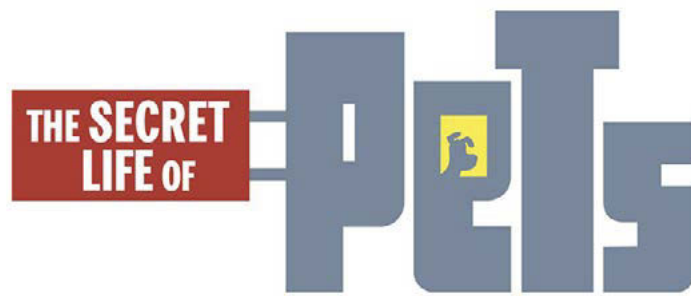


Popcorn ELT Readers

Teacher's Notes



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Welcome to the Popcorn ELT Readers series, a graded readers series for low-level learners of English. These free teacher's notes will help you and your classes get the most from your The Secret Life of Pets Popcorn ELT Reader.

Level 1

Popcorn ELT Readers level 1 is for students who are beginning to read in English, based on a 200 headword list. There are no past tenses at this level.

The Secret Life of Pets has a total story wordcount of 563 words.

The Secret Life of Pets – synopsis

Max the dog has a lovely life with his owner, Katie, in New York City. When Katie is out at work every day, Max hangs out with other pets in his block. However, one day Katie returns with a new rescue dog called Duke. Duke is huge, and takes over Max's life. Max tries to get Duke in trouble so that Katie will take him back.

Duke has other ideas. When the dog walker takes them to the park, Duke tries to lose Max by putting him in a bin. A street cat, Ozone, lives in the bin and chases them away. Max and Duke get caught by Animal Control but are rescued by the sewer animals, Snowball and Ripper. When Snowball discovers Max and Duke are house pets, however, all the sewer animals run after them. The animals in the sewers were once pets but have lost their homes, and hate pets that still live with humans.

Max and Duke escape over the river to Brooklyn, but then Duke is picked up again by Animal Control. Ripper is already in the van. Snowball and Max join forces to save them. They chase the van in a bus and Max dives into the river to rescue Duke.

After their adventures, Max and Duke are the best of friends.

The Secret Life of Pets – the film

Released: 2016

Genre: animated adventure comedy

Suitable for: all children

Actors: Louis C.K. (voice of Max), Ellie Kemper (voice of Katie), Kevin Hart (voice of Snowball)

Directed by: Chris Renaud

Sequel: *The Secret Life of Pets 2* (2019)

For ideas on watching extracts from the DVD in class, see pages 3, 5, 6 and 12 of these notes.



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Just choose the pages that you need and print!

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Meet ... everyone from *The Secret Life of Pets*

The 'Meet ...' page introduces students to the main characters in the story.

This page is recorded on the CD.



- 1 Before looking at the book, ask students *Do you know the film The Secret Life of Pets?* If anyone knows and likes the film, talk briefly in L1 about why they like it.
- 2 Look together at the front cover of the book. Ask *What is this story about? (Animals/Pets)* *What animals/pets are on the cover? (Four dogs, a cat and a rabbit.)*

OR



Watch the opening scene of the film (00:40 – 02:55). Explain the film is about Max the dog who lives in an apartment block in New York City with his owner, Katie. Give students these sentences. Ask: *Which one of these things doesn't happen in the scene?*

1. Max plays with a ball.
2. Max eats Katie's shoes.
3. Katie reads a book to Max.
4. They look at the rain.
5. They eat a pizza.

(Answer: Sentence 3 – Katie doesn't read to Max.)

- 3 Look at the 'Meet ...' page with your class and ask some questions about the characters in the pictures, e.g. *Who lives with Katie? (Max)* *Which cat lives in a bin – Ozone or Chloe? (Ozone)* *Are Snowball and Ripper happy? (No)*
- 4 Pre-teach *bin*, *cage* and *sewer*.
- 5 Read the page out loud to the class or play the CD.
- 6 Students close their books. Play a game of *Who Am I?* For example, say *I live in the street.* Students say *You're Ozone. I live in the sewer.* *I'm a rabbit.* Students say *You're Snowball.* Continue with information about the other characters. With stronger classes, ask students to take over your role.
- 7 Read the 'Before you read' question with your class. Ask any students who haven't seen the film to predict answers.



