

Pupils'  
worksheet

## Animal protection

This worksheet covers issues to do with animal abuse from Tudor times to the Twentieth Century and invites you to consider what issues still need addressing today.

### 1 Tudor Bear Baiting

Bear baiting involved a bear being chained to a stake by a hind leg or by the neck and attacked by dogs. Queen Elizabeth I attended a famous baiting, described by the Elizabethan Robert Laneham:

#### Source A "...

... it was a sport very pleasant to see, to see the bear, with his pink eyes, tearing after his enemies approach; the nimbleness and wait of the dog to take his advantage and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid his assaults: if he were bitten in one place how he would pinch in another to get free; that if he were taken once, then by what shift with biting, with clawing, with roaring, with tossing and tumbling he would work and wind himself from them; and when he was loose to shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood and the slaver hanging about his physiognomy."

#### Source B – An Elizabethan bear ring



Baiting an animal means tormenting or torturing it. In the past, many different species have been subjected to this abuse, including badgers, bears, geese, foxes and bulls. In Britain today, baiting is illegal.

Look at sources A and B. Why do you think bear baiting was legal in Tudor Britain?



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- 2 By the 19th Century, "the conscience of cultivated people seems to have been touched" by blood sports. **How does this help to explain bear baiting and cock fighting being made illegal by the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1849?**
- 3 Only captured or domesticated animals were covered by this Act. Wild animals were not. **Why do you think this was?**
- 4 Watch the video on the RSPCA:  
<https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/whoweare/history>  
**According to the video, what milestones does the RSPCA identify in the protection of animals in England? Why were these important?**
- 5 **Make a timeline of the main changes to the law that have provided protection for animals.** (Helpful hint, the BBC have some helpful material on this in their Ethics Guide). **What further protection should be given to animals?**



## Animal protection

### 6 The Protection of Badgers Act, 1992

Members of Parliament make suggestions for what should become law in the United Kingdom. Written suggestions are called Bills. If a majority of Members of Parliament vote for a Bill, it becomes law once it has received Royal Assent. Once the Bill has been passed in this way, it becomes known as an Act.

The Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 is the latest in a series of Acts passed by Parliament to protect badgers. Badgers are the only mammal in Britain to have their own specific Act. This shows the persecution they have faced.

**Read the offences below from the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. What threats does this suggest badgers faced at the time the Act was passed?**

#### Offences under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992

A person breaks the law if they:

1. Wilfully kill, injure or take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger.
2. Cruelly ill-treat a badger, dig for badgers or use badger tongs (badger tongs are long-handled tools used to grab badgers).
3. Interfere with a badger sett by damaging, destroying, obstructing, or causing a dog to enter a sett, either deliberately or carelessly.
4. Sell or offer for sale a live badger.
5. Mark a badger or attach any ring, tag, or other marking device to a badger.



## Animal protection

7 Now read these exceptions to the Act. Exceptions are circumstances in which a person will not be breaking a law.

A person will not be breaking the law if they:

1. Take or have a disabled badger for the purposes of tending it.
2. Kill a seriously injured or sickly badger as an act of mercy.
3. Kill a badger as necessary for the purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry, or any other form of property. A person must normally have a licence to kill a badger in these circumstances.
4. Kill or interfere with a badger or its setts in order to prevent the spread of disease. A person must normally have a licence to kill a badger or interfere with its setts in these circumstances.
5. Interfere with a sett to construct, maintain or improve water courses, drainage, and tidal defences. A person must normally have a licence to do this.

**Why do you think these exceptions were made? Why do you think you have to get a licence from the government department, Natural England, before doing any of the actions described in points 3 – 5?**

8 Despite the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992, badgers continue to face threats. Over 50,000 are killed on the roads each year. Their habitat is being reduced due to ongoing house and road-building. Pesticides are used on their farmland feeding grounds and these kill off the worms and invertebrates that badgers eat. And of course, there are people who still fight badgers with dogs and ignore other aspects of the law.

**What would you put in an Act to protect badgers today? What exceptions would you make? Explain your answer carefully.**



Teachers'  
notes

## Animal protection

Information and questions for pupils to discuss and answer orally or in writing

1. Baiting an animal means tormenting or torturing it. In the past, many different species have been subjected to this abuse, including badgers, bears, geese, foxes and bulls. In Britain today, baiting is illegal. Look at sources A and B.

Why do you think bear baiting was legal in Tudor Britain?

1

Teachers' notes:

- Less awareness of how sentience works
- More acceptance of violence generally – eg treatment of humans
- Religious views – humans more important
- Lack of facility to enforce any decisions/lack of central gov't
- Crowd pleaser

2. By the 19th Century, "the conscience of cultivated people seems to have been touched" by blood sports. How does this help to explain bear baiting and cock fighting being made illegal by the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1849?

