

TEXT	TWO ANIMAL POEMS
AUTHOR	Rabindranath Tagore
THEMES	Music (Unit 2), Getting Away (Unit 8), Challenging Fate (Unit 18)
VOCABULARY	Related to animals, <i>wild</i> , <i>tame</i> , <i>caged</i> etc., abstract nouns.
WRITING	Students write an email to a friend giving information.
SPEAKING	Students debate an issue presenting for and against opinions.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a Bengali polymath, poet, musician, songwriter, artist, playwright and novelist. He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (1913) and was greatly admired by writers in the West, including WB Yeats, HG Wells and Robert Frost. Tagore travelled extensively and was welcomed by world leaders, artists and scientists all over the world. His writing is often meditative and spiritual, as he explores what it is to be a human being in a world full of variety and contrasts.

### WARMER

Quickly identify the animals in the picture and ask students to think of any stories, films, books or poems where these animals appear (*Disney*, *Dream Works* or *Pixar* movies for example). They might also be familiar with some books that feature animals, e.g. *Black Beauty*, *Warhorse*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Watership Down*, etc.

### ABOUT YOU

The questions introduce some of the themes of the extract. Animals and pets are often regarded differently in different cultures, so ask students to consider why people do, or don't, keep pets. You can also ask students if they think pets are clean and hygienic. Use the questions to check students understand the words *cruel*, *tame* and *wild* as these will come up later in the worksheet.

If you think students might be interested to know more about Rabindranath Tagore use the *Background information* box.

- 1 After reading the poems, form small groups and ask students to compare their preferences and discuss their reasons. You should explain the metaphorical use of the word *ripple* in the poem, a feeling that goes through your body like 'waves' of emotion. Point out the pronunciation of *learned* /'lɜ:nɪd/ and explain that it is a formal term.

## 2

### Suggested answers

- 1 The main similarity is that they are both about animals and express ideas about being human. The differences are more varied and probably more interesting. Poem 1 is a single poetic voice exploring ideas about how dogs behave and what they tell us about human beings and the purity of their loyalty and trust. Poem 2 is a dialogue between a personified pair of birds whose concept of life are so different that they cannot be together.
- 2 The main reason is the loyalty, trust and honesty the dog shows to the man. We can extend this idea to the implication that human beings are sometimes inferior to animals, as we can be dishonest and disloyal.
- 3 Ask for suggestions and ideas. For example, the bird in the cage might be happier because it is safer, doesn't have to worry about danger and is looked after. Or the wild bird might be happier because it has freedom, even if it has a more dangerous way of life.
- 4 With the whole class, ask for suggestions and see which ideas are most popular.
- 5 Ask for ideas and suggestions. You could write five or six of the best on the board and end with a class vote.

## VOCABULARY

## 3

### Answers

- 1 Richard believed it was his destiny to be King.
- 2 George sacrificed a job opportunity in London because his family needed him at home.
- 3 The tiger tried in vain to escape/ tried to escape in vain from the cage.
- 4 Many learned experts tried to explain the death of the dinosaurs.

## 4

### Answers

- 1 ripples
- 2 longing
- 3 status
- 4 convey
- 5 sacrifice

### MIXED ABILITY

The vocabulary exercises are fairly short, so stronger students might finish them quickly. Give those who finish quickly a third activity: writing their own sentences, using the vocabulary in Activity 4, or searching for synonyms or antonyms of the words in the glossary.

## WRITING

- 5 Go through the instructions and check students understand the task. They can use some of the ideas they talked about in the discussion questions. It's also a good idea to set a word limit of around 150 words.

## SPEAKING

- 6 This can either be a whole class activity or organised into debates between smaller groups, depending on the size of the class. You can structure the debate around a specific proposition, for example, 'Zoos should be closed because they are cruel to animals'.