

When a sick possum showed up in my garden my heart overtook my head. Is it ever OK to feed urban wildlife?

Level 3: Advanced

Article summary: This article describes what happened when the author found an injured possum in her garden and examines whether it is a good or bad idea to feed urban wildlife.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Phrasal verbs

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

5. e
6. r
7. c
8. k
9. n
10. g
11. i
12. p
13. l
14. a
15. j
16. t
17. f
18. s
19. m
20. h

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about the urban wildlife that often visit gardens and yards in their area. You can extend the activity by asking students to name different types of urban wildlife that are native to their country or region, e.g. foxes, bats, raccoons, coyotes, etc.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually to match the words and phrases to the correct definitions. Remind them to look at the different forms of any verbs (e.g. simple past, present continuous, etc.) in the definitions, as these will give them clues as to the form of the verb from the article. For an extra challenge, you might like to ask students to complete this as a timed activity, finding the words in the article within two minutes. This will help students develop their scanning skills. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. b
2. o
3. d
4. q

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity in the correct form.

Key:

1. *thaw*
2. *tentatively*
3. *divisive*
4. *huffing*
5. *cardinal sin*
6. *hasten*
7. *ordeal*
8. *nibbling*
9. *screeched*
10. *endemic to*
11. *wheezes*
12. *encroaching on*
13. *sound*
14. *rustling*
15. *tut tuts*
16. *intruder*
17. *diligently*
18. *rashes*
19. *pus*
20. *a fine line*

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3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage them to highlight the sections of the article where they found the answers to the questions.

Key:

1. True
2. False – ‘... I watched the sick possum pick up berries, nibbling while purple juice dripped off its chin.’
3. True
4. True
5. False – ‘They can also become ‘humanised’ and lose their natural fear of potential predators including domestic pets ...’
6. True
7. True
8. False – ‘And every so often my husband still leaves out an apple slice for the possum. Even though we know we shouldn’t.’

4. Key language

- a. Students work individually to find the phrasal verbs in the article (again, this could be a timed activity) and to match them to the correct definition.

Key:

1. d
2. e
3. f
4. c
5. a
6. b

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences with the words from the previous activity in the correct form. To extend the activity, ask students to work in pairs to write example sentences of their own using the expressions.

Key:

1. scampered into
2. dotted with
3. thrash around
4. fend for
5. became reliant on
6. care about

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to get students to think about the different arguments for and against feeding urban wildlife. Give them some time to work together in small groups to create their list of arguments. Remind them that they can use quotes or arguments from the article, as well as list their own opinions on the issue.
- b. Give students time to present their ideas to their classmates. Students can then decide on whose ideas they think are the most convincing.