

## Our Animal Connections

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Animals are our next of kin on the scale of life. Yet, except in the case of pets, our relations with them have seldom been friendly or affectionate. We hunt them for food or just for pleasure, make them do our work for us. A minority of thoughtful people everywhere have protested against cruelty to animals and advanced the cause of animal rights. Today to talk seriously about the 'animal citizen' might not seem the freakish idea that it undoubtedly was to an older generation.

The young ones of some animals do engender affection in our minds. Small wonder that we use terms like cubs, kitten, puppies and piglets appreciatively, as terms of endearment. As a rule, however, quadrupeds have been thought to be alien creatures with needs that seldom converge with ours. 'Paper tiger', 'white elephant' and 'zebra crossing' are expressions that show how the human imagination can render innocuous and so acceptable, creatures that are apt to arouse fear, dislike or suspicion.

From the time of Aesop, down through the ages, our literary transaction with the animal world has been prolific in fable and allegory and has yielded a crop of metaphors with which to characterise human types and behaviour. It is significant that the number of phrases related to animals is directly proportional to their intimacy with man. For example, domestic animals like cat, dog, horse, pig and sheep are richer in kindred words and phrases than wild creatures like crocodile (tears), donkey ('s years) or stag (Party)\*.

The following list should give a fair indication of the extent of our animal 'connections' and their recognition in everyday usage.

### 1. BULL (*adj. taurine*)

- bull (n) : {a strong and heavy-set man  
: {a person who anticipates a rise in the price of shares  
bull dance : a dance of men only  
Bull-headed : obstinate and uncooperative  
Bull's eye : the centre of a target  
bulldoze : use force to persuade some one; intimidate  
like a bull in  
a china shop: behaving clumsily in a delicate situation

### 2. CAT (*adj. feline*)

- cat (n) : a malicious or spiteful woman  
catnap : a short sleep during the day without lying down  
cat's eye : a reflector (reflective studs marking lanes/streets)  
cat walk : a narrow platform for the models in a fashion show  
rain cats  
and dogs : rain very hard  
let the cat out  
of the bag : to reveal a secret unintentionally  
see which way the  
cat jumps : wait and see how things are going to turn out

### 3. DOG (*adj. canine*)

- dog (v) : pursue; follow closely and persistently  
dogged : stubbornly determined  
dog end : something left over  
go to the  
dogs : deteriorate, get much worse  
dog's chance: no chance  
dog-eat-dog : ruthless pursuit of one's own interest

underdog : a person who is weak and is treated badly  
 dog in the manger : someone who prevents others from using something even though he has no use of it

**4. GOAT** (*adj. caprine*)

goat (n) : a lecherous man who annoys women  
 goatee : a small pointed beard on the end of a man's chin  
 scapegoat : person blamed or punished for the fault of others  
 play the giddy goat : behave in a silly way

**5. HARE** (*adj. leporine*)

hare (v) : run very fast, usually in an uncontrolled way  
 start a hare : raise a topic of conversation  
 hare-brained : not practical, foolish  
 hare lip : cleft lip  
 run with the hare and hunt with the hounds : try to support both sides in an argument

**6. HORSE** (*adj. equine*)

horse (sl) : a heroine  
 dark horse : little known person who wins unexpectedly  
 white horses : white-crested waves at sea  
 willing horse : a willing and obliging worker  
 horse sense : common sense  
 horse trading : shrewd bargaining straight from the horse's mouth : information from a person having direct knowledge

**7. PIG** (*adj. porcine*)

pig (n) : a greedy, dirty, obstinate person  
 pigheaded : stupidly stubborn, obstinate  
 pigsty : a dirty or untidy place  
 pigswill : tasteless or unpleasant food  
 piggy back : ride on someone's back and shoulders

**8. COW** (*adj. bovine*)

cow (v) : to intimidate; to frighten somebody into submission  
 cowish : cowardly  
 cow college : a college in a remote rural area  
 cowboy : a dishonest, reckless or unqualified businessman  
 till the cows come home : for an indefinitely long time

