

Text 1 – Interview with a Vet

Hi Toby! So, what does an orthopaedic vet do?

I see dogs and cats with broken legs, arthritic joints and sore necks or backs, as well as athletic animals with sprains and strains. Once we have worked out the reason why the animals are lame or painful, we devise the best way of treating each one – this might involve special medicines or operations.



How long do bones take to mend themselves?

There are lots of things that affect how quickly a bone heals. We can do operations to fix bones to help them heal but, because bones are living things, we have to make sure the little blood vessels bringing nutrients and oxygen to the bone are kept intact. A fracture in a young animal can heal in 2-3 weeks, whereas a bad break in an older animal might take 3-4 months or even longer.



What's the trickiest case you've had to treat?

We sometimes have to do some very tricky operations. Recently, we saw a dog that had had a broken bone in her knee since she was a puppy. It was not possible to fix the break and make the knee better, so we used 3D printing technology to design an artificial knee. The operation to fit the new knee took nearly five hours, but the dog has recovered well and is now able to go for walks again.

INTERVIEW WITH AN... ORTHOPAEDIC VET

Have you always wanted to be an orthopaedic vet?

I grew up on a dairy farm and actually wanted to be a cattle vet at first. Just before I went to vet school I unfortunately broke both of my own legs, and I found it really interesting when the doctors explained how they were going to fix me. At vet school I was amazed by what could be done to fix a broken leg, and I really wanted to be able to do the operations myself.

Like a real-life superhero, orthopaedic vet Toby Gemmill puts broken pets back together after an accident. I asked him what it's like to do his job...

How do you mend broken bones?

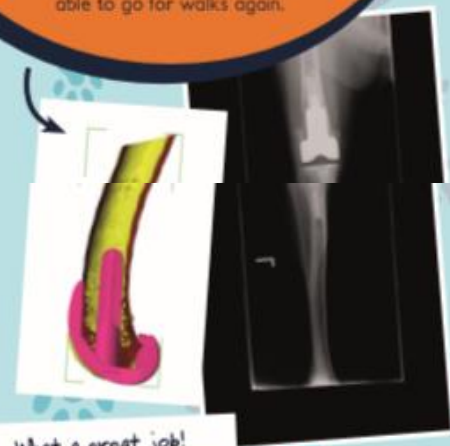
Bones are wonderful in that, if they are treated properly, they will heal back to a normal bone again, so animals can often get completely back to normal – even after quite bad breaks. We sometimes put a plaster cast on younger animals' legs, just like in children. But usually we do operations to fix broken bones with pins, screws and plates that are attached to the bone under the skin.



Toby Gemmill is a specialist in a small animal surgery at Willow's Veterinary Centre in Solihull, West Midlands.

What a great job! How can I become a vet?

Becoming a vet is quite hard work, but it's a very enjoyable and satisfying thing to do, so it is definitely worth all the effort. It is important to work hard at school as there is a lot to learn, and it really helps to spend as much time as possible working with animals on farms or in kennels. The most important thing is to be sure you are doing it for the right reasons – you have to like animals and their owners, and be interested in the science of making the animals better.



Text 1 – Questions

- Q1.** What changed Toby's mind from wanting to become a cattle vet to wanting to become an orthopaedic vet? Find the evidence from the text which shows why he changed his mind.
- Q2.** How has technology helped Toby to heal a puppy?
- Q3.** The article has been divided into sections with a question for each one. Which section tells you about the qualities you'd need to become a vet?
- Q4.** Look at the section with the question 'What's the trickiest case you've had to treat?' What do you think the word artificial means?
- Q5.** Put a T or an F in the boxes next to each statement to show whether the information is true or false.

It helps to spend as much time as possible working with animals on farms or in kennels.

Bones will always heal themselves back to normal.

A bad break in an older animal might take 2-3 weeks to heal.

Toby is a specialist in Solihull, West Midlands.

Text 2 – Flying with a dragon

Flying with a dragon

Jilly's dream has come true! In her room is a real, live dragon and they are about to have an amazing adventure. The dragon tells Jilly to climb on his back.

And then they were off! She felt the strong upward beat of his wings as he soared through the window and into the open air.

She looked down and saw the garden below. She saw the roses, the apple trees and her father digging. She gave a gasp. What if he looked up and saw her?

