

Modals: Pets and their Owners

**READING
TEXT**

Pets are very often a reflection of their owners. A toy poodle, for example, seems a natural pet for an elderly lady, but would look a little odd being walked by a 250-pound truck driver. Similarly, the trucker might enjoy owning a Rottweiler, which would probably not be the lady's cup of tea. In this text you will first read descriptions of seven pet owners, and then the descriptions of seven pets. At the end of all the texts you will find a chart. To complete the chart, you must decide which pet belongs to which owner, and then explain your choices. There are no right or wrong answers, the choices will be up to you. In your explanations, be sure to use modals of speculation where appropriate.

THE OWNERS

1. CATHERINE JONES

Catherine is a twenty-eight-year-old chartered accountant who lives and works in a downtown high-rise in a big city. She works long hours and often has to make overnight business trips. Catherine lives alone in her chic apartment, which is furnished entirely in white. In her free time she enjoys socializing in restaurants, bars, and discos. During the week, however, Catherine enjoys her private time at home, reading and listening to music, especially jazz.

2. DOROTHY WINGER

Dorothy lives in a charming little cottage in an equally charming small town. She was a school teacher for forty-three years, but she has been retired for several years now. She felt terribly lonely after her husband died last year, so she decided to buy her first pet to keep her company. Dorothy loves to garden and to watch T.V. She subscribes to several gardening magazines and maintains letter-writing relationships with several former students who have moved away. This year, she is planning her first adventure vacation, a nature-watching trip to the Galapagos Islands.

3. THE COLLARD FAMILY

The Collard's live in a big ranch-style house in the suburbs. They have a good-sized, fenced-in backyard and live just a block from a large city park. Jim and Mary Collard have three kids: Bill, 8; Jane, 6; and Maggie, 4. Like little kids everywhere they have tons of energy and are on the go all day long. The Collard's love to go on family picnics, and on weekends they usually go to Mary's parents' cottage, which is situated on a mountain lake about an hour from the Collards' home.

4. ADAM CLEESE

Adam is a twenty-five-year-old computer games designer who lives in a big city apartment with his younger brother Eric, a university student. Adam is a star in the computer-games world. He has created some of the most popular games ever, including Super Horatio, an electronic obstacle course, and Petrus, a game in which participants fire exploding grapes at the bad guys.

Adam's favourite music is heavy metal. He has dyed his hair and his eyebrows jet black. He usually gets up around noon, and gets to his office by 1 p.m. He then works late into the evening, thinking up new versions of electronic mayhem.

5. GILBERT BRONSKY

Gilbert is a pilot for a big airline. He criss-crosses North America on a regular basis. He is lucky to have trustworthy neighbours who have a key to his condo and a fondness for animals. Gilbert loves his work, but he finds it stressful and is always looking for ways to relax. He lives alone. He has tried yoga and transcendental meditation and is currently doing tai chi twice a week. When not flying around the continent, Gilbert loves to stay home, listen to classical music, and read about Eastern philosophies.

6. PEGGY HAMILTON

Peggy is a thirty-eight-year-old professional artist who lives in the same working-class neighbourhood in which she grew up. She lives with her husband and her two teenage sons. Her speciality is wooden sculptures of the people she encounters on her street. Her sculptures have been described by one art critic as “... ripe, round, sensual explosions of life.” As Peggy says of her subjects “...they aren’t the rich and the famous, but I love them.” Peggy rarely leaves her neighbourhood but she is always having friends over for potluck suppers. She is happy to be a homebody.

7. BILLY HILL

Billy is a fifteen-year-old boy who lives in the basement of his family’s home. He is a teenager interested in sports, music, cars and girls. He also likes to hang out with his friends. His favourite subject in school is biology. He especially enjoys dissecting worms and frogs in the school lab. Billy’s dream in life is to become a guitarist in a famous rock band; but if that doesn’t work, he thinks he might like to be a dentist.

