

Pet interactions

Why do pets behave this way?

Look at each image. Identify the behaviour it shows and match it to its purpose. Write the correct letter and number in the two circles, e.g. 'B | 2'.



My answers:

A

Scratching

1

Exploring and interacting with their surroundings



B

Zoomies

2

Gathering information about their environment



C

Hiding

3

Releasing pent-up energy, stress or excitement



D

Sniffing

4

Seeking safety, rest or a quiet space



E

Chewing

5

Maintaining claws and leaving scent marks

Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Read each story and think about what the pet might need.

Bella's story

Bella the cat keeps scratching the sofa. Her owner is frustrated because the sofa is becoming damaged, and tells Bella off whenever she sees her scratching it. Bella doesn't have a scratching post or another suitable place to scratch.

But is Bella simply being naughty, or could there be a reason for her behaviour?



Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Bella

1. Look beyond the behaviour

What natural behaviour is Bella carrying out, and why might it be important to her?

2. What does Bella need?

What need or opportunity might not be being met?

3. Think about the solution

How could Bella's owner provide an appropriate scratching surface and encourage her to use it?

4. Put yourself in Bella's paws

Why might telling Bella off or stopping her from scratching not solve the problem?

Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Read each story and think about what the pet might need.

Zeke's story

Zeke is an energetic two-year-old dog who spends most of the day indoors. He has a small garden, but it doesn't give him much space to run around or explore.

He goes for two 15-minute walks each day. His owner usually walks him quickly around the same streets, so there isn't much time to stop, sniff, or investigate.

Zeke's owner thinks that because he has a garden and gets two walks a day, he has everything he needs. Is the owner right?

Is Zeke "too energetic", or could his behaviour be telling us something about what he needs?



Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Zeke

1. Look beyond the behaviour

What natural behaviours might Zeke need more opportunities to carry out?

2. What does Zeke need?

Why might spending time outdoors and exploring be important for Zeke, even if he has access to a garden?

3. Think about the solution

What could Zeke's owner do to give him more opportunities to exercise, explore, and use his senses? Think about walks, play, scent games, and activities or enrichment items.

4. Put yourself in Zeke's paws

How might you feel if you spent most of your day indoors and only had a short time each day to explore somewhere new?

Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Read each story and think about what the pet might need.

Eric's story

Eric is a rabbit who spends most of his day alone in a small enclosure.

He has nowhere to hide, dig, or explore, and there isn't much space for him to move around. He doesn't have another rabbit to spend time with.

Eric is usually quiet and doesn't cause any problems for his owner. Does this mean he is happy and has everything he needs? Or could his environment be affecting his well-being?



Pet interactions

What does the pet need?

Eric

1. Look beyond the environment

What natural behaviours and needs might Eric not have opportunities to meet?

2. What does Eric need?

Is there anything else, apart from changes to his enclosure, that Eric might need to live a good life?

3. Think about the solution

How could Eric's environment and daily life be changed to give him more opportunities to behave naturally and meet his needs?

4. Put yourself in Eric's paws

How might you feel if you spent most of your time alone in a small space with little to do or explore?

Pet interactions

Supporting natural behaviours

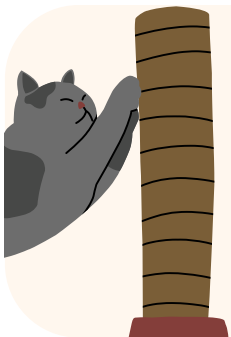
Now, think about a pet you know. What natural behaviours do they enjoy or regularly carry out? Are there any behaviours that people might see as a "problem"?

The pet I'm thinking about: _____

One natural behaviour this pet enjoys: _____

Is there a behaviour the pet displays that people find challenging or call a "problem behaviour"? What do you think might be behind it?

Then, choose one of the activities below, or another suitable activity, that could give the pet an opportunity to express a natural behaviour.



Sniffari walk with a dog
Hunting-style play with a cat
Digging box for rabbits
Scratching post for a cat
Safe space to explore/hide for guinea pigs



Pet interactions

Supporting natural behaviours

The activity I chose: _____

The natural behaviour(s) it encouraged: _____

How did the pet respond? _____

How could this activity benefit the pet and anyone or anything else?

Think about the pet's well-being, your bond with the pet, and even the environment or other animals. _____



Meeting an animal's needs can sometimes have benefits beyond the individual pet. For example, appropriate hunting-style play gives cats an opportunity to express natural behaviours, so how might this also affect the wildlife around them?

Pet interactions

Supporting natural behaviours

A photo of my activity:

