

## IELTS Speaking Topic – Animals and pets #3

This is a sample response for IELTS Speaking Part 2 and 3. In addition to the model answer there are highlighted words and phrases. **Teal** is for vocabulary relating to this topic, **yellow** is for generally useful words and phrases.

## IELTS Speaking Part 2

Describe a pet you or somebody you know has

You should say:

- what the pet is
- how long you or somebody else have had it
- if there is special about it

and say if owning this pet brings any inconvenience.

### Model answer

My grandmother has two **budgerigars** - these are species of parrots, they are slightly bigger than **sparrows** and have very colourful **plumage**. A male and a female, they seem to be quite fond of one another. They can often be seen cleaning their feathers, **chirping** away. They get especially **vocal** in the morning as soon as the sun rises, so the cage they live in has to be covered with cloth, otherwise they get too excited in the morning. Grannie has had them for about seven years, and she had them since they were both babies. They say that **in captivity** they can live to be as old as fifteen years. Sometimes it makes me think that they might **outlive** my grandmother who is in her nineties now.

An interesting thing about these parrots is that one of them - the female - can talk. Over the years granny has managed to teach it some basic phrases that she exclaims from time to time. There is no telling when she will do that, it all seems very spontaneous. Sometimes she does that in the middle of the night - she seems to have **irregular sleeping hours**, even when we cover her cage with a blanket. This is quite a nuisance, when the quiet house is suddenly brought back to life because the parrot has one of her talkative **spree**s. But I guess the granny doesn't mind this too much.

## IELTS Speaking Part 3

### Animals and society

#### What impact do you think pets have on people's mental health?

The impact has to be mostly positive. There ought to be at least **a handful of** scientific researches on the matter than prove therapeutic effects of having a pet. One interesting thing about animals in general and pets in particular is that they will very often love you **unconditionally**. I mean they just love you for who you are, not because you have money or social status. It is really heartwarming when you realise that. Secondly, pets can provide much needed emotional support just by **hanging around** you. Scientists also have reasons to think that pets help reduce stress and anxiety levels.

Another important thing is that one has to take care of pets - I guess it could feel like a lot of responsibility, so that might not be a necessarily positive influence on your mental **welfare**. However, I think it's just a nice opportunity to **get out of your comfort zone**. Finally, when your pet does, the emotional toll it takes on you can be **immeasurable**. The owner always has to keep this in mind to better prepare for the moment their pet inevitably **passes away**.

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### What could be done to reduce conflicts between people and animals in urban areas?

In order to address the issue of such conflicts, we first of all have to understand their nature. One example is when people **dispose of** food waste improperly. Said waste often attracts **stray** and wild animals as some species can smell it from miles away. This can often lead to conflict as people might see this as invasion on private property. Another issue **stemming from** misunderstanding is general misconception about stray dogs posing danger to people and kids. It is almost never **the case** unless the animal is ill or when the dogs are in larger packs. As pack animals their instinct might **kick in** and they could exhibit **overly** aggressive behaviour.

People need to understand that animals are never hostile without a reason, and such reason could range from diseases like **rabies**, to being provoked or troubled past experience with humans. In order to address most of such issues, people need to get better education on how animals **reason** and how they are guided by instincts rather than mind and logic. I believe this is where biology or similar school subjects could **fill students in**.

## Animals rights

### What do you think are the main arguments for and against animal rights?

I can't think of many arguments against animal rights. One that comes to mind that animal are not **sentient**, I mean they probably do not even realise they exist. For some this fact makes it ethically acceptable to **subject** animals to experiments and suffering in general. Similar reasoning leads people to believe that by experimenting on animals we don't have to conduct such tests on people which is more **humane**. I believe such argument are rather weak, as no living thing deserves such fate, no matter how developed or intelligent they are.

To grant and **uphold** animal rights makes much more sense. I believe it is our duty and privilege to **coexist** peacefully with wild animals and ensure decent welfare for pets and other **critters** living in urban areas. One ought to keep in mind that they are an integral part of the biosphere. It is possible that many species **predate** humans, so we should be treating them with respect similarly to old people.

### What is your opinion on using animals for entertainment purposes, such as in circuses or zoos?

Usage of animals for entertainment purposes has long been a controversial issue. For the past decade the matter has especially been **in the public eye** as various non-profit organisation were trying to draw attention to the matter. Nevertheless, people remain **divided on the matter**. Some argue that it provides education and enjoyment for people while others see it as unethical and cruel to keep animals in **captivity** and force them to perform.

