

Popular pets

1 Talk about the information with your partner. Answer the questions.

- 1 What is the most popular pet in the UK?
- 2 Which reptiles are popular pets?
- 3 Which pets are equally popular?

2a Read the texts about some unusual pets. Which of the pets is a mammal, a reptile, and a spider?

The ten most popular pets in the UK



Pet	Number (in millions)
Fish	20-25
Dogs	8.5
Cats	7.9
Rabbits	0.8
Birds	0.6
Guinea pigs	0.7
Hamsters	0.4
Horses and ponies	0.4
Lizards	0.4
Snakes	0.3

Unusual Pets



Douglas, the UK

I've got a crested gecko called Dawn. She's green and I think she's beautiful. Geckos are one of the easiest lizards to have as a pet. They are small and they are very friendly. They are best for older children, as they are delicate and you must be careful when you pick them up. Geckos grow to around 17–20 cm long. They are nocturnal, and can be noisy at night, so Dawn doesn't live in my bedroom. She has a home called a vivarium with a special light and some plants in it. I buy special reptile food for her but she also likes to eat small insects. My mum and sister love Dawn, too. She's part of the family!

Cristina, Brazil

My pet is a tarantula. His name is Enrique and he's two years old. Tarantulas are great pets. They are small, quiet and clean and most are quite gentle. But you must be careful when you pick them up because you can hurt them. Tarantulas don't need a big tank to live in, but it needs to be warm. Tarantulas eat insects and I give Enrique one or two crickets a week. Some of my friends don't like Enrique because they are scared of spiders, but I like his hairy body and big legs. He's a unique and interesting pet.



Luis, Spain

I've got two chinchillas. They are really cute, with their big, dark eyes and soft grey fur. Chinchillas are easy to look after because they are clean and quiet. You can't really play with a chinchilla, but mine are very curious and they like to sit on me. Chinchillas need a place to run and jump: they love jumping and can jump over one metre! They aren't big animals – they are around 30 cm long – but they need a big cage. Chinchillas' teeth grow all the time, so they need to eat lots of hay. Mine also like to eat pieces of apple or other small sweet treats.

2b Read the article again and circle the correct alternative.

- 1 Crested geckos are good pets for young children/teenagers.
- 2 They are active during the day/at night.
- 3 You can/can't touch a pet tarantula.
- 4 Cristina thinks her pet is unusual/scary.
- 5 Chinchillas are good at jumping/playing.
- 6 Chinchillas' teeth never stop growing/stop growing when they are 30 cm long.

2c Complete the table with information about each pet.

	Crested gecko	Tarantula	Chinchilla
what it looks like			
why it is a good pet			
what kind of home it needs			
what kind of food it likes			

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and answer the questions.

- 1 Do you have a pet at home, or have you ever had a pet? Tell your partner about it.
- 2 What kinds of pets are popular in your country?
- 3 Do you know anyone with an unusual pet? What is it?

PROJECT

3b You are going to work on a presentation about pets in your country and another country of your choice. Read the questions and prepare your project research.

- 1 Work in small groups. Choose a country you are interested in to compare and contrast with your own country.
- 2 In your groups, do some research on the Internet to find information about pets in your country and the country you have chosen:
 - How many people have pets?
 - Which are the five most popular pets?
 - Which are more popular, dogs or cats?
 - What kinds of unusual pets are there?
- 3 Work together and discuss what you found out. Decide how to present your information to the class. This can be a slideshow, a presentation or a poster.

3c Present your information to the class. What were the main similarities and differences between your country and the country you chose?