

Interview

Introduction

Sample Interview



You will have the chance to read many articles and interviews in your Word Generation lessons. Here is an example of the kind of interview you will read. Two intrepid fourth grade reporters, Susana Flores and Arun Khanna, interview experts on the topic of the week.

When animal behavior expert Juliet Baum talks about pit bulls, she draws from research studies about how dogs act but also from her own experience and mistakes as a dog trainer.

Arun Khanna: Dr. Juliet Baum, could you tell us a bit more about pit bulls? Are they more dangerous than other dogs?

Dr. Baum: Well, pit bulls look aggressive, and they are very strong. There are lots of stories in the news about pit bull attacks, so many people are intimidated by them. That means we might act scared or threatening with pit bulls, doing things that elicit attacks! Pit bull lovers point out that pit bulls are very smart. Like all dogs, though, they need to be trained to behave properly.

Susana Flores: Growing up, I always heard that certain breeds of dogs were just more violent than others.

Dr. Baum: Some breeds of dog can be trained more easily than others to fight, but to fight other dogs, not humans.

Arun: Why do dogs sometimes attack humans, then?

Dr. Baum: Dogs typically attack humans only when they feel threatened or scared. There is actually a dog test developed by the American Temperament Test Society (www.atts.org) that is designed to assess whether dogs are likely to overreact and become aggressive under normal circumstances. Dog owners can take their dogs along to a test site if they are worried. The ATTS accumulates data. Of the 839 pit bulls tested so far, only 111 (13%) showed overreactions: a smaller percentage than collies or Doberman pinschers and other popular pets. Of course, these aren't random samples of dogs, but it shows that lots of pit bulls are not likely to be dangerous and some other breeds might well be.

Arun: So why do we hear so many stories about people getting bitten by pit bulls, more so than by other breeds of dogs? What does the research say?

Dr. Baum: Interestingly, a recent study from the University of Pennsylvania identified dachshunds, Chihuahuas, and Jack Russell terriers as the dogs that bit humans most. They are all small dogs, so perhaps that's why they feel threatened more often.

Susana: So we shouldn't worry about being attacked by pit bulls?

Dr. Baum: You should be cautious when approaching any dog, whether it looks aggressive like a pit bull or cute and fluffy like a poodle. Dogs of any breed that have been mistreated, or that have come out of puppy mills that didn't train them properly when they were young, can be dangerous. But the vast majority of dogs just want to play and to be petted!

Susana: Thanks very much for sharing your expertise in animal behavior.

Dr. Baum: It was a pleasure. Enjoy your pets, and treat them properly.

Arun: That sounds like good advice! Thank you so much for your time, Dr. Baum!