

Lilly.

We have a new addition to our house. It's a furry, playful little thing that, at the moment, is fast asleep(1). Lilly is her name, but I'm not sure if it suits(2) her. Most of the time 'mini monster' would suit her, as she hides around the corners, waiting for us, and then jumps out and attacks our ankles. Thankfully, she doesn't use her claws very much, and she's not big enough to do any damage, though she seems to think that(3) she's as big as the local mountain lions. We bought her a few weeks ago from the humane society, or the pound(4). She was, what they call, a throw-away(5)cat. They have so many of them in the pound; they're often not wanted, and so they are very cheap. When Lilly's not dashing(6) around, or attacking us, she naps. Well, of course she naps, she's a kitten. And then, everybody fights over her. We all want her to be on our laps(7) because she is so cute and warm and cozy. It's surprising what a comforting influence a cat can be. Mind you, our dogs would disagree. They are outside dogs, and only rarely(8) come in the house. Lilly has learned that a window can be the ultimate weapon. She stands at our glass door and stares, while on the other side, both dogs are going bananas, barking and jumping up and down, trying to get her. "Oh, what a fuss," she seems to think, as she licks her paw, gives them one last look, and climbs onto my lap.

1. 'Fast asleep' means to be deeply asleep. 'Fast' is an old English word meaning 'thoroughly', 'quickly', or 'deeply'. We often use 'fast' in this way when talking about something being thoroughly stuck (with glue).

- a. The two pieces of wood are stuck fast and can't be separated.
- b. When he is fast asleep, it's very difficult to wake him up.

2. 'To suit' means to go well with, to look good on, to complement, to seem natural with.

- a. The landscaping really suits the house.
- b. Red suits you; you look good in it.

3. '...seems to think that...' is a normal part of English speech, and is good to practice. It can be said as an observation, or it can be used humorously or ironically.

- a. He seems to think that women don't have opinions of their own.
- b. The Chancellor seems to think that the public loves to pay taxes.

4. 'The pound' is a nickname for the humane society, where unwanted animals are cared for and held up for adoption. It is obviously written and pronounced the same way as the currency and weight 'pound'.

- a. Our pets came from the pound; they had been found on the road, and taken there for safety.
- b. Some teenagers volunteer at the pound. They walk the dogs and play with the cats.

5. 'Throw-away' is a made up compound. It is self-explanatory, and used in front of items that are for sale.

- a. I bought a throw-away camera for our vacation. When the film was used and developed, I threw it away.
- b. Those are throw-away knives and forks; you can only wash and reuse them a few times, they they need to be thrown away.

6. 'To dash' is similar to 'to dart' which means to move very quickly and suddenly. 'Dashing' is also used as 'handsome'.

- a. The cat dashes here and there around the house; you never know when she will do it.

b. He looks very dashing in that long, black coat.

7. 'Lap' is the top of your leg, between your knee and your hip. It is where a child or animal will sit, if they sit on you. In fact, we never say, "Come and sit on my leg"; we use the word 'lap'. The same word is also used in sports: a lap of a swimming pool (is one length), and a lap when running (is one circuit).

a. The cat sat on my lap and fell fast asleep.

b. We swam ten laps and then had a break.

8. 'Rarely' means not often. It is mainly used just before the verb.

a. We rarely go to the theater, but I do love to go there.

b. There are coyotes in town, but you rarely see them because they are so well disguised.

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