New Words

This page is recorded on the CD.

The words on this page are available as flashcards, see pages 13–18 of these notes.

The 'New Words' page presents up to ten new words that are included in the story, but are not on the headword list. There is usually a piece of conversational language at the end.

New Words

What do these new words mean? Ask your teacher or use your dictionary.

cage

It is in a **cage**.

jump

I'm **jumping**!

van

This **van** is blue.

bin

This is a **bin**.

key

This is a **key**.

help

He is **helping** his mother.

pet

I've got a lot of **pets**!

'Life is good!'

Life is **good!**

break

My pencils always **break**!

idea

I have an **idea**!

sewer

There are **sewers** under the city.

What does the title *The Secret Life of Pets* mean? Ask your teacher.

1 Look at the 'New Words' page with your class. Say *All these words are in the story. Which words do you know?* They should remember *bin*, *cage* and *sewer* from the 'Meet ...' page.

2 Play the recording of the words and sentences on the CD. Elicit the meaning of each word in L1 or translate for the class. Note the *-er* at the end of *sewer* is pronounced as the *schwa* sound.

3 The conversational language on this page is *Life is good!* We use this when we are happy and things are going well for us. Say it several times and ask students to repeat.

4 Ask *What does the title The Secret Life of Pets mean?* Explain to your students that when we go to work or school, we don't know what our pets are doing. Only the pets know, so this is their 'secret life'. The film imagines what pets do when their owners are not there!

5 Do some vocabulary activities to practise the new words (see suggestions below).

Vocabulary Activities

- Play bingo. Students write down five of the new words on a piece of paper. You then show the picture flashcards in random order and say the words. When students hear or see a word that they have written down, they cross it out. The first student to cross out all his/her words and shout *Bingo!* is the winner.
- Put the class into two teams. Two students, one from each team, stand in front of you. Hold up a picture flashcard. The first student to say the word wins a point for their team. Continue with other students and other flashcards.



Using the story with your class

- The story is recorded on the CD.

The story can be read in a number of ways, depending on the size of your class, the age and language level of your students and the teaching time available. The following are some suggestions for ways of reading the story. You may want to combine several of these.

Teacher-led reading

This can work well with younger students. Read the story out loud to your class, or use the CD. If possible, allow your class to sit close together on a mat when you read the story to them. Remember to give the students plenty of time to process what they are hearing. As you read, emphasise the words which carry most meaning, and pause at the end of each sentence.

Children often like to hear the same stories again and again, and repetition supports language learning. Reading the same story several times can be very useful.


Autonomous reading

It is important that students learn to read autonomously. Decide on a period of time each week when students can practise silent reading in class – or perhaps ten minutes at the start or end of every lesson. This will encourage the habit of reading and will motivate students to continue reading in their own time. Younger students can take their readers home and read a page or chapter to their family. This will give them a strong sense of ownership of the story.

Group or pair reading

Students take turns in reading a sentence, paragraph or page of the story to each other in small groups or pairs. Encourage them to help each other with pronunciation of new words. This can be a useful reinforcement task once students are familiar with the story.


Before reading a section of the story you could:

- Warm up with a vocabulary activity (see page 4).
- Discuss what has happened in the story so far.
- Show students a picture from the next part of the story and ask them to guess in L1 what is happening.
- Copy several pictures from the next part of the story. Give a set of the pictures to small groups of students. They guess the order in which the pictures will appear.
-  Play students a short section of the film, showing an event that they are going to read about or a character that they are going to meet. For example, play the scene where Katie brings Max home for the first time (09:01 to 10:20 on the DVD). Then ask *Who comes home with Katie? Is Max happy? Is Duke happy? What happens next, do you think?*

Tip Set up a class library of graded English readers and give students the opportunity to choose their own stories from time to time. This will encourage them to be more involved in their own reading.




