

# Animals

Vocabulary: animal names, adjectives, domestic vs wild

Grammar point: comparative adjectives

## Introduction

1. Look at the picture below. How many of the following animals can you name?



2. Are any of these animals native to your country? Work with a partner and guess the countries from which all the pictured animals come.
3. Here is a list of some household pets. Match the picture to the word.

Snake

cat

ferret

dog

mouse

Hamster

guinea pig

horse

goldfish

Frog

rat

tarantula

rabbit

1.



2.



3.

4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.

11.



12.



## Listening

Listen to the following people talk about their pets. Who does not have a pet?  
Why not?

## Reading

Read the following text about fantastic animals and answer the questions.

### *Fantastic Research and Where to Find it: The Creatures in Harry Potter*

One of the **best** things about J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series is the amount of work that she did to recreate another world. Fans of the book love the effort she put into not just her characters but the 'wizarding universe' that surrounds them. This extends to the animals.

Animals are important in Harry Potter. One of the supporting characters, Rubeus Hagrid, is a teacher in the subject Care of Magical Creatures, and the creatures here range from unicorns, to hippogriffs, to completely made-up Blast Ended Skrewts. Sometimes they are important to the plot and sometimes they simply add to the feel of a magical land.

The animals can be divided into three groups. There are normal animals, such as cats and owls, which are slightly magically altered. In the books, one of the main character's cat has **far greater** intelligence than a normal cat; Crookshanks, who belongs to Hermione Granger, helps to uncover the real identity of an apparently normal rat named Scabbers. Examples that appear **more frequently than** the aforementioned are the owls in the wizarding world. Here the owls are responsible for delivering the post.

The second group would be animals from or inspired by mythology. Some are **more obvious** than others; the children look after unicorns and unicorn foals in Care of Magical Creatures with the reader knowing that JK Rowling didn't invent those. But a **less known** fact is that Buckbeak, the very important Hippogriff in book 3, is not a Rowling creation. Hippogriffs, vast half eagle half horse beasts with wings, come from Latin mythology, and are said to be related to the **more famous** gryphon. Bigger than the Hippogriff is the Basilisk. The Basilisk is also a reference to mythology, but in Harry

Potter the creature is **far bigger** than in the myth. There are many more examples of mythological monsters in Harry Potter, such as mandrakes, banshees and Cerberus.

The last group consists of creatures that Rowling has made up. This is normally explained by a character in the book (Hagrid normally) breeding the animals for some purpose or other. The **most famous examples** include skrewts, bubotubers, and fire crabs.

Truly Rowling must be praised for her commitment to her work, right down to the animals, real, mythological and invented, that inhabit it.

### Questions

1. What, according to the writer, is one of the most impressive things about the Harry Potter books?
2. True or false: an animal has sometimes served as a plot point in Harry Potter
3. How many groups of animals are there in the Potte universe?
4. Who is Crookshanks' owner?
5. True or false: JK Rowling invented hippogriffs
6. In the books, who normally breeds the creatures that come from Rowling'

### Grammar

#### *Comparatives*

In English, if we want to describe something, we use this construction:

That dog is brown.

This cat is little.

The tiger is big.

We can also say:

Fish are boring animals.

Horses are beautiful creatures

And:

This is my cat. He's very cute.

This is my hamster. I love him but he is very bad-tempered.

We can make these simple constructions more complicated by *comparing* one animal to another.

**E.g. My dog is bigger than my cat.**

To form comparative adjectives we must do one of three things:

1. Form a comparative from the original adjective by adding 'er' or 'r' onto the end, doubling letters when necessary to retain the original vowel sound.

**E.g.: smaller, larger, bigger, prettier, nicer, grander, uglier**

These adjectives are comparing something positively to something else. If we to make a negative comparison we form the sentence thus:

**E.g. My cat is not as friendly as my dog.**

*(note: when forming a comparative out of an adjective that ends in 'y', the ending always changes to 'ier')*

### **Grammar Exercise 1**

- a) Make up five sentences using the comparative adjectives above and the animal vocabulary that you have learnt. Use the examples above to help you.
- b) Look again at the Harry Potter reading. Which of the adjectives in **bold** fit the comparative adjective mould?

2. For longer adjectives, or adjectives formed from verbs (**e.g. worried, bad-tempered, beautiful, horrible**) the word becomes too long and complicated if we add 'r' or 'er'. We can never have something that's 'beautifuller' than something else! Instead we add a word onto the beginning:  
**E.g. The hippogriff was more majestic than a Blast-Ended Skrewt.**  
The opposite construction is:  
**E.g. The hippogriff is less well-known than the gryphon.**

### Grammar Exercise 2

- Make up three sentences using the adjectives above in bold. Use the examples to help you.
- List the examples of this construction that you can find in the Harry Potter reading.

3. Finally, there are two adjectives that do not follow either rule. These are, predictably, '**good**' and '**bad**'.

The comparative form of 'good' is '**better**':

**E.g.: Hermione is better than Ron at her schoolwork.**

The comparative form of 'bad' is '**worse**':

**E.g.: The 'Twilight Saga' is a worse book series than 'Harry Potter.'**

### Grammar Exercise 3

- Make up three sentences using 'better' or 'worse', using your own opinions and the examples above to help you.
- Why do you think that 'best' is highlighted in the passage? What do you think that 'best' means?

