

UNIT 1: READING

1 Read the text. Which of the following statements best describes Richard Bevington's opinion of John and Helen?

- 1 He thought they were funny but a bit crazy.
- 2 He expected them to be very normal and polite but actually they were a bit crazy.
- 3 He thought that they were charismatic and funny but, in the end, rather boring.
- 4 He expected them to be mad but actually they were funny and interesting people.
- 5 He expected them to be charismatic and funny and they were.

IF I COULD TALK TO THE ANIMALS

Last month I had an extraordinary weekend at a place called 'Black Horse Farm' in the country. It was a lovely setting in the hills of north-west England, far away from the nearest roads. The track which led to the farm was bumpy and wet. My purpose? To attend a seminar for people who are interested in developing their skills of communication with animals. The company which runs these weekends is called Mind Set and it claims to have been successfully training people to communicate better with animals for over 25 years.

My first impression was very positive. The people who welcomed me were not at all what I had expected. John and Helen, the hosts, were both extremely charismatic and had a great sense of humour. In short, they appeared very normal and incredibly polite. I had rather expected to feel as though I was amongst madmen and women. This was not the case.

After dinner on the Friday evening we were given an introductory lecture by both John and Helen. They were clearly used to doing such talks and held everyone's attention. The main message of the talk was that we, as the human race, are increasingly in need of a better connection with the living things around us. In this time of increasing environmental disasters, we are searching for meaning and a relationship with our environment. In essence, their message is that we should learn from the animal kingdom about how to live in harmony with the Earth. In order to do this, we have to learn to communicate with the animals around us.

Of course, animals generally can't speak. For John and Helen, this is not a problem. The answer is telepathy: communication without words. If we can develop our ability to communicate telepathically with our four-legged friends, we can begin to understand the beauty and joy of relationships outside

our normal, every day experience. By doing this, we can begin to understand the world.

Communicating telepathically is about transmitting thoughts directly to another person or animal without speaking. John and Helen believe that speaking is a poor form of communication. They believe that we are trained to speak as children and so never develop our potential to communicate in other ways. Animals, on the other hand, according to Mind Set, are able to communicate with physical movement and action. Furthermore, animals can communicate telepathically by sending mental pictures, feelings and knowledge to anyone who is trained to receive them. Even more impressively, John and Helen claim that animals can also receive such messages.

At this point on a Friday night, having driven for seven hours from London, I was ready to pack my bag and set off for the nearest pub. However, when I saw the demonstration that followed the lecture, I was quite frankly amazed. From that moment, I knew that it was going to be a fascinating weekend.

By Richard Bevington

2 Are the following statements true, false or 'not given'?

- 1 People who attend the Mind Set seminar weekends have to pay.
- 2 The author believes that Mind Set can train people to communicate better with animals.
- 3 The author's first impression on arrival was exactly what he had expected.
- 4 The first lecture of the weekend was interesting.
- 5 Learning to communicate with animals can help us to have a better relationship with the Earth.
- 6 Some animals can communicate better than others.
- 7 Animals can learn to communicate with people by talking.
- 8 Humans are not capable of telepathy.
- 9 After the first lecture, the author wanted to leave and go for a drink.
- 10 He did not leave because he was not allowed to leave.