After reading a section of the story you could:

- Point to a character in a picture and ask questions, e.g. *Who is this? Is he/she good or bad? What does he/she do?*
- Give students one of the chapter quizzes on pages 7–8 of these notes.
- Ask students to describe places or things in the story. Give them some examples, e.g. *The dog walker takes the dogs here. (The park.) Animal Control put Duke in this. (A cage.) Snowball drives this. (A bus.)* Students read their definitions to the class for their classmates to guess.
- Predict what is going to happen next.
-  Play the film extract that corresponds with the section of the story that students have just read. For example, play the scene where Max and Duke go to the park (16:25 – 18:48 on the DVD). After watching, ask students to tell you how much they remember. Write their ideas on the board, then show the extract again to see how well they did.

After finishing the story you could:

- Do the activities at the back of the reader.
- Ask students to make a list of words from a particular category used in the story, e.g. places in the city (*park, sewer, house, bridge, river*) or verbs to describe things that the animals do in the story (*play, walk, eat, talk, sit, sleep, run, jump, help*).

-  Divide the class into groups and give each group a word that is used regularly in the story. You might want to create an action for each word. Play the CD or read a section of the story aloud. Each time students hear their word, they stand up and sit down again, or do the action. For example, give groups the words *cage, sewer* and *pet* for Chapter 3.
- Ask students to create a map of where the characters go in the story. They could draw in details, such as the dog walker in the park, the van in Brooklyn or Gidget on the bridge.
- Ask students to write captions for the pictures in the story.
- Ask students to write a short review of the reader. Write on the board:
I think The Secret Life of Pets is ...
My favourite character is ... because ...
Ask students how they might complete these sentences and write their ideas on the board. They use this as a framework for writing their review. They could also give the story a score out of ten, depending on how much they enjoyed it. You might want students to have a readers folder where they keep reviews for all the readers they have read.



Using film extracts in class

- Use short extracts (two to three minutes maximum).
- Give students something to do or think about as they watch.
- Ask them questions about the extract they have just seen.
- Allow them time to talk about what they have just seen.



Chapter Quizzes (Answer key, page 11)

Chapter 1

Circle the words.

- 1 Max and Katie have a good / bad life.
- 2 Katie goes out *in the mornings* / *in the evenings*.
- 3 Katie comes home at *six* / *eight* o'clock.
- 4 Today, she has a new *dog* / *cat* with her.
- 5 Max *likes* / *doesn't like* Duke.

Chapter 2

Match.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 The dog walker | a) doesn't want to live with Duke. |
| 2 Max | b) catch Max and Duke. |
| 3 Duke | c) takes the dogs to the park. |
| 4 Ozone | d) wants to put Max in a bin. |
| 5 Animal Control | e) is in the bin. |

Chapter 3

Put the sentences in the correct order.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a A rabbit jumps into the van. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b Max and Duke are in the van. | <input type="checkbox" value="1"/> |
| c The sewer animals run after Max and Duke. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d Snowball opens Max and Duke's cage. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e The dogs jump in the river. | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Chapter Quizzes (Answer key, page 11)

Chapter 4

Correct the mistakes.

Max

- 1 'Where are ~~Øzøæ~~ and Duke?' Gidget shouts.
 - 2 Animal Control put Snowball in the van again.
 - 3 Max and Katie go after the van.
 - 4 The Animal Control van goes into the sewer.
 - 5 'We don't like bins!' the sewer animals shout.
 - 6 Max and Duke jump on the sewer animals.
-

Chapter 5

Write the correct words.

again door friends gives jumps key

- 1 Snowball sees the**key**..... to the cage.
 - 2 He the key to Max.
 - 3 Maxinto the water.
 - 4 Max and Duke sit at the
 - 5 Max and Duke are good now.
 - 6 Life is good !
-



Real World

This page is recorded on the CD.

The **Real World** page provides students with cross-curricular or cross-cultural information linked to the content of the reader.

Real World

WILD in NEW YORK CITY

There are a lot of pets in New York City. Many wild animals and birds live here too.

