



1054 Pest Protection

Shirley talks about how custom officials also work to help protect species from being smuggled to other countries.

Ray: I remember watching a television documentary in the United States a few years ago that **at one point** they brought up the subject of these toads that live in Australia that supposedly have some substance that is for humans a hallucinogenic, does that **ring any bells** with you?



Shirley Ray

Shirley: Well, I don't know about those ones specifically but I know that in Australia for example we have a huge Cane Toad problem. Cane toads are very big toads they are about the size of a small cantelope probably, and someone brought them in at the **turn of the 20th century** and they got loose in northern Australia and now there's thousands and thousands and thousands of hectares covered with Cane toads and every year it costs the government a huge amount of money trying to control them and they've become a pest. And that's one of the reasons why we have such strict quarantine regulations.

Ray: **That makes sense.** Of course, I guess we all know about the rabbits.

Shirley: Yes, rabbits were first brought into Australia from Britain, and probably just as someone's pet and one got out ...

Ray: You weren't on duty that day

Shirley: I wasn't on duty that day probably because it was maybe about a hundred years ago

Ray: You did say "previous life" so

Shirley: That's true. Anyway, the rabbits got loose and there was periods in Australian history where there were millions and millions of rabbits and huge control programs and one of the things that they did to control them, which I think eventually did control them was they gave them a disease called "myxomatosis" which doesn't kill the rabbit but makes them go blind ... so they get infected with it. I think that it's **transmitted by** a small flea and they go blind and I think, rather horribly, they either starve to death or they, you know, they just can't survive. And that was what controlled them **in the end.**



Ray: Uh huh, until they come up with an immunity to it.

Shirley: Yeah, they don't seem to have done that. I mean they're still around a little bit, but not in the numbers, not in the plague

Quiz

1) A television documentary in the United States had a story about _____.

- a) drug taking in Australia
- b) sugar frogs in Australia
- c) cane toads in Australia

2) Cane toads were brought to Australia in about _____.

- a) 1901
- b) 1931
- c) 1961

3) The rabbits are pests because _____.

- a) they bother people.
- b) they are too great in numbers.
- c) they are loud.

4) The plague rabbit population in Australia was controlled by _____.

- a) killing the rabbits with guns
- b) releasing a disease
- c) promoting rabbit meat

5) Shirley thinks that the method of controlling the rabbit problem was _____.

- a) a good idea
- b) not nice for the rabbits
- c) not successful

Reset Quiz

Show Answers

Vocabulary

at one point

At one point they brought up the subject of these toads that live in Australia.



To say that something occurs "at one point" means there was a specific time or event that marked when something happened. Note the examples below:

1. At one point I was thinking of becoming a psychologist but I didn't want to study statistics.
2. Last year, I ran a marathon and at one point I didn't think I could go any further, but then someone gave me a thump on the back and said "keep going", so I did.

ring any bells

Does that ring any bells with you?



"Ring any bells" means to be reminded of something. Note the following examples:

1. I know you said we met in high school, but the name doesn't ring any bells.
2. I lost my camera but when Jack mentioned Sarah's birthday it rang a few bells, and I remembered that was the last place I had it.

numbers that they used to be in the past.

Ray: So now it's toads that are the big problem.

Shirley: Yeah well, there's other things as well but ... yeah, toads are an ongoing problem.

Speaking Challenge

Answer these questions related lesson.

Q1 Are any animals smuggled in or out of your country?

A1

Q2 Does it make sense to make smuggling illegal?

A2

Q3 Does the name Nick ring any bells with you?

A3

Q4 How are many diseases transmitted?

A4

Q5 In the end, do think tigers will survive extinction?

A5

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turn of the century

Someone brought them in at the turn of the century.



The "turn of the century" or the "turn of the season" refers to the time when the century or season changes from one to the next. Here are a couple of examples.

1. Many cities around the world celebrated the turn of the 21st century with fireworks and parties.
2. I love it when summer turns to autumn and the trees change their leaves to red and gold.

that makes sense

That makes sense.



"That makes sense" is a common expression often used to agreement about an idea or reason. Here are two examples.

1. It makes sense that Jane likes golfing, because both her parents were golfers.
2. It makes sense that we take just one car, there are only three of us and it would be a waste of petrol to drive separately.

transmitted by

It's transmitted by a small flea.



To "transmit" something is to send it or carry it from one place to another. Note the following examples.

1. They transmitted the signal from HongKong to Germany using a satellite dish in Australia.
2. The common cold is transmitted by a virus.

in the end

That was what controlled them in the end.



"In the end" means the final event or action. It is the last thing to happen. See the following examples.

1. We were hoping to holiday in Spain, but in the end decided on the French Riviera.
2. "In the end, it depends on how much money you want to spend" Michelle said when trying to decide whether or not to buy a new iphone or ipad.

Vocabulary Quiz

at one point • ring any bells • make sense in the end • transmitted by

1. The disease cannot be human contact.
2. Does the name John ?
3. Well, we almost left, but we decided to stay.
4. They did not buy the house because it was too expensive.
5. It does not to spend more than you earn.