

Unwanted neighbours

Lesson code: 114R-A46C-QIHC

INTERMEDIATE (B1-B2)

 British English

1 Warm-up

What are these animals called?



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____

Choose the best answer: These animals are all ...

- pets
- farm animals
- zoo animals
- wild animals

Do any of these animals live in your country? Are they dangerous?

Have you ever seen one of these animals? Where and when?



2 Reading for main idea

You're going to read an article called "Wild boars: new neighbours in the city of Genoa." First, skim the text quickly to understand the main ideas and how the information is organised. Then cover the text and tell your partner 3 things that you remember from the article. Do you remember the same things?

The sentences below are missing from the article. Match each sentence with a numbered space in the text.

- a. Across the country, wild boar numbers have risen from 600,000 to 1 million over the past decade.
- b. After they left their farms, trees and forests quickly covered the land.
- c. Local people near Genoa say that the last truly wild boar in the area was hunted and killed in 1814.
- d. In 2018, hunters killed about 90 wild boars with permission from the city.
- e. Today, a family of wild boars live in the Albergo dei Poveri, a historic building in the city centre.

3 Reading for detail

Read these sentences from the article and choose the best meaning for the words in bold.

1. But while wild boars look **comically** out of place running through the city ...
 - a. like something in a comic book or animated cartoon
 - b. in a funny and surprising way
 - c. dangerously
2. From the 1950s onwards, more and more people **abandoned** the countryside and moved to the cities.
 - a. hated living in
 - b. destroyed
 - c. chose to leave forever
3. The "rewilding" of farmland has become a **controversial issue** in the region.
 - a. something that people argue about
 - b. something that the government needs to spend money on
 - c. something that might be happening in the future
4. Animal rights groups **oppose** the plans. They sometimes block the government's actions, sending people to find and care for the animals, and even give them names.
 - a. agree with
 - b. stop
 - c. argue against
5. ... they have not been able to agree on a solution that **balances** the need for public safety and health with the needs of the wild boars.
 - a. considers two different points of view
 - b. seems like the easiest
 - c. doesn't cost much money



THE CONVERSATION

Wild boars: new neighbours in the city of Genoa

Adapted from *The Conversation*

Near the Ponte Gerolamo Serra (a bridge in the Italian city of Genoa), a small group of people were standing by the river wall. What were they looking at? A family group of wild boars – the adults resting in the shade while the young ones looked for food.

In any other place, this might seem surprising. But in some parts of Italy, the population of wild boars has been increasing so quickly that this sight is now common. (1)

But while wild boars look comically out of place running through the city, they are there as a natural result of the way people have moved – and the wars they have fought – over recent history.

Wild boars used to live all over Europe, but disappeared from many places during the 18th and 19th centuries. This was the result of competition with humans for space and resources and, of course, hunting. Wild boars can be very dangerous but in fact people used to hunt them because they enjoyed the challenge. (2)

After more than a century, wild boars began to return to parts of northern Italy. During World War I (1914-1918), fighting in the south-east of France pushed more animals back into Italy, over the mountains.

Although hunters also brought more wild boars in from other places to add to the local population, the increase in the boar population was mainly natural. From the 1950s onwards, more and more people abandoned the countryside and moved to the cities. (3)

This "rewilding" has become a controversial issue in the region. Many environmental organisations consider the return to "wilderness" a success. But others are worried that people have lost their traditional knowledge of how to manage the countryside.

The province of Genoa has one of the highest

populations of wild boars in Italy, with around 25 boars per 10km². Rewilding has brought forested areas nearer the city limits, making the line between countryside and city less clear. Boars have moved into city spaces in Genoa, attracted by the food waste created by humans.

In 2009, one boar made his home at Righi on the outskirts of Genoa. "Pierino" became a celebrity, and people used to visit him regularly to feed him the Italian bread *focaccia*. (4)

But while people often record and share the boars' activities on social media, the local city government have become worried about the dangers of having so many wild boars in close contact with people. Wild boars have caused traffic accidents, and have attacked dogs and even people when protecting their young. The local government in Genoa has made plans to reduce the number of animals in the city, including forced removals, sterilisation, increased attention to garbage disposal and hunting. (5)

Not everyone agrees with these actions. Animal rights groups oppose the plans. They sometimes block the government's actions, sending people to find and care for the animals, and even give them names. But many residents are unhappy with the animals living in the city, and have asked the council for help with the boar problem.

The city of Genoa continues to discuss this problem, but so far, they have not been able to agree on a solution that balances the need for public safety and health with the needs of the wild boars.

Meanwhile, the animals themselves sleep and feed under the Ponte Gerolamo Serra, bringing a little of the wilderness into the city.

by Robert Hearn, Assistant Professor in Human Geography, University of Nottingham, September 20, 2018



4 Grammar: Mixed tenses

Look at these sentences from the article. Match the verbs in bold to the correct tenses and rules below:

1. In 2009, one boar **made** his home at Righi on the outskirts of Genoa. "Pierino" **became** a celebrity ...
 2. ... people **used to visit** him regularly to feed him the Italian bread *focaccia*.
 3. But while people often **record** and **share** the boars' activities on social media ...
 4. ... the local city government **have become** worried about the dangers of having so many wild boars in close contact with people.
 5. Wild boars **have caused** traffic accidents, and have attacked dogs ...
- a. We use **used to + infinitive** to talk about repeated actions in the past that no longer happen.
 - b. We use the **past simple** to talk about completed events at a specified time in the past.
 - c. We use the **present perfect simple** to talk about recently completed events or changes that have a connection with the present.
 - d. We also use the **present perfect simple** to talk about something that happened at an unspecified time in the past.
 - e. We use the **present simple** to talk about present repeated actions or permanent states.

