

Parks are a breath of fresh air, especially when they are in cities. I found that when we visited London in the summer, we really needed to escape into the parks at least once a day. Children can only take a certain amount of (1) site seeing, and then they need to run and play, and be around trees and grass. The parks in London are wonderful, my favorite being St. James's which is central, right near Buckingham Palace. It is one of the oldest in the city, and has a lake, and many kinds of birds. These animals are used to being around people; they seemed quite tame. We fed the ducks, geese, and swans with some of the sandwiches from our picnics, and we soon found that we were surrounded by pigeons as well. Deeper into the park, we came across another surprisingly comfortable creature: a squirrel. In fact, there were lots of them all over the place. I spotted a man who was feeding one of them nuts from his hand. "Wow!" we all said, as we watched him. He had the right 'touch'(2) with these animals, and they accepted all of his food. He was kind, and gave us some of his peanuts, showing us how to call the squirrels. And, would you believe it, they came scurrying(3) from the trees over to us and ate out of our hands. It was magical. I had no idea that they were so tame! When I worked in central London, I used to relax in St. James's park on my breaks, so I am quite familiar with it. However, I had never taken the time to be around the animals, so I was surprised how close they got to people. Each day we made a point of(4) visiting the squirrels in St. James's park. We would have an ice cream, play frisbee, and then feed the little creatures. We spent quite a few pounds on peanuts, and not one of them went to waste. They would jump up on the fence, take a peanut from one of us, and then jump down and scamper(3) off. I'd like to think that they

appreciated our company, but really they just wanted the nuts. Once our peanuts were all gone, they would disappear in a flash, and look for other friendly people with bags of good things to eat.

1. '...can only take a certain amount of' means that too much of something would be intolerable. In this case, site seeing has to be limited, otherwise it becomes exhausting.

a. I can only take a certain amount of country music, and then I've had enough.

b. The crowd was beginning to leave; they had been waiting in the cold to see the actors, but they could only take waiting for so long.

c. At Christmas time, I can only tolerate a certain amount of shopping. I can take a day or two, but then I've had enough of the crowds.

2. 'To have the right 'touch',' can apply to many situations.

a. The animal trainer has the right touch with the animals; he is very gentle and careful, and seems to understand what they want.

b. Gosh, you have the right touch with plants. You can make anything grow!

3. 'To scamper/ to scurry,' these are two fabulous verbs that describe how small animals (rodents) run. We use these verbs particularly with mice, rats, rabbits, and squirrels. 'To scamper' implies a bounciness to its running, while 'to scurry' implies a scratching and grabbing while the animal runs.

a. It was fun to see the rabbits scamper all over the field, jumping around like they had springs on their feet.

b. The rat scurried away from the dog, up the metal pipe and onto the roof.

4. 'To make a point of,' means to deliberately do

something; to be intentional.

a. My neighbor is an animal lover, and every day she makes a point of feeding a stray cat.

b. When we visited Amsterdam, we made a point of visiting a historical site each day.