In circuses, animals are often trained through harsh and inhumane methods. They are forced to perform tricks and routines that are far from natural - nothing the animal would do **willingly**. While in zoos no such things occur, they have their downsides as well - animals often live in very limited areas, which is especially true for bigger predators whose **hunting range** can span tens of kilometers. In both zoos and circuses animals can feel bored and isolated. Of course not all zoos and circuses are alike. Some offer only the best regarding feeding and living conditions. Unfortunately, such examples are quite rare.

## Pets and animals vocabulary

**Budgerigar** (n) - a small parrot, also known as parakeet.

**Sparrow** (n) - a small bird with greyish-brown feathers, common to temperate climates and often found in towns and cities.

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**Plumage** (n) - feathers and down that cover a bird's body.

**Chirping** (n) - the pleasant sound that birds make which can be an indicator of their mood or when they try to attract female's attention. *Morning chirping in the nearby park never fails to cheer me up.*

**In captivity** - if an animal is held in captivity it means that it is not in its natural habitat and is often there against their will.

**Stray** (adj) - (about an animal) without a particular place where it lives. *Stray dogs are usually very thing and often rely on strangers' goodwill as a source of food.*

**Rabies** (n) - an infectious disease of animals that can be contracted by a person through bite. It makes the animal unreasonably aggressive to the point where it can become extremely dangerous.

**Sentient** (adj) - aware of one's existence, able to understand the world. *Crows are one of the few avian species that are fully sentient.*

**Subject** (v) - to make somebody undergo something. *It is not fair to subject students to tests every week as they hardly get to learn anything new over such brief period.*

**Humane** (adj) - characterised by good qualities usually found in humans such as compassion and empathy. *If the animal lived in more humane conditions it would undoubtedly feel much happier.*

**Coexist** (v) - to live together, to share a habitat. *Most primates can coexist peacefully provided they don't have to compete for limited food or space.*

**Critter** (n) - a creature, an animal.

**Hunting range** - the area which predator considers its hunting grounds.

## General vocabulary

**Vocal** (adj) - (here) loud or active with its voice (or song if referring to birds).

**Outlive** (v) - to live longer than somebody else. *He managed to outlive most of his political opponents.*

**Irregular sleeping hours** - an inconsistent sleeping schedule. *With night shifts you are almost guaranteed to end up with irregular sleeping hours - this takes a serious toll on your health.*

**Spree** (n) - a long period of some activity or series of actions. *His success spree lasted throughout the year.*

**A handful of** - some, a small amount of. *A handful of people turned up for the event and I could barely recognise any of them.*

**Unconditionally** (adv) - without asking or expecting anything in return. *Our help was completely unconditional and we will not be demanding any payment for it.*

**Welfare** (n) - (here) well-being. *Your welfare ten years from now depends on the choices that you make now, so make them carefully.*

**Get out of one's comfort zone** - to do something you are not used to doing or do not like to do in order to strengthen your character.

**Immeasurable** (adj) - too big to measure or quantify. *The immeasurable effort it took the firefighters to extinguish the flame.*

**Pass away** (phr v) - to die.

**Dispose of** - to get rid of something. *Dispose of your waste responsibly - sort paper, plastic and organic waste and put them in separate containers.*

**Stem from** (v) - to originate or come from, to be the reason for something. *Your insecurity seems to stem from some childhood trauma you might not remember. Maybe you forced yourself to forget about it as a coping technique.*

**The case** (n) - if something is the case, it is the reason or a relevant example of something. *Smoking killed many people, but it wasn't the case for him as he died in a car accident.*

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**Kick in** (phr v) - (informal) take effect, come into action. *As soon as the sleeping pills kick in I'm going to go straight to bed.*

**Overly** (adv) - too much, more than needed. *Maybe you were overly careful with your approach to research, that's why the results are a bit underwhelming.*

**Reason** (v) - to think, to make decisions, to analyse something.

**Fill somebody in** (phr v) - to give somebody information, especially one they need and do not have. *Fill me in on the situation, I don't have time to read the official report.*

**Uphold** (v) - to follow and support a law, a regulation; to enforce.

**Predate** (v) - to appear sooner than something else. *Steam and electric engines predate gasoline ones.*

**In the public eye** - known to general public, having public attention. *Politicians are always in the public eye, that is exactly why they may come off as a bit insincere since they have to please everybody.*

**Divided on the matter** - if people are divided on something, it means they have different opinion on it and cannot come to agree.

**Willingly** (adv) - on their own will rather than forced; consensually. *Nobody in their right mind would willingly work for this little money.*