

Teaching notes on Useful to Know: Animals

Slide 1

Learning objectives: To explore the roots of modern animal-related words, to investigate the roles of animals in the ancient world, and to make a clay owl, symbol of Athena/Minerva

After saying 'salve' to Lucundus, mouse-clicks on this slide will make a doctor pop up and say, "eheu! Lucundus aeger est! quid sibi dolent...cor aut cerebrum?" ("Oh no! Lucundus is poorly! What's hurting him... his heart or his brain?"). After looking at the picture of the poorly Lucundus, students can reply, "cerebrum sibi dolet!" ("His brain is hurting him!").

Slide 2

A game of Word Roots Challenge showing some Latin and Greek root vocabulary for animal-related words.

On mouse-click, an English derivative (and its definition) of one of these Latin words will appear on the screen. Pupils have to work out from which one the English word is derived. On second mouse-click, the English word will make its way to its root word. As an extension, pupils can explain the connection between the root word and its English derivative, or even think of more English words deriving from the Latin/Greek ones.

Slide 3



In advance of looking at how animals were viewed in the ancient world, let's have a think about the role of animals in today's society. Eight picture prompts will get students to think about what functions animals perform in modern times, from sniffer dogs and race horses, to pets and allegorical figures and characters in children's stories. These photos don't cover everything, so get your students chatting about their thoughts on how animals fit into modern society.

Slides 4-6

Over the next three slides, we'll take a look at some artefactual and textual evidence about the role of animals in ancient societies.

As with today, animals were eaten as meat, although there was likely more catching of wild animals for consumption than in modern times. Just like us, their farmers reared goats, sheep, pigs, cows and chickens. Goats, sheep and cows would also produce milk, which could be turned into dairy produce, and chickens were a source of eggs.

Certain animals could also be a useful source of leather and furs for purposes such as clothing and shoes. Ivory from elephant tusks was prized for its durability and could be carved into intricate shapes. Flutes made from hollow bones have also been found dating from Roman times.

Larger animals such as mules, oxen and horses were used to pull vehicles and ploughs, and horses could be significant status symbols. In fact, animals were often used in barter for other objects (see the quote from Homer's *Iliad*). Certain animals were also hunted for sport as well as for food. There is some evidence of animals being kept as pets, especially by women and children.

Animals also played an important role in ancient religion. Certain Roman priests known as augurs would interpret the actions of birds to make predictions about the future. The foundation myth of Rome features the central character of a wolf who raised Romulus and Remus, as seen here carved on the side a Roman altar. Many of the gods in the Greek/Roman pantheon had animal symbols:

- Zeus/Jupiter – eagle
- Hera/Juno – peacock
- Aphrodite/Venus – swan and dove
- Artemis/Diana – deer
- Poseidon/Neptune – horse
- Athena/Minerva – owl

Slide 7

...which brings us onto this lesson's student activity. Following the instructions, students can make owls, the symbol of Athena/Minerva. These can be made from air-drying clay or salt dough.

Slide 8

The plenary slide:

Question 1 Which creature gets its name from the Latin word 'pilosus', meaning 'hairy'? [caterpillar]

Question 2 Name two uses of animals in the ancient world. [meat, leather, milk, pulling things, riding, hunting, religious symbols, pets, augury]

Question 3 Can you recall any Greek/Roman gods and the animal symbols associated with them? [Zeus/Jupiter – eagle, Hera/Juno – peacock, Aphrodite/Venus – swan and dove, Artemis/Diana – deer, Poseidon/Neptune – horse, Athena/Minerva – owl]