**9. RABBIT** (*adj. leporine*)

rabbit (n) : a novice; a beginner or unskillful player of a game  
 rabbit on : to chatter; talk excessively in an annoying way  
 rabbit punch : hit on the nape of the neck with the side of the hand  
 rabbit food : a vegetarian diet providing insufficient nutrition

**10. SHEEP** (*adj. ovine*)

sheep (n) : a shy, easily-led person  
 sheepish : embarrassed, uncomfortable  
 black sheep : a disreputable member of family  
 separate the sheep from the goats : identify the people who are intelligent and successful

**11. BEAR** (*adj. ursine*)

bear (n) : {a rough, unmannerly person  
 : {a person who anticipates a fall in the price of shares  
 bear hug : a rough, tight embrace  
 bear garden : a turbulent assembly  
 bugbear : an object of baseless fear like a bear with a sore head : very bad-tempered

**12. LION** (*adj. leonine*)

lion (n) : a brave or celebrated person  
 lionize : treat someone as being important or famous  
 lion-hearted : very brave  
 the lion's share : the largest or best part in the lion's

den : among people who are your enemies

**13. MONKEY** (*adj. simian*)

monkey (n) : a mischievous person

monkey about : behave in a stupid or careless way

monkey wrench

: an adjustable spanner

monkey's wedding

: a simultaneous occurrence of sunshine and drizzle

have a monkey on your back

: to have an addiction to drugs

**14. WOLF** (*adj. lupine*)

wolf (n) : a man given to seducing women

wolf down : devour something greedily

wolf whistle : a whistle indicating sexual admiration

cry wolf : raise repeated false alarms

have a wolf in the stomach

: to be ravenously hungry

**15. TIGER** (*adj. tigrine*)

tiger : a cruel or formidable person

tigerish : fierce-tempered

tiger-footed : fiercely swift

paper tiger : an opponent who seems strong but is actually weak

**16. SNAKE** (*adj. ophidian*)

snake (n) : someone who cannot be trusted

snaky : cold and cunning; ungrateful

snake-hipped: slim-hipped

snake along : move in long twisting curves

snake in the grass

: a lurking danger; a person who injures furtively

**17. RAT** (*adj. murine*)

rat (n) : a traitor; a mean, untrustworthy person

ratty : irritable, bad-tempered

rat on : betray somebody's trust

rat pack : a group of aggressive journalists and photographers

rat race : rowdy gang of youngsters

rat race : a fiercely competitive struggle for power, position, wealth etc.

smell a rat : guess that something wrong is happening

like rats deserting a

sinking ship : people leaving an organisation when it is in trouble

**18. DONKEY** (*adj. asinine*)

donkey vote : a system of voting in which preferences are marked in the order in the ballot paper

donkey (n) : a stupid or foolish person

donkey engine

: a small auxiliary engine

donkey jacket: a thick weather proof jacket

donkey work: drudgery; laborious part of a job

donkey's years

: a very long time

talk the hind leg

off a donkey : talk continuously

**19. FOX** (*adj. vulpine*)

fox (n) : a sly, cunning person

foxy : clever in a deceitful way

fox hole : a hole in the ground used as a shelter

fox trot : a type of ballroom dance

**20. SQUIRREL** (*adj. sciurine*)

squirrel (n) : a hoarder

squirrelly : very eccentric or odd

squirrel away: keep valuables in a safe place to use later

squirrel cage : a dull, purposeless task

**21. APE** (*adj. simian*)

ape (n) : an imitator

ape (v) : to mimic

go ape : to become crazy

**22. MULE** (*adj. mulish*)

mule (n) : a stupid or obstinate person;  
a drug courier

mulish : stubborn, obstinate,  
unwilling to cooperate

**23. BUFFALO** (*adj. bubaline*)

: (v) to intimidate

buffalo grass :

buffalo wings:

**24. ELEPHANT** (*adj. elephantine*)

elephantine : clumsy and unwieldy (size)

: reliable&extensive  
(memory)

white

elephant : a possession that is useless  
or troublesome

**25. Misc.**

crocodile

tears : false tears or sorrow without  
heart-felt feelings

stag party : a bachelor party on the eve  
of a man's wedding