5 Practice

Complete the summary of the article using the verbs in brackets in one of these forms. In two of the gaps, two forms are correct – write them both.

- present simple
- present perfect
- past simple
- used to + infinitive

A long time ago, wild boar _____¹ (live) in the countryside in Europe. People _____² (enjoy) hunting them but they _____³ (kill) the last boar in Italy around two hundred years ago. The boars _____⁴ (return) to northern Italy in the 20th century for three reasons. The first reason is that they _____⁵ (come) to get away from fighting in France in the First World War. The second reason is that hunters _____⁶ (bring) animals in from other areas to increase the population. The third reason is that many people _____⁷ (abandon) their farms in the 1950s. The countryside _____⁸ (change) since then, and woods and forests _____⁹ (replace) farmland. The border between countryside and city _____¹⁰ (become) less clear, and wild boars _____¹¹ (start) to live in cities like Genoa. They _____¹² (sleep) and _____¹³ (feed) in different places around the city. Some people _____¹⁴ (like) seeing the wild boars, but they _____¹⁵ (be) dangerous to cars and people. The city government _____¹⁶ (discuss) a number of different solutions to these problems, but _____¹⁷ (not find) the right one yet.



6 Role play

Work in groups. These three people are meeting to discuss the problems wild boars are causing and to find a solution. You are going to roleplay the meeting. Before the meeting, look again at the article and use the information to prepare your ideas. Invent details if you need to, to make your point. At the end of the meeting, make a decision together about the best solution.

- a. You are a resident of Genoa, and you see wild boars every day. You think they are dangerous. (Be ready to explain why you think boars are dangerous and what solution you think is best.)
- b. You are a member of an animal rights group. You want to protect the boars. (Be ready to explain why the boars should be protected and what solution you think is best.)
- c. You are a member of the city government. You need to make a decision about how to solve the boar problem. Be ready to listen to everyone's story and opinions and ask questions if you need to. Then, present the best solution in your opinion and explain why you have made this decision.



1 Warm-up

Time: 10 mins. Do this as a whole class activity and make sure students can pronounce both singular and plural forms, as given below. Elicit which animals students think are dangerous to humans and why – answers may vary, but bears and wolves are the most dangerous to humans. Encourage students to talk briefly about where and when they have seen any of these animals.

1. bear/bears
2. deer/deer (the same form is used for singular and plural, as with fish and sheep)
3. wolf/wolves (the f changes to v for the plural form)
4. lynx/lynxes (a type of wild cat)
5. wild boar/wild boars
6. fox/foxes

All are wild animals.

Optional extra: if your class needs extra support understanding the context to the reading, you could show them 30 seconds of the short video accompanying the lesson plan. Elicit that the boar is pushing a rubbish/wheelie bin around. It can probably smell the garbage inside and is trying to open the bin so it can find something to eat. It doesn't succeed in the video, but it might succeed after trying for a while. This will be a problem because it will leave garbage everywhere, which will smell bad and may make people sick.

2 Reading for main idea

Time: 15 mins. Skimming is an important exam skill – tell students they have a time limit of 3 minutes to complete this first reading of the text. It can be helpful to display a few enlarged copies of the text on the wall for students to stand and read for the time limit to support the idea of quick skimming. Students can start to confirm their understanding by returning to their seat (or covering the text) and, in pairs, each recalling three things from the article; there is no need to check if these ideas are right or wrong at this stage.

Students can then work alone to demonstrate their understanding of how the information is organised by adding the missing sentences. When checking answers with the class, encourage them to explain why they have chosen the position for each sentence – this is also an important skill for reading and writing exams.

1. a 2. c 3. b 4. e 5. d

3 Reading for detail

Time: 10 mins. Working in pairs, students can use the context of the sentences from the article to choose the best meaning from the choices. Make sure students can pronounce all the words (stressed syllables have been underlined). You might also ask them to identify the part of speech for each item.

1. b (adverb) 2. c (verb) 3. a (adj. + noun) 4. c (verb) 5. a (verb)

4 Grammar: Mixed tenses

Time: 5 mins. Do this matching activity with the whole class.

1. b 2. a 3. e 4. c 5. d

5 Practice

Time: 10 mins. Students can work alone and then check answers in pairs before you go over the exercise with the whole class. Ask students to explain why they have selected each tense. Ensure that irregular forms like 5 and 6 are spelled correctly too. Some classes benefit from some extra support half-way through their working time 1– you could tell them that there are 2 x used to, 5 x past simple, 6 x present perfect and 4 x present simple.



- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. used to live/lived | 2. used to enjoy/enjoyed | 3. killed |
| 4. returned | 5. came | 6. brought |
| 7. abandoned | 8. has changed | 9. have replaced |
| 10. has become | 11. have started | 12. sleep |
| 13. feed | 14. like | 15. are |
| 16. has discussed | 17. hasn't found | |

6 Role play

Time: 10 mins. Divide students into A, B or C roles and explain the task. Students might benefit from spending a few minutes talking to other students with the same role first, to formulate their ideas. They can then reform as a mixed group (A+B+C) to roleplay the meeting. Monitor to make sure they are communicating effectively, and offer correction either during or after the roleplay, focusing on the vocabulary and grammar from the lesson. At the end of the roleplay, compare how different groups have solved the problem.

