges.
- **Oluwaseun Serah Iyasere.** Oluwaseun is a specialist in Animal Behaviour and Welfare and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Animal Physiology, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. She is the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) link person for her institution. Oluwaseun is the first secretary of the International Society for Applied Ethology, Africa and West Asia region. She is an Editorial Advisory Board member of Applied Animal Behaviour Science Journal.

Decide if the numbered words should be singular or plural or have articles (a / an / the):

We get excited to see **(1) animal** so close, but when we see them unhappy: **(2) hyena** trying to hide, **(3) rhino** walking up and down, **(4) lazy lion** that don't know how strong they are, and **(5) bird** with cut feathers, it's not so exciting.

(6) Zoo show **(7) animal** in an unreal environment. It's like looking at something under **(8) microscope**, taking **(9) animal** out of their natural context. Far better than seeing **(10) animal** in a zoo is seeing them in **(11) wild** – for example **(12) lion** hunting or **(13) elephant** migrating, on **(14) wild safari**.

Check: why are most of them plural with no article?

We get excited to see **animals** so close, but when we see them unhappy, **hyenas** trying to hide, **rhinos** walking up and down, lazy **lions** that don't know how strong they are, and **birds** with cut feathers, it's not so exciting.

Zoos show **animals** in an unreal environment. It's like looking at something under **a microscope**, taking **animals** out of their natural context. Far better than seeing **animals** in a zoo is seeing them in **the wild** – for example **lions** hunting or **elephants** migrating, on **a wild safari**.

Do you agree with these ideas? Why? / Why not?

Make the numbered words singular or plural and add articles where needed:

I disagree that (1) zoo cause more harm to (2) wildlife. This is because (3) zoo are one of the most important (4) way to conserve most endangered species. (5) Wild animal are in danger from (6) climate change, other (7) animal that eat them, and human poaching and hunting. If (8) zoo had not looked after (9) animal, many species, for example (10) Iberian lynx, California condor and pygmy hog, would have become extinct.

Many (11) zoo have developed many different conservation programmes. These include fighting for the (12) wild animal and research. They make sure that (13) animals live in (14) habitat that is near natural to try to get them to live naturally. Most conservation (15) programme also breed (16) wild animal in (17) zoo and then take them back to live in (18) wild.

Check: Why are these correct? (other answers are possible too)

I disagree that **zoos** cause more harm to **wildlife**. This is because **zoos** are one of the most important **ways** to conserve most endangered species. **Wild animals** are in danger from **climate change**, other **animals** that eat them, and human poaching and hunting. If **zoos** had not looked after **animals**, many species, for example **the Iberian lynx, California condor and pygmy hog**, would have become extinct.

Many **zoos** have developed many different conservation programmes. These include fighting for the **wild animals** and research. They make sure that **animals** live in a **habitat** that is near natural to try to get them to live naturally. Most conservation **programmes** also breed the **wild animals** in **the zoo** and then take them back to live in **the wild**.

Do you agree with these ideas? Why? Why not?

Vocabulary – match:

1/ a microscope

2/ to migrate

3/ an instinct

4/ welfare

5/ a boundary

6/ to conserve

7/ a habitat

8/ to breed

- a) to move from one area to another, usually each year (animals)
- b) to protect something from harm or destruction
- c) a line that marks the limit of an area
- d) to have babies (animals)
- e) a scientific instrument to look at very small things
- f) the natural home of a plant or animal
- g) a typical behaviour pattern that animals are born with and follow
- h) health and happiness of people or animals

KEY:

1/ a microscope e

2/ to migrate a

3/ an instinct g

4/ welfare h

5/ a boundary c

6/ to conserve b

7/ a habitat f

8/ to breed d

a) to move from one area to another, usually each year (animals)

b) to protect something from harm or destruction

c) a line that marks the limit of an area

d) to have babies (animals)

e) a scientific instrument to look at very small things

f) the natural home of a plant or animal

g) a typical behaviour pattern that animals are born with and follow

h) health and happiness of people or animals

Now read the full argument (3 slides) – what do you agree with?:

LINDA: We get excited to see animals so close, but when we see them unhappy, hyenas trying to hide, rhinos walking up and down, lazy lions that don't know how strong they are, and birds with cut feathers, it's not so exciting. Zoos show animals in an unreal environment. It's like looking at something under a microscope, taking animals out of their natural context. Far better than seeing animals in a zoo is seeing them in the wild – for example lions hunting or elephants migrating, on a wild safari. Animals suffer in zoos from 'zoochosis'. This is a psychological condition which affects the animal's quality of life. Animals never get this in the wild – and this shows that zoos cannot give animals the right environment that they need to live well.

Zoos take away the value of wildlife because animals normally live with no interaction with humans. Interaction with humans stops the animal instincts, which are so important for staying alive in the wild, so they have to stay in zoos forever. World Animal Protection say that 75 per cent of the zoo facilities under the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) do not follow the organisation's animal welfare guidelines and standards. These guidelines should protect the animals from risks in zoos, for example diseases, genetic disorders and early death.

