



1. What do you think about zoos? Answer the following questions by yourself first. Then work with a partner and compare answers.

a. Do you enjoy going to the zoo? Why or why not? Use the scale to answer the question.

b. Some people criticise zoos. What do they criticise them for? Write down keywords.

c. Are there any animals you think should not be kept in zoos? Why or why not?

d. Is there a difference for you between keeping animals as pet or keeping animals in zoos? Why or why not?

2. Homework: Find out what other people think about zoos. Take notes in your exercise book.
- Interview three different people about zoos. You can ask the following but also other questions:
 - How do you feel about zoos?
 - Do you enjoy visiting zoos?
 - Which animals do you believe should no longer be kept in zoos?
 - ...
 - Mediation: Summarise what your interviewees told you about zoos.
 - Do you agree with your interviewees? Why or why not?
 - Prepare a short oral presentation (2 minutes) about your results and your own opinion about zoos.
3. Look at the vocabulary below to prepare for the role play.

English	German
enclosure	Gehege
extinction	Aussterben
to become extinct	aussterben
endangered species	vom Aussterben bedrohte Art
zookeeper	Zoowärter / Zoowärterin, Tierpfleger / Tierpflegerin
animal welfare	Tierwohl
veterinarian (vet)	Tierarzt / Tierärztin
natural habitat	natürlicher Lebensraum
conservation	(Umwelt-)Schutz, Erhaltung
animal welfare activist	Tierschützer / Tierschützerin
species-appropriate	tiergerecht
intensive mass animal farming	Massentierhaltung
petting zoo	Streichelzoo

The situation



Should zoos be banned?

With more than 19 million visitors in 2021, zoos are very popular in Germany. The zoo in Berlin is the most visited one in Germany with over 2.2 million visitors. However, keeping animals in small cages only for the entertainment of visitors has sparked debate in recent years. Organisations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) have labelled zoos as “animal prisons”. They question the justification for their existence, particularly regarding the protection and conservation of endangered animal species. While it is true that not all animal species in zoos are endangered, supporters argue that zoos play an important role in education. They provide opportunities for visitors to learn about animal behaviour, care, feeding, and conservation. Visiting zoos and interacting with animals can foster people’s interest in protecting animals and their natural habitats. In the following, you will take part in a discussion about whether zoos should be banned or not.

The following people take part in the discussion:

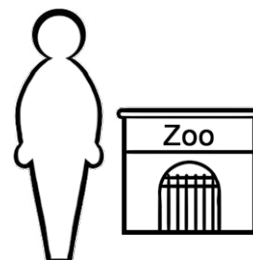
- the director of a zoo
- a biologist
- a politician
- a family
- a member of an animal welfare organisation
- an animal welfare activist
- an animal lover
- a journalist
- an ethicist
- a farmer

Tasks:

1. Read the role play card and prepare your role. You may take notes and write down arguments for your position. Look up words, if necessary, and make sure that you are able to use your own words in the discussion.
If you work with a partner or in a group: Decide who will play the role and take part in the discussion.
2. Take part in the discussion.

The director of a zoo

You are the director of a zoo with approximately 1,500 animals and 120 different species. Your zoo is a popular destination for families who enjoy observing and learning about the animals. In the past, zoos have often been criticised for keeping animals in inadequate conditions, such as small cages, which negatively impact their welfare. However, your zoo has made significant improvements by providing large enclosures that imitate the animals' natural habitats and offer areas for resting, hiding, and playing.

