

Your workplace's best friend?

Level: Intermediate +

Time: 90 minutes

Summary: This lesson is about taking pets into work. In this lesson, students:

1. discuss statistics from recent studies;
2. study a text on the advantages and disadvantages of taking a pet into work;
3. write a set of guidelines to ensure a pet-friendly workplace is a comfortable place for all concerned, including the pets;
4. exchange opinions on and experiences of taking pets into the workplace.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student

Group size: Any

Note: This lesson plan is for both pre-experience and in-work business students based on an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* issue 7/2019.

Warmer

Have students discuss the first set of questions briefly with a partner or in small groups. Then collate students' answers to question 2 on the board, and work out the percentage and most popular pet together. Students then read the text in question 3 and discuss their responses to it as a class or in small groups.

Key words

Students match the key words and expressions with the definitions and then find them in the article before reading carefully through the article and noticing how they are used in context. The words in the task are in the order that they appear in the article.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. companion | 7. groomed |
| 2. diversion | 8. poop scoops |
| 3. interact | 9. obedient |
| 4. pop over | 10. cruel |
| 5. morale | 11. resilience |
| 6. tend to | 12. revitalize |

Should you take a dog to work?

To make this more communicative, students can do this task in pairs. They should read the article again and find the reasons in favour of or against taking a dog to work and dictate these to their partner who should write them onto the worksheet.

Key (possible answers):

for	against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs reduce people's stress levels. • They make offices more friendly. • They provide positive diversions. • They remind you to take a break, which in turn may reduce your stress and consequently increase your productivity. • They lower absenteeism. • They raise morale, employee engagement and retention. • They have a positive effect on both employee well-being and the business as a whole. • They provide emotional support and joy. • They help people recover from ill health or a difficult time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs might be an unwelcome distraction. • They can be unhygienic and smelly. • They may have 'accidents'. • Other people at work may be allergic to them. • It could be stressful or frightening for the animals to be in the workplace, with strange noises, smells and unfamiliar people.

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Workplace guidelines for responsible dog owners

Students complete the gaps with advice on what a dog owner should do if they decide to take their dog to work. Tell the students to use information from the article to complete their sentences. Their answers might vary, and the most important thing is for them to write complete, grammatically correct sentences. Encourage them to write further guidelines of their own.

Key (possible answers):

- *have a pet insurance policy*
- *make sure their dog is clean, well groomed, free of parasites and not smelly*
- *be 100 per cent responsible at all times for their dog*
- *train their dog to be obedient and not to bark*
- *make sure their dog doesn't feel stressed*

Discussion

In pairs or small groups, students discuss the questions. Hold a short, whole-class feedback session afterwards in which you compare the students' answers to the information in the information box from task 1 and the information given in the article. In general, do the opinions in the class reflect those in the information and the article? If not, briefly discuss why that might be.