OLUWASEUN: I think animal welfare should focus on what the animal thinks about its environment. We humans believe that animals are more comfortable in the wild than in zoos, so they can behave naturally. But this is not really what it is like in the wild. Most animals in the wild cannot cross many invisible boundaries. Humans cannot see these boundaries, but animals know they are there by calling and marking scents.

Only the stronger, more important animals have freedom to eat, move around and choose which animal to reproduce with. Other animals (especially males) don't have these choices. Zoos don't give so much space, but they do give the other choices.

Wild animals now have many problems, because of human action, for example less space. Humans kill them or trade them. They often suffer a lot from capture and transportation. During 2019-2020, bushfires in Australia destroyed more than 18 million hectares and many millions of animals died there. With climate change, wild animals will probably have a lot of problems, for example, losing their habitat, and not enough food and water.

Zoos can allow people to see wild and exotic animals, and this helps with education, conservation and preservation of the ecosystem, and reintroduction programmes for endangered species. Nowadays, zoos are less for entertaining people and more for conserving wild animals.

LINDA: I agree that humans usually harm wildlife rather than help them in nature. But if humans have failed to protect wildlife in nature, they won't be able to protect them in zoos. It is very difficult and expensive to make the zoos similar to the animals' natural environment. Nature without humans is good at dividing resources equally. Nature needs limits on areas to do this.

Born Free Foundation did research on members of the Consortium of Charitable Zoos. This showed that only 26.6 per cent of species in the zoos were in the 'threatened with extinction' category in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list. More than 50 per cent of the animals in zoos have enough resources to survive in the wild with no help from humans.

Animals are losing their habitats quickly, but this problem cannot be helped by zoos. Instead, we need protected areas to conserve wildlife. This will make sure we have a green ecosystem with little human influence – to make us stronger to face climate change.

OLUWASEUN: I disagree that zoos cause more harm to wildlife. This is because zoos are one of the most important ways to conserve most endangered species. Wild animals are in danger from climate change, other animals that eat them, and human poaching and hunting. If zoos had not looked after animals, many species, for example the Iberian lynx, California condor and pygmy hog, would have become extinct.

Many zoos have developed many different conservation programmes. These include fighting for the wild animals and research. They make sure that animals live in a habitat that is near natural to try to get them to live naturally. Most conservation programmes also breed the wild animals in the zoo and then take them back to live in the wild. Members of WAZA spend nearly \$350 million a year on conservation projects in the wild – they are the third largest contributor to conservation in the world. The overall goal of the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is to 'save the unique species that live there for future generations'.

LINDA: Studies have shown that it is not very successful to take endangered animals born in zoos back to the wild. Animals in zoos get used to humans and usually don't develop survival skills they really need in the wild. They need a very safe place to live at first. So it is very important to create these safe places for animals, and stop animals being threatened. Breeding animals in zoos often means fewer baby animals survive. This can be because of nutrition, care, or genetic factors.

With new technology, people can see wildlife and get education about conservation in virtual safaris and documentaries. These don't harm the animals and show them in their natural environment. I feel that zoos should not replace conservation of endangered species in their natural habitat. We should put more effort and resources into making these natural habitats safe and stopping the exploitation of wildlife.

OLUWASEUN: Most natural things - hunger, disease and bigger animals killing them are harmful to animals in the wild. Animals in zoos are free from hunger and disease, and they have no fear of bigger animals or a difficult life. With more research, most zoos improve their environments for animals so they can behave naturally.

Also, climate change will bring more danger to wild animals, for example from intense drought, storms, heatwaves and rising sea levels. There will be not so many other animals to eat, or water to drink. A lot of these species may become endangered or even go extinct if we do not look after them in zoos. All these points show that animals can have better lives in zoos than in the wild.

Role play: prepare for your 'argument' first by re-reading and making notes on the relevant opinions, then, in pairs take these roles:

Linda
- argue
against zoos

Oluwaseun –
argue for zoos

Now – in the same small groups, take the list of zoo animals you made earlier:

You are managers of a zoo and all these animals are available.

You need to discuss and agree on the perfect zoo (imagine you have as much money as you need).

Plan:

- **How many enclosures and buildings? How large?**
- **How many / which animals in each?**
- **Which animals will need special environments? How will you plan this?**
- **Which animals will you not keep in your zoo? Why not?**

After 15-20 minutes, all groups will present their plan and then vote on the best one

Writing:

In pairs, write a balanced article:

‘Should we still have zoos?’

120 – 150 words

You must use:

conditionals, passives, relative clauses,
linkers, pronouns, a range of tenses

Homework:

Read the original (more difficult) article:

[https://newint.org/features/2021/12/09/
do-zoos-cause-more-harm-good](https://newint.org/features/2021/12/09/do-zoos-cause-more-harm-good)

Then search (top right) for more articles on animals to read:

<https://eewiki.newint.org/>