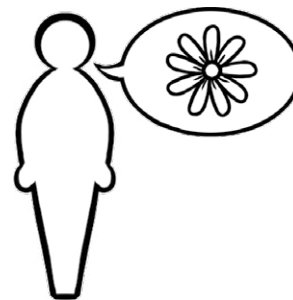


In the discussion, the following aspects are important for you:

- **Education:** Zoos offer the chance to see and learn about animals that may not be easily seen in the wild. Your zoo provides informative and interactive displays as well as guided tours to help visitors learn more about the animals. The more we know about animals, the better we can protect and take care of them.
- **Protection of the animals:** Instead of small cages, your zoo offers enclosures similar to the habitats the animals come from. If zoos were banned, owning a pet would also have to be forbidden, because pets such as rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs are often kept in even worse conditions.
- **Research:** Zoos play an important role in conducting research to understand and protect wildlife. By studying animals in zoos, such as their behaviour, physiology, and health, we can learn how to better manage and conserve them in their natural environments.

A biologist

As a biologist, your main interest is the protection of animals. You understand the critical role zoos play in animal conservation efforts. Currently, there are 39 animal species listed as extinct in the wild, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Zoos can help protect endangered species from extinction and should not be banned.

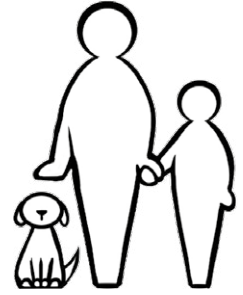


In the discussion, the following aspects are important for you:

- **Protection of the animals:** Zoos provide a safe and secure environment for animals, especially those threatened in the wild by climate change, pollution, habitat loss, and human activities. Zoos also rescue injured animals that wouldn't be able to survive in the wild.
- **Funding for conservation efforts:** Zoos raise money for projects to save endangered animals. People are more likely to donate to conservation projects for animals they see in zoos, even if in the wild those animals are in areas far away from where the people live.
- **Education:** Zoos educate visitors about animals and conservation efforts. They help visitors understand the importance of protecting wildlife and encourage them to take action.

An animal lover

As an animal lover, you have been actively involved in animal welfare activities for years. You believe that animals should be treated with respect. This is why you strongly oppose keeping animals in circuses and zoos. You also strongly disapprove of poor living conditions or the mistreatment of animals solely for the sake of our entertainment. You do not agree that zoos are necessary for education, as there are excellent virtual reality (VR) programs that can provide a more realistic and ethical alternative to zoos. Therefore, as a parent, you don't take your children to zoos.

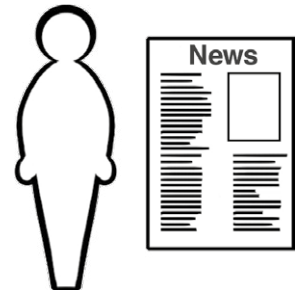


In the discussion, the following aspects are important for you:

- **Virtual reality:** VR technology can be an alternative to zoos by providing the illusion of animals and their natural habitat (e.g. a virtual safari experience). Zoos are no longer needed for the purpose of education.
- **Ethics:** Zoos are often motivated by profit rather than animal welfare. They frequently fail to provide adequate living conditions for their animals.
- **Mistreatment of animals:** You are concerned that visitors and zoo workers mistreat or even torture animals. Some zoos claim to provide certain animal welfare standards to attract visitors, even though those standards are not actually applied.

A journalist

You are an investigative journalist who specialises in wildlife and zoos. You have recently published an article about the importance of conserving endangered species, but you believe that zoos do not take this task seriously enough. In your opinion, zoos often prioritise keeping animals that are popular with visitors rather than focusing on protecting endangered species.

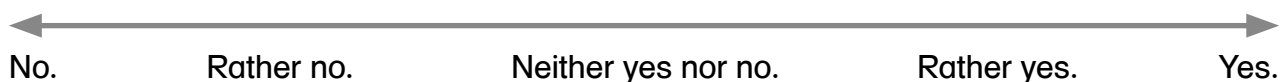


In the discussion, the following aspects are important for you:

- **Conservation:** Zoos often fail to effectively conserve endangered species. You believe that resources should be directed towards protecting animals in their natural habitat rather than in captivity.
- **Wrong priorities:** You think that if conservation was really important to zoos, they would keep more endangered species instead of focusing on animals that attract visitors, such as elephants, giraffes, and zebras.
- **Genetic issues:** Breeding programmes in zoos can result in genetic problems and deformities, especially if the population of the breeding programme is too small. You also believe that releasing these animals back into the wild could be problematic.



