

THE FLATMATES

Language point:
Animal vocabulary



BBC WORLD SERVICE LEARNING ENGLISH



BBC Learning English – The Flatmates

The Flatmates – Animal vocabulary

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode109/languagepoint.shtml>

There are some words and expressions in English we use to describe animals which can also be used to talk about people.

Animal parts

a paw:

1. an animal's foot

The dog cut its **paw** on a piece of wire on the ground.

2. a person's hand (informal and humorous)

Go and wash your mucky **paws** before we have dinner.

a mane:

1. the long thick hair along the top of a horse's neck or around the face and neck of a lion

She brushes her horse's **mane** and tail until they gleam.

2. a person's thick long hair

He's got beautiful flowing **mane** of black hair.

whiskers:

1. the long, stiff hairs growing on an animal's face

The cat cleaned the milk off his **whiskers**.

2. a moustache or the hair growing on a man's face (plural noun old-fashioned and humorous)

I hate it when his **whiskers** tickle me when he hugs me.

Animal sounds, movements and actions

cluck:

1. the sound a hen or chicken makes
 2. express too much sympathy, anxiety or approval towards someone
- She's very overprotective. She **clucks over** her son the minute he starts crying.

purr:

1. the sound a cat makes when it's contented
 2. show your pleasure when speaking (in a sexy way)
- 'So open up your present and see what I got you' Marilyn Monroe **purred**.

bark:

1. the sound a dog makes
 2. shout at someone forcefully
- 'Attention! Right, left! Right, left!' The army sergeant **barked**.

sting:

1. a small but painful injury, usually with a poison, that an insect makes by biting you
 2. say something hurtful which upsets someone
- When she criticised his work, it really **stung** him.

preen:

1. the way a bird cleans its feathers using its beak
 2. feel very proud or satisfied with yourself because of something you've done or a quality you have
- She's very vain and spends hours **preening** herself in front of the mirror before she goes out.

Animal idioms:

to be the cat's whiskers:

to be better than everyone else
He's thinks **he's the cat's whiskers** since he got promoted.

to keep the wolf from the door

to have just enough money to live on
It's a low-paid job but she had to take it **to keep the wolf from the door**.

to talk the hind legs off a donkey

to talk a lot for a long time
He never stops! He could **talk the hind legs off a donkey!**

to come home to roost

to return and make trouble for you
She didn't do any studying this term, just had a good time and went to loads of parties. Now the exams are here and it's **all coming home to roost** for her.

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Vocabulary:

limping

walking unevenly because of injury or pain in the leg

swelling

becoming larger and rounder than usual

antibiotics

medicine that can destroy harmful bacteria

twice a day

two times every day

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