2

Teachers' notes:

- Bear baiting/cock fighting very violent and longlasting
- Cock fighting involved gambling
- Cultivated people were influential – some of them even MPs
- Concern over the wellbeing of other people and effects on them

3. Only captured or domesticated animals were covered by this Act. Wild animals were not. Why do you think this was?

3

Teachers' notes:

- Wild animals seen as farm pests eg foxes and badgers
- Human society more affected by cock fighting/bear baiting
- Landed aristocrats enjoyed some wildlife activities – fox hunting and shooting
- Harder to police matters such as badger baiting
- In order to avoid bringing crowds together in towns - potential for riots



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4. Watch the video on the RSPCA:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/howeare/history>

According to the video, what milestones does the RSPCA identify in the protection of animals in England. Why were these important?

4

Teachers' notes:

- 1824 creation of the original Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- 1835 Abolished bear baiting and bull baiting. This consolidated and expanded previous animal welfare legislation
- 1840 becomes the 'Royal' Society. This provided social acceptance and increased profile of the needs of animals
- 1911 Protection of Animals Act. This tackled cruelty to all animals
- 1914 Set up sick and wounded horses fund in First World War. This raised the issue of animals suffering in war
- 2005 Hunting Act to protect foxes, deer and hares from hunting. This was a step forward in recognising animal sentience (though this is still work in progress!)
- 2006 Animal Welfare Act making it possible to allow the RSPCA to save animals from cruelty. This allows the RSPCA to take preventative action rather than purely reactive and recognises 5 welfare needs for animals: suitable environment, suitable diet, ability for normal behaviour, suitable housing, protection from pain and suffering

Further written information can be found on the RSPCA page below the video.

5. Make a timeline of the main changes to the law that have provided protection for animals. (Hint, the BBC have some helpful material on this in their Ethics Guide.) What further protection should be given to animals?

5

Teachers' notes:

- Should farm animals have more protection?
- Should animals have rights like humans?
- Are there specific species who need protection?
- How should wider environmental concerns affect future protection for animals?

Many other topics might be raised.



Teachers'  
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### 6. The Protection of Badgers Act, 1992

Read the offences from the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. What threats does this suggest badgers faced at the time the Act was passed?

6

Teachers' notes:

- Pupils might identify badger-digging, badger-baiting, dog fighting, badger fighting
- They might identify the use of dogs and the trade in badgers
- They might also identify abuses that may seem more respectable eg. builders bulldozing a sett, farmers ploughing over a sett, stables filling in badger holes in paddocks
- Concern about the pet trade
- Concern over commercial activities involving badger body parts, eg. shaving brushes

7. Now read the exceptions. Exceptions are circumstances in which a person will not be breaking a law.

Why do you think these exceptions were made? Why do you think you have to get a licence from the government department, Natural England, before doing any of the actions described in points 3 – 5?

7

Teachers' notes:

- People rescuing badgers should do so without fear
- vets euthanising injured badgers
- needs of farmers (and the power of the farming lobby)
- fear over badgers spreading bTB (but note scientists challenge this fear)
- the need to sometimes move badgers on for building activities considered central to humans

For Natural England to issue a licence requires people to explain and justify what they want to do to the badgers and why. It puts a limit and control on people acting on the spur of the moment.

(But note that efficacy of licences for badger protection relies on Government and Defra wanting to protect badgers – Smart Motorway developments have been given licences for sett closures; the government has organised a badger cull, killing over 100,000 badgers, even though the science shows that this isn't the solution to the spread of bTB in cattle.)



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8. Despite the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992, badgers continue to face threats. Over 50,000 are killed on the roads each year. Their habitat is being reduced due to ongoing house and road-building. Pesticides are used on their farmland feeding grounds and these kill off the worms and invertebrates that badgers eat. And of course, there are people who still fight badgers with dogs and ignore other aspects of the law.

What would you put in an Act to protect badgers today? What exceptions would you make? Explain your answer carefully.

8

Teachers' notes:

- Road traffic protection
- Limitation on developments on Green Belt land and greater consideration of habitat and clan requirements (rather than simply the actual sett structure) when assessing planning applications
- Requirement to include wildlife bridges or tunnels (green highways) in all new roadbuilding schemes
- Requirement to consider adding green highways to existing roads in wildlife accident hotspots
- Limitations on pesticides
- Limitations on people owning certain types of dogs
- Prevent imports of products using badger parts eg shaving brushes
- Increase in penalties for violations of the Act