'We are invisible, remember,' came Lancelot's voice. It was as if he had read her thoughts.

'So we are!' She felt suddenly free! Hurray! We can go where we like, and no one will see us. Puff some fire! Please puff some fire!'

Lancelot obeyed. It was just as she had dreamed it would be. Flames went forking out on all sides. They danced and curled like scarlet snakes.

'Hurray!' Jilly yelled again.

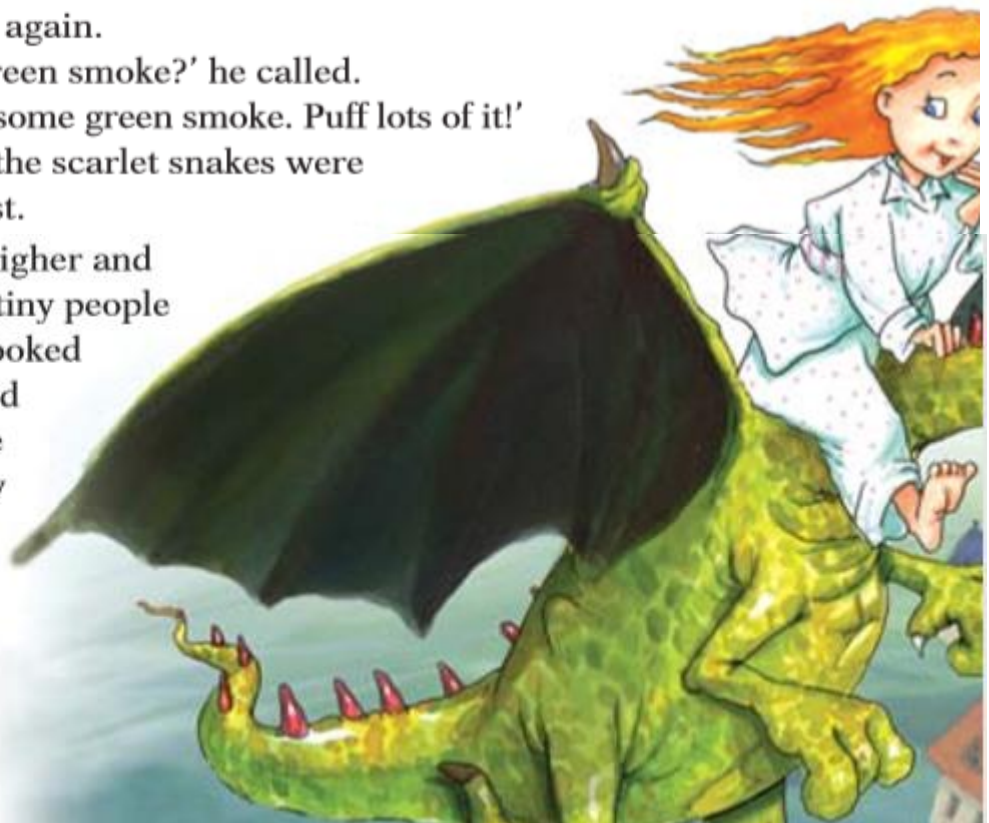
'What about some green smoke?' he called.

'Oh yes, please! Puff some green smoke. Puff lots of it!'

And so he did. Now the scarlet snakes were dancing in a green mist.

As the dragon rose higher and higher, Jilly could see tiny people walking below. They looked like toys. 'If they looked up, all they'd see is the moon coming up,' Jilly thought. They could not guess that right above their very heads was a dragon flying.

Dragon Ride, Helen Cresswell



Text 2 - Questions

Understanding the story

- 1 How did Jilly and the dragon get out of her bedroom?
- 2 Who was in the garden?
- 3 What did Jilly ask Lancelot to do?
- 4 What else did Lancelot do?
- 5 If people looked up, what would they see?

Looking at words

- 6 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story:
a soared b gasp c obeyed
d forking

Exploring the adventure

- 7 Why couldn't anyone see Jilly and Lancelot?
- 8 How do you know Jilly was enjoying herself?
- 9 How does the writer describe:
a Lancelot's fire b the people walking below?
Explain why these are good descriptions.
- 10 How do you know that Jilly had thought about a dragon ride before?

Extra

- Where do you think Jilly might ask the dragon to take her?
- Imagine you could go for a dragon ride. Write about where you would ask the dragon to take you and why.