

## An Elizabethan Collar.

Do you ever check your bills? It's a good practice(1), but sometimes seems unnecessary. If you do, however, you might find the occasional odd charge, or you might have a question about something on the bill that you don't recognize. That is exactly what happened to me last week when I took my dog, Rosie, to the vet. The poor thing had a skin infection of some kind. Apparently it was the result of an allergy. She obviously felt itchy because she would scratch herself all over. Well, the vet got to the bottom of (2)the problem, gave her a medicinal (3)bath and prescribed antibiotics and steroids. As I sat in the waiting room, I looked over(4) the bill and spotted(5) an item that immediately made me curious: an Elizabethan collar. I blinked because I thought I had misread(6) the words. An Elizabethan collar, no I wasn't mistaken; those were the words written, along with the pills, the bath, and the ear cleaning. A mental picture of Queen Elizabeth I came to my mind, with her wide, ruffled collar. What was she doing back there with the animals? Pet owners can never really know what is going on beyond(7) the waiting room. Perhaps the vet likes historical costumes....Maybe her assistants dress up all the animals to put on a Tudor play, "Ok people we need an Elizabeth, a Henry VIII, and a Mary Queen of Scots, ... and a few servants and advisers of course. Rosie, if you want to play Elizabeth, make sure you put on her collar..., and get ready for that Armada scene, ok?" "Woof!" replies Rosie. Oh my! My imagination can certainly run wild(8) when I'm bored! So, I asked the lady behind the counter about the Elizabethan collar, and she told me that it's just a plastic cone that is put around the dog's head so it doesn't scratch its ears. Oh, well that's disappointing. It's not even frilly(9). My idea was far more interesting.

1. 'A good practice' is something that you do that is beneficial, practical, or helpful.
  - a. It's good practice to double check that your doors are locked.
  - b. Helping your neighbors is a good practice.
2. 'To get to the bottom of...' is to find the solution or the answer.
  - a. The detective got to the bottom of the crime.
  - b. We need to get to the bottom of what happened.
3. 'Medicinal' means 'of medicine'. It is used when we refer to a treatment.
  - a. He put a medicinal wrap on his wound.
  - b. That tea is medicinal; it has many health benefits.
4. 'To look over...' is often used when we talk about examining a document of some kind, a collection of information, or a list.
  - a. We looked over the plans for the house and found three things that we didn't like.
  - b. I looked over the phone bill; it was higher than last month.
5. 'To spot' something is 'to notice'.
  - a. I spotted her orange coat in the crowd.
  - b. I've spotted a family of doves in my back garden.
6. 'To misread' means to read incorrectly. The prefix 'mis' shows an error or negative slant given to the verb. Similar words are: mistake, mismanage, misinform. Notice, the past of 'to misread' is spelt exactly the same but pronounced 'misread'.
  - a. I misread the highway directions, and ended up in Canada instead of Idaho!
  - b. Read slowly so you don't misread the words.
7. The use of 'beyond' here shows three things: distance, separation, and mystery. It is the context that gives 'beyond' those meanings. Normally, 'beyond' means 'further on from/ than', especially when you are giving directions. However, because 'beyond' often refers to a place that is not yet seen, there can be an element of mystery attached to it.
  - a. I love the series 'Stories from beyond the grave'; it's really scary.
  - b. God exists probably beyond space and time, beyond what we see.
8. To have your 'imagination run wild' is an expression that is self explanatory.

- a. When you write this descriptive essay, let your imagination run wild.
- b. When the kids are playing, their imaginations run wild.
- 9. 'Frilly' refers to the 'ruffled' collar in the paragraph. It describes material that is folded, wavy, or doubled, often with delicate edges.
  - a. The edge of the skirt is frilly; it looks like a country dress.
  - b. Queen Elizabeth's collar was very wide and very frilly.

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