

Classroom Resources

NEWS ENGLISH Online Dating for Animals

Learning Objectives: For upper-level students to develop vocabulary, discuss the ideas in the article, and write an online dating profile for an animal.	Preparation Time: 5 minutes
	Completion Time: 25–45 minutes
Skill/Grammar: Reading, speaking, writing	Age/Level: Intermediate–Upper Intermediate
Resources: Online Dating News Article Worksheet (Upper Level), Profile Templates	

Teacher's Notes

1 Warm-up (5 minutes)

- Hand out the worksheets.
- Ask the students to name the animals in the pictures and guess which ones are monogamous (eagles and swans). Encourage the students to give other examples of monogamous animals.
- Ask the students to discuss the second question in pairs, and then hold a brief feedback session.

2 Reading Activities (20 minutes)

- Ask the students to read the article and discuss *a* as a class.
- Ask the students to complete *b* and *c*. Check through the answers as a class.
- Divide the class into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the ideas in *d*.

Answer Key:

b 1 monogamous 2 database 3 mate 4 endangered 5 matchmaking
 c 1 potential 2 format 3 spreadsheet 4 association 5 solitary

3 Extension (20–30 minutes)

- In this activity, students will imagine they are an animal and complete an online dating profile for that animal. You will need to give one animal profile template to each student and instruct them to draw a picture of the animal and complete the sections.
- Move around the classroom helping where necessary.

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- Once everyone has completed their profile, gather in the sheets and redistribute them. Make sure nobody gets their own back!
- Ask each student to read the profile they have received and correct any errors that they see.
- Now ask the students to find the most appropriate match for the profile they are holding. They will have to mingle with the other students and ask questions to find out about the other profiles. You may wish to model this for them.
- After giving the students some time to do this, ask them to tell the class who they think would be a good match for the animal profile they are holding. Ask them to briefly explain why (e.g. “They both like eating grass!”)
- Make sure everyone receives their own profile back at the end.

Online Dating Not Just For Humans!

It seems humans are not the only ones turning to modern technology to help them find love in today's world.

Zookeepers in the United States are now using an online dating website to find mates for their animals, particularly members of endangered species.

The Species Survival Plan is designed primarily to match animals with **potential** partners, giving them an opportunity to breed and expand their species. Particularly for some **monogamous** species, such as the agile gibbon or the gray wolf, this saves not only their species, but the individual animal from the **solitary** life they would otherwise have led.

Each animal in the **association's database** has an individual profile page detailing its location and giving information about the risk to the species of extinction. Unlike most human online dating profiles, no photos are included, but genetic data and descriptions of the animal's behaviour are provided.

Zoo employees consider life expectancies and birth rates to help them decide which animal species it is most



urgent to breed. Animals with lower birth rates and life expectancies are usually top of the list.

The idea of zoos matchmaking and bringing pairs of animals together to breed by sharing information began in 1981 in the form of a **spreadsheet**, but organization officials recently updated this **format** and created an online database. Thus far, the website has had several successes.

Two otters were matched and successfully mated at Oakland Zoo in California, bringing a new pair of otters into the world in 2011. Each otter will be sent to a different zoo to **mate** with other otters, thus continuing to expand the species.

Profile Template

Name:

Picture:

Species:

Age:

Location:

Endangered status:



Write something about yourself that might attract an ideal partner. You may like to include information about your personality, behaviour, habits, likes, dislikes and what kind of partner you are looking for.

1 Match the animal names to the pictures. Which of these animals do you think are monogamous?



swan

lion

zebra

eagle

- Do you know of any other animals that are monogamous?
- What are some of the pros and cons of monogamy for animals?

2 Read the article and complete the tasks below.

a What challenges do you think the zookeepers might face during the matchmaking process?

b Match the words in bold in the article to the meanings below.

1 Having only one mate at a time _____

2 A set of data on a computer _____

3 Breed or bring animals together to breed _____

4 In danger of extinction _____

5 Arranging relationships for others _____

c Use the remaining words in bold to complete the sentences below.

1 There are several _____ cures for the disease, but none of them have been proven to work yet.

2 The _____ of the programme was confusing; the information was all over the place.

3 The _____ took her ages to complete because there were 127 rows and 48 columns.

4 We decided to form an _____ of people to help endangered species.

5 Tigers are _____ creatures. They only spend time with another tiger when they mate.

d Discuss the following in pairs:

- Would you ever use a matchmaking website? Why or why not?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using matchmaking websites to find a partner?

3 *Imagine you are an animal of your choice and complete the profile given to you by your teacher. Can you find a match for the profile your teacher gives you?*