Hudson River
Central Park
NEW YORK CITY

Skunks in the park

- Skunks come out at night.
- They look for food in bins.
- They can make a horrible smell!

Hawks in the city

- Hawks live on skyscrapers.
- They eat rats and small animals.

Alligators in the sewers

People from New York say, 'Alligators live in the sewers under the city.' Is it true?

Seahorses in the river

- You can see seahorses under Brooklyn bridge.
- They can live for four years.
- The seahorses are from 7 cm to 17 cm long.

Which wild animals live near you?

What do these words mean? Find out.

wild smell skyscraper rat people

26 27

- 1 With books closed, ask *Where do Max, Snowball and Ozone all live? (In the city)* Elicit in L1 what animals and birds students have seen in their city / town, e.g. *fox, horse, pigeon, rat*. Write them on the board.
- 2 Ask *What animals live in New York City?* and encourage students to make suggestions. Tell students to open their books at page 26 and look at the photos of the animals. In L1, ask which animals they expected to see, and which were a surprise. Then students read each section, or read and listen to the CD. Ask or write these questions on the board for students to answer:
 - 1 *Where can you see seahorses? (You can see seahorses under Brooklyn Bridge.)*
 - 2 *Where do skunks look for food? (They look for food in bins.)*
 - 3 *What do hawks in the city eat? (They eat rats and small animals.)*
 - 4 *What do people from New York say about the sewers? (Alligators live in the sewers!)*
- 3 Look at the word box. Ask students if they know what these words mean. You might like students to use a dictionary to check meaning.
- 4 In pairs, students make a list of the wild animals that live near them. They can use L1 or draw a picture of any animals they don't know how to say in English. Compare ideas across the class, asking each pair to say one wild animal. Provide the English names for the animals as needed.
- 5 Give each student a copy of the 'Project' worksheet (see page 10 of these notes). Encourage them to research information about another city animal, either at home or in the school library, using books or the Internet. They then complete the text about their animal, draw or stick a picture of it in the space provided, and perhaps draw the city in the background.
- 6 Display the projects around the classroom for other students to read.



Real World: Project

Cross-curricular
content area:
Science

My Wild City Animal

This is a

It is and

It eats

It lives



Answer Key

After you read (page 28)

- 1 a Duke b Katie c Max d Ozone e Gidget f Snowball
2 a ii b v c iv d i e vi f iii



Where's the popcorn?

Tell your class that the popcorn logo is hidden in the reader.
Can they find it? (Answer: page 27)

Multiple intelligence activities (pages 29–32)

The activities on pages 29–32 are designed to cater for students' multiple intelligences and learning styles.

Puzzle time! (pages 29–30)

1 Spatial intelligence

- a a cat c a key
b a rabbit d a van

2 Linguistic intelligence

- a a white dog d in a bin
b a big dog e the park
c a white rabbit

3 Linguistic intelligence

- a park c bridge
b sewer d river

4a Intrapersonal intelligence

Students' own answers.

Chapter Quiz Answer Key (Teacher's notes, pages 7–8)

Chapter 1

- 1 good 4 dog
2 in the mornings 5 doesn't like
3 six

Chapter 2

- 1 c 4 e
2 a 5 b
3 d

Chapter 3

- a 2 d 3
b 1 e 5
c 4

Chapter 4

- 1 Ozone Max
2 Snowball Duke (or Ripper)
3 Katie Snowball
4 sewer river
5 bins pets
6 Max and Duke Gidget and her friends


Chapter 5

- 1 key 4 door
2 gives 5 friends
3 jumps 6 again







Imagine ...

Kinaesthetic intelligence

- 1 Say *Open your books at page 31*. Put students in pairs. Ask each pair to find the picture in the story to go with this dialogue (*page 9*). Students each pick one of the characters to act out.
- 2  If you have time, play some of the bed scene from the DVD (10:22 to 11:37) to show the characterisation of the two dogs before doing this activity.
- 3 Students practise reading out the dialogue in their pairs. Then encourage students to act out the scene without reading.
- 4 Clear a large space in the centre of the classroom. Call up different pairs to act out the dialogue.
- 5 The class votes for the pair that does the best performance.

