

## A Human Sandwich.

It's not often that(1) I find myself trapped, stuck in the middle of two things. However, I put myself in the middle of two things the other day deliberately(2). The two things were my dog and cat. The dog wanted to get the cat, and the cat wanted to test her young claws on the dog's nose. I have been training my little kitten. She is getting used to(3) the front garden, so when she's older, I can let her out by herself. I have a little harness(4) for her, (I call it her bra), which attaches around her chest. Then the leash(5) clips into it, so I can gently hold the leash and follow her while she explores. Perfect. Well, not really. My dog Foxy can jump over the gate and come to the front garden whenever she wants to(6). That's the problem. She is very, very smart. She approaches us, focusing on the cat. I tell her "no" and act like a confident boss. She responds by lying down and acting sweet. However, I can see in her eyes that she is just pretending for her stupid human owner. Really, she's ready for war, and her enemy is the cat. She looks at me with sad, sweet eyes, and then back at the cat with an unbreakable(7) stare. She licks her lips. I feel quite proud of myself for staying(8) right in the middle, the great protector. Suddenly a car scares the cat and she runs for the door. Foxy, the dog, jumps to attack, but the cat is too quick. She gets out her weapon, her claws, and goes for the nose. This is a new experience for Foxy; her precious nose must be protected, so she backs away(9). When the cat and I are back inside the house, I realize how ridiculous that scene was. And was I even necessary? I'm sure the natural dog and natural cat don't need a civilized woman to keep the peace. Why? Because naturally speaking, there is no peace between a cat and a dog.

1. 'It's not often that I...' this sentence and the use of 'often' could be written a different way, and with 'often' at the end.

a. I don't find myself trapped (very) often. OR It's not often that I find myself trapped.

b. It's not often that he reads all night. OR He doesn't read all night (very) often.

c. It's not often they visit us. OR They don't visit us (very) often.

2. 'Deliberately' means 'on purpose'. Let's practice the pronunciation.

Del-i-ber-ate-ly Del-i-ber-ate-ly Del-i-ber-ate-ly Del-i-ber-ate-ly

3. 'To get used to' is a phrase that we have covered before. It is the same as 'to familiarize yourself with' or 'to become accustomed to'. It is much easier to use 'to get used to',

a. It might take a long time, but you will get used to the weather here.

b. I just can't get used to my new work schedule.

c. Get used to it! You have no choice.

4. 'A harness' is like a piece of clothing made of straps that fits around the body. In rock climbing, a rope is attached to it to keep the climber safe.

a. The rock climber checked his harness before he started climbing.

5. 'A leash' is the cord or rope that is attached to a dog or cat collar when you take them for a walk.

a. I bought a new leash for my dog because she had chewed the other one.

b. You need a stronger leash for that big dog.

6. 'Whenever she wants to' in the U.S the preposition 'to' is often missed out. In England, however, we normally include it.

a. They'll do it whenever they want to. OR They'll do it whenever they want.

- b. I'll say whatever I want to.                      OR    I'll say whatever I want.  
c. They always went wherever they wanted to.    OR They always went wherever they wanted.

7. 'Unbreakable' means that it is impossible to break.

Un-break-able    un-break-able    un-break-able    un-break-able

8. 'I feel quite proud of myself for staying.....' it is the structure of this sentence that is useful:

Subject + emotion + preposition + (oneself) + for + gerund

- a. He's happy with himself for getting the promotion.  
b. I'm disappointed in myself for getting angry.  
c. She's ashamed of herself for being lazy.  
d. They're proud of themselves for building the house.
9. 'To back away' can also be expressed as 'to back off'. 'To back down' is similar, but it also means to give up in a fight, or to stop offering a threat.
- a. The protesters backed off when the police arrived.  
b. The younger lion backed down when the alpha male confronted him.

Thanks for joining me! Let me know your questions and comments at [acupofenglish@hotmail.com](mailto:acupofenglish@hotmail.com), and I will send you an email in return. You're all invited to join my FACEBOOK page Anna Fromacupofenglish.