

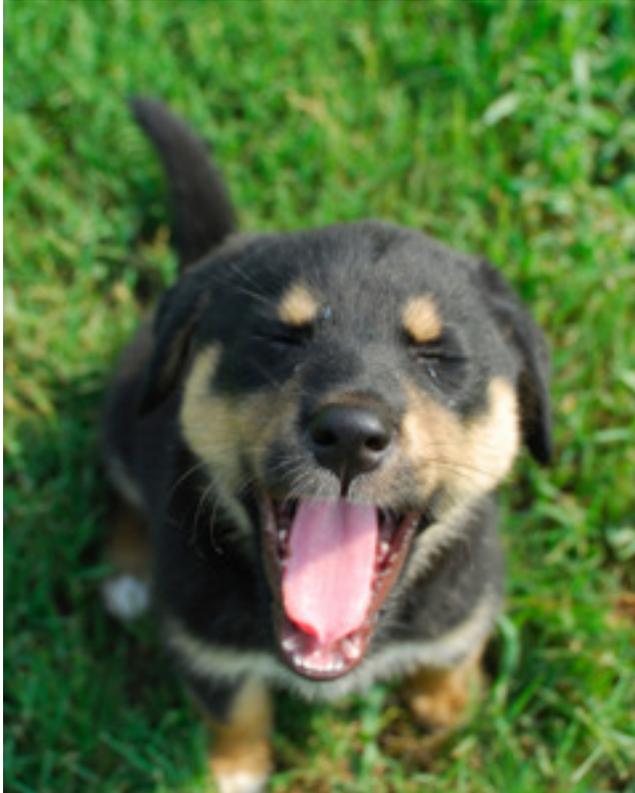
1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection

LANGUAGE

15 words etymologically inspired by animals

Animals have always been important to the lives and livelihoods of humans, so it's no wonder they've left a mark on language

SOURCE: THEWEEK.COM NOVEMBER 24, 2013



Bawl like a dog. *Photo: (Thinkstock)*

1. BAWL

Comes from the sound that a dog makes. In Latin, the dog says *bau bau*, and bawl originated in the verb *baulare*, to bark like a dog. Bawl was first used in English for the cries of dogs, and was later applied to human sobbing and yelling (as in "bawl out").

2. CYNIC

From the Greek *cynikos* for dog-like, churlish. Though the name might have first been applied to the ancient members of the Cynical philosophical sect because of the school where its founder taught, Cynosarges (place of the white dog), the Cynics were widely thought of as dog-like and churlish by their contemporaries for living on the street and ignoring the rules of decorum.

3. HARPOON

Harpoon also goes back to dogs. It comes from the French *harpon*, a cramp iron for holding stones together, which came from *harpe*, the word for a dog's claw.

4. TYKE

Dogs also figure in the history of tyke. It comes from Old Norse *tík*, a word for female dog. It came to be used as an insult in English, and then as a teasing, reproachful way to refer to children. These days, it's lost the sense of reproach and is just another cute word for the wee ones.

5. PEDIGREE

From the Anglo-Norman *pé de grue*, for "foot of the crane." It refers to the lines on genealogical charts, which have the look of crane footprints.

6. CAVALIER

Comes from the Old Spanish *cavallero* for horse-rider, from *cavallo*, horse. Those horse-riding cavaliers, or knights, could get pretty haughty and disdainful sometimes, giving rise to the adjective we use today. But they could also be gallant and brave, which is why we also have the related word, chivalrous.

7. HOBBY

Hobby was an old nickname, related to Robin, that people in England used to give cart-horses. It became a general word for a nice little pony and then for a toy horse. It later came to mean a pursuit taken more seriously than it should be, like riding a toy horse.

8. HACKNEYED

Horses have been very important to the lives of humans; no wonder we have so many words from them. We got hackney from Old French *haquenée*, a gentle sort of horse considered especially suitable for ladies to ride. It came to be used as a general term for horses that were hired out and then, by metaphorical extension, for anyone having to do drudge work. If something was all worn out from years of drudgery, then it was hackneyed. Like a stale cliché.

9. BUTCHER

Goes back through Anglo-Norman *bocher* to Old French *bochier*, which was formed off the word *boc*, meaning goat. So a butcher was originally a "dealer in goat's flesh."

10. CAPRICIOUS

Goes back to the Italian *capro* or goat, an animal known for its herky-jerky, whimsical skipping about.

11. BURRITO

From the Spanish for "little burro" or donkey. These days, burritos can be nearly the same size as their namesakes.

12. EASEL

Another donkey word, from the Dutch for donkey, *ezel*. An easel is similar to a saw-horse, another four-legged structure you can use to support your work.

13. VACCINE

Formed from *vacca*, the Latin for cow. The first vaccines were made from cowpox lesions, known as *variola vaccinae*, which were found to produce immunity from smallpox.

14. AVIATION

Aviation comes from the Latin *avis* for bird. It was coined in the 19th century, while we were in the middle of trying to figure out how to do that thing that birds do so well.

15. VIXEN

Vixen is the feminine form of fox. Members of the *Vulpes vulpes* family have given English a host of metaphorical expressions to work with. This is why we can make sense of the phrase "the vixen outfoxed the foxy, sly fox."

Possible Response Questions:

- Make a list of some of your favorite words and explain why you like them.
- Make a list of some of your least favorite words and tell why you don't like them
- Pick a word that intrigues you and research where it came from