Chant

Musical intelligence

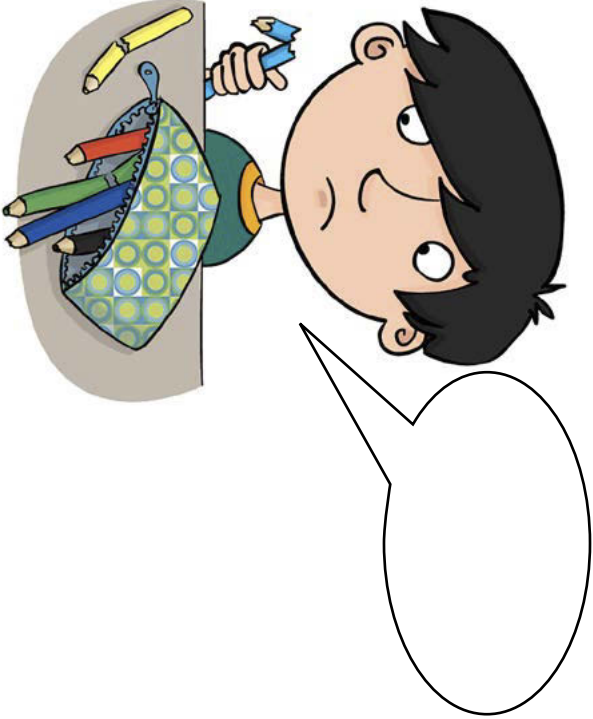
-  This page is recorded on the CD.
- 1  Say *Open your books at page 32*. Read the chant or play the CD. Ask students to read and listen carefully.
 - 2  Tell the students that they are going to clap to the chant. Play the CD or say the chant yourself while clapping on each syllable. Ask students to clap with you.
 - 3  Divide the class into three groups. Each group takes a different verse of the chant to repeat. This is a competition to see which group can say their verse the best. Play the CD or say the chant yourself. Students say it at the same time. Practise several times. Praise all groups and choose the group which said their verse the best.



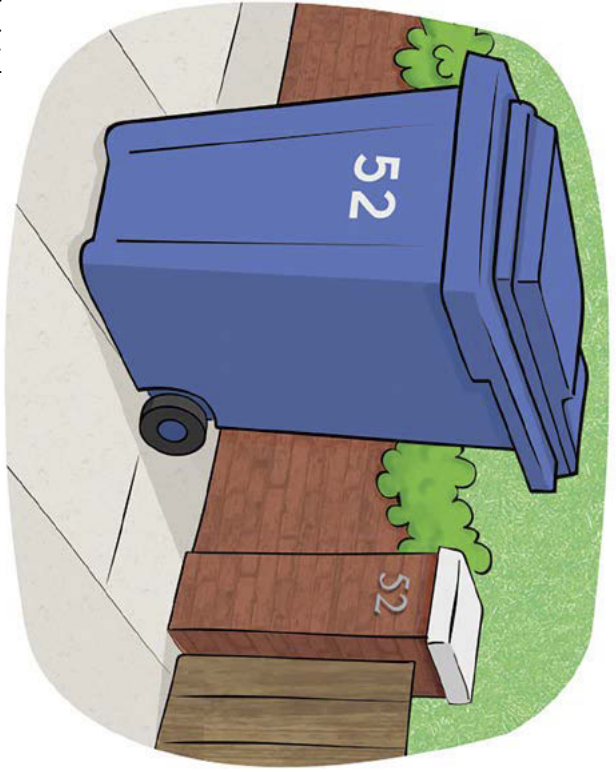
Flashcards



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© Scholastic Ltd



fold

fold

bin

This is a **bin**.

break

'My pencils always
break!'



Flashcards



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fold

fold

help
He is **helping** his
mother.

cage
It is in a **cage**.



Flashcards



© Scholastic Ltd



© Scholastic Ltd



fold

fold

'I'm jumping!'

jump

'I have an idea!'