1. Should zoos be banned?
 - a. Use the scale to answer this question.
 - b. Has your opinion changed after the discussion? Why or why not? Make notes in your exercise book.



2. At an international youth camp, you are researching animals which are almost extinct. Your task is to report on the Przewalski's horse, but the text you found is in German. As the camp's working language is English, summarise the most important aspects concerning the Przewalski's horse in English in your exercise book.

Das Przewalski-Pferd

Das Przewalski-Pferd zählt als „Urwildpferd“ zu den ältesten Wildpferdarten der Welt. Die Tiere mit der dunklen Stehmähne, dem hellen Mehlmaul, den gestreiften Beinen und einem Aalstrich über dem Rücken gleichen vom Körperbau einem Pony oder Islandpferd. Benannt wurde die Pferderasse nach dem russischen Asienforscher Nikolai Michailowitsch Przewalski. Während einer Expedition in der Steppe von Kobdo in der Mongolei entdeckte er immer wieder eine Herde von Tieren, die ihm gänzlich unbekannt waren und die er erst für Halbesel hielt.

Przewalski brachte 1878 von seiner Expedition das Fell und den Schädel einer bis dato in der westlichen Welt unbekannten Pferdeart nach Sankt Petersburg mit.

1881 gelangte der Zoologe Iwan S. Pojarkoff zu der Erkenntnis, dass Przewalski mit dieser Pferderasse die letzten noch lebenden Wildpferde gesehen hatte, von denen es bereits damals nur noch wenige Exemplare gab und die 80 Jahre nach ihrer Entdeckung auch in der Mongolei ausgestorben waren.

Der Grund für das Aussterben der Rasse ist auf den Menschen zurückzuführen. Zum einen wurde durch die Umwandlung von Grasland in landwirtschaftlich genutzte Flächen der Lebensraum für die Tiere immer knappen. Die Tiere dienten zudem dem Menschen als Nahrung und bisweilen auch als Trophäe. Eine Verminderung der Rasse ist außerdem auf Erkrankungen und Parasiten zurückzuführen.

Dass es mittlerweile wieder über 100 Przewalski-Urpferde gibt, ist der Arbeit von Zoos zu verdanken. Ein Kaufmann namens Assamnow, der mit China Handel trieb, hatte in den Jahren 1897 bis 1902 damit begonnen, Exemplare dieser Pferderasse einzufangen und nach Russland zu transportieren. In dieser Zeit gelangten auch 39 Przewalskis zu Carl Hagenbeck nach Hamburg.

Nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges wurden weltweit 30 Przewalski-Pferde in menschlicher Obhut gezählt. Das letzte freilebende Tier wurde Ende der 1960er-Jahre gesichtet. Nur in den Tierparks in Prag und München kamen noch Pferde dieser Art zu Welt. Das Pferd wäre folglich ohne Zoos ausgestorben. In mehreren Zoos wurden in der Folgezeit aus den Nachkommen Zuchtgruppen zusammengestellt, um die Pferderasse, die als Urahne unseres heutigen Hauspferdes gilt, zu retten.

Im Sommer 1995 wilderte der Prager Zoo wieder drei Przewalski-Hengste und vier Stuten in der mongolischen Steppe aus. Die dortigen Zuchtprogramme werden bis heute von Zoos betreut. Die Art ist jedoch noch immer stark gefährdet. Experten gehen davon aus, dass es zwischen 400 bis 500 Exemplare benötigt, damit die Rasse nicht weiterhin von der Ausrottung bedroht ist.

(nach Handbuch Pferde, Komet Verlag Köln, 179f.)