

I'll Borrow Your Pitbull.

There is an animal that helps to fight crime, is therapeutic(1) to be around, and is a good companion. However, this animal is also used for fighting and guarding illegal drugs. It's a Pitbull. It's a dog with a reputation. Over the past few centuries, this dog has been used as a tool and a weapon. When immigrants first came to North America, they brought this mixed breed(2) for defense and hunting. The English had crossed(3) bulldogs with terriers, and the result was an animal that had the best characteristics of both. Bulldogs are very strong and athletic, while terriers have a 'never-give-up' attitude. That combination makes a naturally dominant breed of dog. In fact, Pitbulls, along with German shepherds and Rottweiler, are the three notorious(4) breeds that have been involved in attacks on humans. But there is no consensus about this. Some studies show that it is bad training, no training, and poor conditions that lead these dogs to violence. It's a bit like trying to drive a tank through town when you actually don't know how to drive. Something bad is bound to(5) happen. Humans need lots of guidance, and dogs are no different. Any dog needs to be trained properly, but a dog that has natural aggression and strength needs extra training. I saw a pitbull the other day while I was having coffee with a friend of mine. It wasn't aggressive or dominant. In fact, it wasn't even very big. It was a puppy, and oh my goodness, how cute. Its owner asked if he could leave 'Sally' with us while he went into the cafe to get his coffee. "Of course!" was our answer. "Be careful, because she nips when she gets excited," warned the owner. The little puppy was warm and wiggly and very enthusiastic. I could see how anyone could fall in love with a young pitbull, without realising the work and responsibility needed to bring it up properly. And yes, she did nip me. I thoroughly enjoyed petting and playing with her. I hope that Sally will be well trained, so she and people around her can always enjoy each other safely.

1. 'Therapeutic' means healing in some way.
 - a. Foot massage can be quite therapeutic.
 - b. Knitting is very useful and also therapeutic.
2. A 'breed' is a kind of animal, a type of the species.
 - a. That breed of dog is very energetic.
 - b. Mixed breeds are often healthy and intelligent.
3. 'To cross' sometimes means to mix different breeds of animals, or types of plants.
 - a. They crossed a plum tree with a cherry, and made a tree that produces giant cherries.
 - b. What do you get when you cross a dinosaur with a pig? Jurassic pork.
4. 'Notorious' means a person, animal, or thing with a bad reputation.
 - a. He is a notorious thief. Don't lend him any money!
 - b. She is notorious for spreading people's secrets.
5. 'Bound' is followed by the infinitive of a verb. This combination means that something is destined to happen, like a natural consequence.
 - a. He's naturally clumsy. He's bound to have an accident sooner or later.
 - b. They are so talented. They're bound to be famous one day.

You are all welcome to join me on FACEBOOK at Anna Fromacupofenglish. Questions, comments, or need conversation practice via Skype? Email me at acupofenglish@hotmail.com.