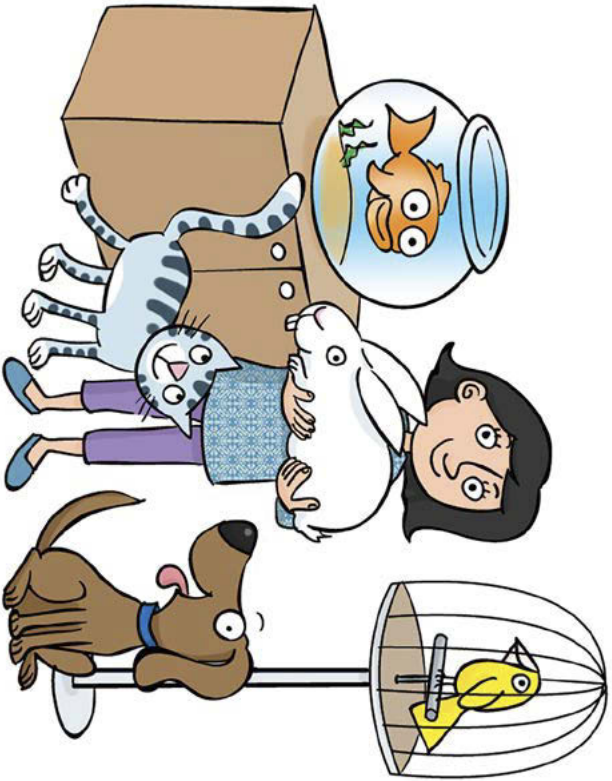
idea



Flashcards



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fold

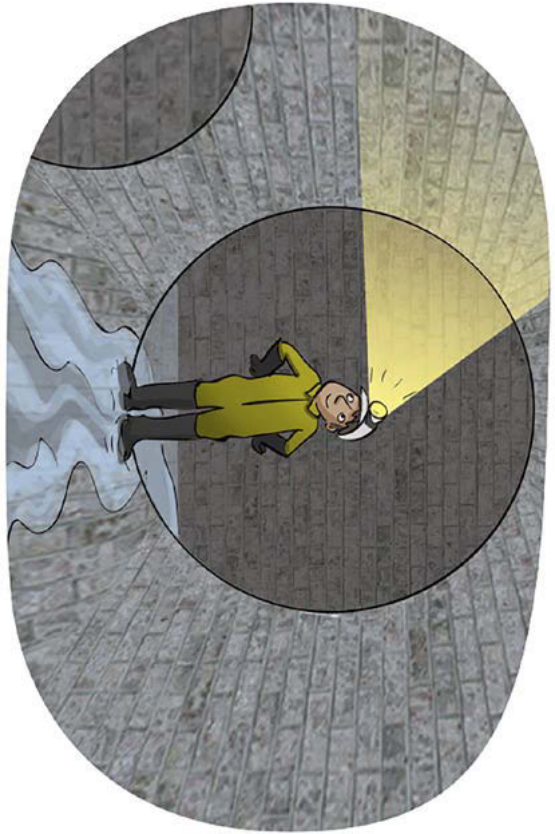
fold

pet
"I've got a lot of **pets**!"

key
This is a **key**.



Flashcards



© Scholastic Ltd

sewer

There are **sewers**
under the city.

fold



© Scholastic Ltd

van


This **van** is blue.

fold



Flashcards

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fold

'Life is good!'

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The flashcard is a rectangular card with dashed lines for cutting and a vertical dashed line for folding. On the left side, there is a vertical dashed line labeled 'fold' and a pair of scissors icon at the top. On the right side, there is a vertical dashed line with a pair of scissors icon at the top. The top half of the card features a colorful illustration of a dog wearing sunglasses and a hat, sitting on a beach. The dog is holding a surfboard with a white and brown pattern. The background shows a blue sky with a yellow sun, green palm trees, and a sandy beach. A speech bubble is positioned next to the dog, containing the text 'Life is good!'. The bottom half of the card is blank white space.