

Comparatives and superlatives

Speaking and Reading

2 a Read the article. Answer these questions.

- 1 Why are koi such special pets?
- 2 Did the writer buy any koi? Why?/Why not?

b Fill in gaps a–e in the article with these sentences/phrases. There is one sentence/phrase you don't need.

- 1 Serious collectors can pay up to £18,000 for a fully grown koi.
- 2 One recently sold for £250,000.
- 3 Although some are more reasonably priced,
- 4 However, I did consider buying one,
- 5 Jean wasn't impressed by some of the koi on sale either.
- 6 They're just so amazing to look at.

Living Jewels

John Wilkins goes in search of the world's most expensive and collectable fish.

Before I went to the British Koi Keepers' Annual Show, I didn't understand how people could take fish so seriously. However, **the more I learned about koi, the more interested I became.** As one expert was eager to tell me, "Collecting koi is **far more addictive than** you might think. They're **as beautiful as** butterflies and very calming to watch." Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of Queen, would have agreed. The pool in his specially-built Japanese garden was home to 89 koi, which cost up to £10,000 each.

At the show I met koi enthusiast Jean Kelly. "Breeding koi **is getting more and more lucrative,**" she told me. ^a . But that was a record," admitted Jean. "The normal price is **nowhere near as high as** that."

I later found out that the koi in question was a particularly rare specimen. Nevertheless, it still seemed outrageous to me – that's **almost as much as** I paid for my house.

^b , which is **nearly as expensive as** a luxury car and **the bigger they are, the more they cost.** The cheapest I could find were £75 each, but they were only about **twice as big as** my goldfish.

^c . "Actually, these koi aren't **any nicer than mine,**" she commented. "They're **slightly bigger than** the ones I've got, but I paid **considerably less** than this." When I asked her why she liked koi so much, she replied, ^d . I think of them as living jewels."

I certainly wasn't quite **as enthusiastic as** Jean. ^e , but then I remembered that all but five of Freddie Mercury's koi died when someone accidentally turned off the electricity supply to their pool. Jean assured me that with all the new equipment available the survival rate **was getting better and better** and that looking after koi was **no more time-consuming than** taking care of any other pet. However, in the end I decided to stick with my goldfish. They're **not nearly as exotic as** koi – but they're **a great deal cheaper** to replace!