ANIMAL EMOTIONS

If you've read my blog before, you already know that I'm an animal lover. My two dogs are the best four-legged friends in the world, and I've also adopted a long-haired, one-eyed cat with an attitude; she seems to know exactly what I'm thinking. So this month I wanted to ask a question:

Can animals think and feel like we do?

In the 16th century, the philosopher René Descartes said that animals were like mechanical robots which didn't feel pain or have thoughts and feelings. Since then, opinions have changed, as scientists have spent a lot of time researching animals. Here are a few of the surprising things which they've observed:

• When an elephant dies, the other elephants in the group cover its body and stand next to it. They stay near the dead animal for days and seem broken-hearted. Members of the group will visit the place months and sometimes years later. It seems like they could be expressing their sadness. They might, perhaps, have emotions.

• Whales act like they're happily in love. They embrace and play together. Some, like orcas, have one partner for life.

• Studies show that chimpanzees are sympathetic to each other; one chimpanzee will hug another chimpanzee if it is hurt.

• It's not only big-brained mammals which show sympathy. Crows, like elephants, stand in a group when one dies, and bring grass to cover the body. Scientists have also noted that mice appear worried when another mouse is in pain.

• Animals in a group certainly have different personalities; some are confident; some are shy; some are relaxed; others are more aggressive and assertive.

So what about Descartes? To me, it's pretty obvious that he was wrong. The evidence suggests that animals must feel something; they can't simply be like robots. Researchers are using brain scans to discover more about animal behaviour, so we may know more about their emotions in the future. For now, we should be open-minded and considerate towards animals. They might be thinking more than we realise.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Decide whether the statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. The writer says she loves animals and has three pets at home.
2. René Descartes believed that animals could think and feel like humans.
3. Scientists have spent a long time researching animal behaviour.
4. Elephants stay near a dead elephant only for a short time.
5. Whales sometimes play and embrace each other.
6. Orcas usually change their partners many times in their lives.
7. Scientists have noticed that mice seem worried when another mouse is in pain.
8. The writer believes animals may feel emotions and think more than we realise.

INFLUENCERS: THE ONLINE STARS WHO SET THE TRENDS

An interview with marketing specialist Harper Tanner

Who or what are influencers?

Erm ... people who have influence on others, obviously. 😀 Young people who are stars on social media have thousands, sometimes millions, of followers. Companies pay them a lot of money to advertise products because they are like internet celebrities. A famous example from the UK is Zoella – she has about ten million subscribers to her beauty channel.

Really? How does that work?

OK. Imagine I'm a fashion blogger or a popular gamer or someone who makes really funny videos. Marketing companies give me a product because of my popularity on social media. I recommend the product and my followers think, 'Hey, that must be cool because Harper likes it. I'm going to buy it.' The marketing company pays me, and everyone is happy.

Give me more examples.

OK. A music promoter sends a song to an internet star who maybe dances to the song. The music company then pays for every view or 'like' which that video gets. Or clothes retailers give lots of their products to influencers since they hope the influencers will wear or just mention their stuff online. Influencers never pay for clothes or makeup or skateboards or games. Marketing companies are **THROWING** stuff at them all the time.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Hey, I've got this blog and nobody's throwing stuff at me!

Well, you'll need a minimum of 400,000 followers. That doesn't happen overnight, but when you are successful, you can earn big money. Some vloggers started earning when they were still at school! Online marketing is **MASSIVE**. Companies want to reach young customers as they spend a LOT and they stick with the brands that they like.

OK. Thanks, Harper. I'm going to find some followers. See you online.

Good luck!

Decide whether the statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. Influencers are people who have a strong effect on others, especially on social media.
2. Most influencers have only a few hundred followers.
3. Companies pay influencers to advertise products online.
4. Zoella is mentioned as a famous influencer from the UK.
5. Influencers always buy the products they advertise.
6. Music companies may pay influencers for every view or "like" their videos get.
7. An influencer can become successful and earn money immediately.
8. Companies use online marketing because young customers spend a lot of money and stay loyal to brands.

LIVEWORKSHEETS