### Forming comparative sentences

Look at the passage again. Have you noticed that the structure of comparative sentences using 'better' or 'worse' is quite flexible? Although the simplest way to form the sentence is:

subject + comparative structure + object + additional information\*

Hermione+ is better than + Ron + at her school work

It is possible to change the order.

Hermione + is better + at her school work + than + Ron

Subject + comparative + extra info + comparative preposition + object.

**Further examples:**

**I am better at football than my friend.**

**I am worse at singing than my sister.**

**Bart is worse at behaving than Lisa.**

### **Oral work**

In the class, make up six sentences, three using 'better' and three using 'worse'.

Discuss celebrities.

### *Superlatives*

When comparing a group of nouns, we use comparatives and superlatives. Superlative adjectives are formed by adding 'st' onto the end of the adjective and changing the adjective accordingly. The superlative adjective describes the noun that 'wins' in the category. Example:

'Hedwig is the **whitest** owl in Hogwarts.' (Hedwig, a snowy owl, is whiter than all the other owls in the school)



'The blue whale is the biggest animal in the world' (there is no other animal bigger than the blue whale)

*And for longer verbs:*

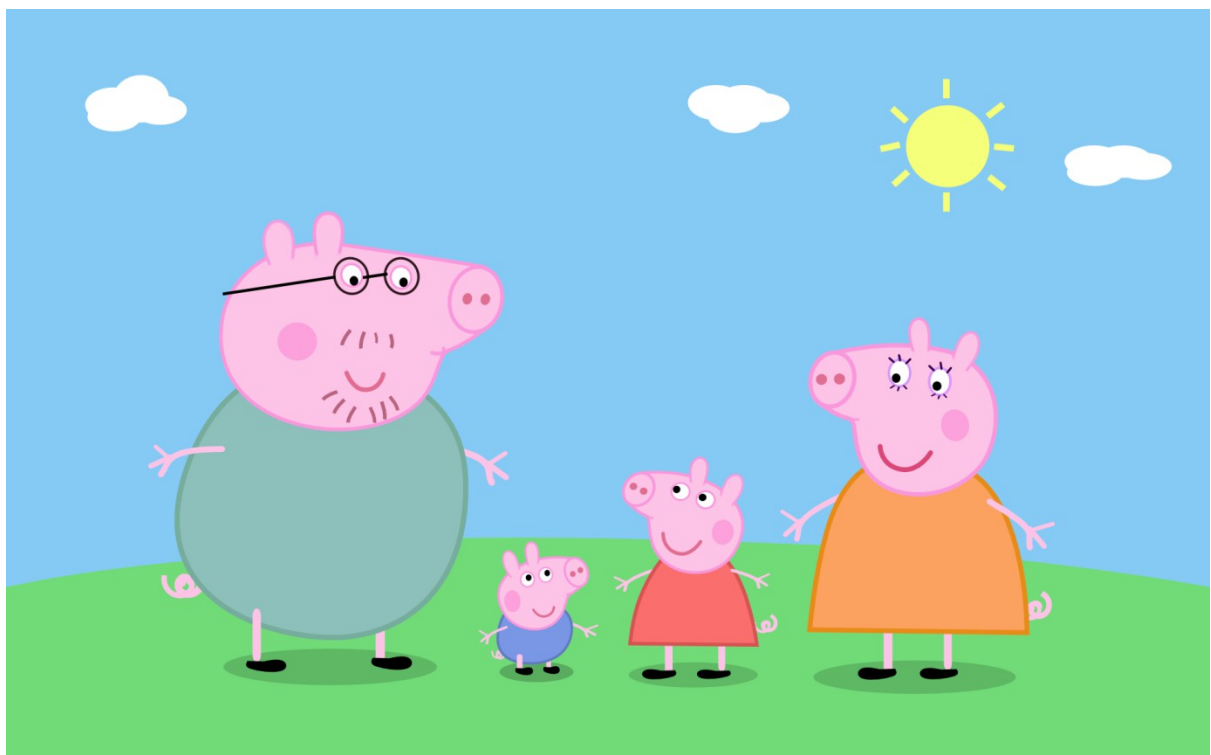
'Barack Obama is the most important political leader in the world' (there is no other political leader more important than Obama)

'The sloth is the least interesting animal in the jungle' (all other animals are more interesting than the sloth (un perezoso))

*And for 'good' and 'bad':*

'Dalmatians have the best fur of all dogs' (no dog has better fur than a Dalmatian)

'My cat has the worst temper out of all my pets' (none of the speaker's pets have a worse temper than his/her cat)



Look at this picture of the popular British children's T.V. show 'Peppa Pig'.

1. What is the littlest pig wearing?
2. What is the biggest pig wearing?
3. Which do you think is the most important pig?
4. Which of the children is the oldest?
5. Which of the adults is the youngest?