THE PETS

1. JAKE

Jake is a typical golden retriever, an energetic, sociable dog. A perfect day for Jake involves a lot of running, eating, chewing, playing, and above all, being with people. Jake does not like being alone. If alone for more than five or six hours at a time he is quite likely to chew up the couch or a pair of shoes. Jake is probably too friendly to bite an intruder, but his booming bark makes him an effective watchdog. Jake is not a complex, delicate or high-strung animal; all he needs to be happy is some space to run and some people to be with. Who do you think Jake lives with? Why?

2. BUBBA

Bubba is a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig. Vietnamese potbellies make excellent pets as they are affectionate, clean, and easily housebroken. Unlike Jake, Bubba is not an exercise enthusiast. A perfect day for Bubba consists of eating, sleeping, and eating some more. Bubba is an indoor pet. He rarely ventures outside, even in the summer, and his cold-sensitive heart will not allow him to go outside during the winter. Bubba is not as sociable as a dog, but he enjoys human company and he is sad if he is left alone for long periods. Who does Bubba live with? Why?

3. FELIX

Felix is a white, shorthaired cat. The short white hair is a hit with his owner, who likes a neat and tidy home but has little time to clean up. Felix is a proud, independent animal who is equally happy to be alone at home or to share it with his owner. Much like Bubba, on a perfect day Felix has enough to eat and lots of time for sleeping. Felix's home is often invaded by his owner and other people on the weekend, and he is happy when Monday rolls around. Who would Felix be happy with? Please explain.

4. MONTY

Monty is a long, long animal: a great snake who crushes, then eats his food. He usually eats live rodents dropped monthly into his large glass terrarium. The life of a python in a human home is a simple one. Monty spends his days doing very little but lying around. As he only eats once a month, he has few disruptions in his routine of doing nothing. Monty is not a cuddly, loving pet. He displays no emotions whatsoever and seems completely unconcerned about human company. His presence would be valued more by its owner for its dramatic effect. Who should Monty's owner be?

5. TWEETY

A bright and chirping canary, Tweety lives in a large cage in a cosy corner of his owner's home. Tweety wakes her/his owner at the crack of dawn with a sweet song. Tweety is not an emotional, demanding pet because she requires little maintenance and her singing keeps her owner company. Who owns Tweety?

6. THE SWARM

The Swarm is the collective name for the hard-working, hierarchical, ant colony that inhabits a terrarium, smaller than Monty's, in the owner's bedroom. To human eyes, ants seem to be a chaotic mess of forever-moving little insects with no plan or organization to their frantic activities. In fact, ant colonies are rigidly organised communities in which individual ants have strictly defined roles that they carry out with great industry. They make clean and interesting pets. They also give many adults the creeps. So, who owns the ants? Why?

7. THE BATHING BEAUTIES

The Bathing Beauties spend their days swimming, sleeping, and looking lovely. They are the residents of a fifty-gallon aquarium composed of: fantails, neon tetras, zebras, swordtails and catfish. Freshwater tropical fish require only regular feeding, and they place few demands on a busy owner's time. They are beautiful, so watching them swim about is a surprisingly relaxing activity. Watching them can be a fine way to unwind after a tough day at work. If the fish are stressed, they do not show it. To human eyes, they are perfectly happy just to swim and swim. Who owns the Bathing Beauties? Why?

Write a sentence with each of the following words and expressions.

1. **CHIC** _____
2. **SUBSCRIBE** _____
3. **OBSTACLE
COURSE** _____
4. **MAYHEM** _____
5. **CRISS-CROSS** _____
6. **TRUSTWORTHY** _____
7. **POTLUCK** _____
8. **HOMEBODY** _____
9. **HOUSEBROKEN** _____
10. **TO DISSECT** _____
11. **INTRUDER** _____
12. **HIERARCICAL** _____
13. **RIGIDLY** _____

Advanced 1 – Reading Exercise 4 – Modals: Pets and their Owners

Which pet belongs with which owner? Complete the chart below. Use MODALS OF SPECULATION in your explanation where appropriate.

Owner	Pet	Explanation
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		