

CrossTalk

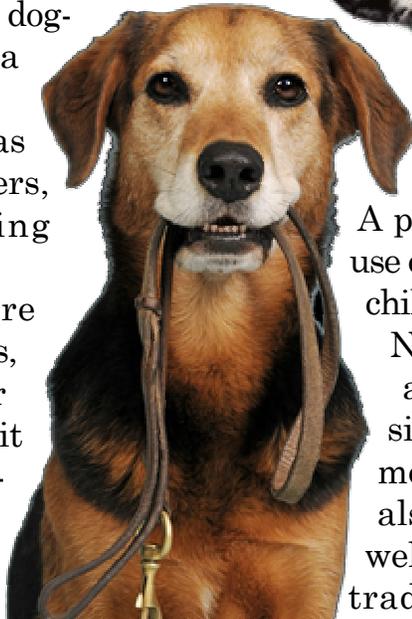
CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter March, 2026

More than a Friend

Have you noticed an increase in pet-people combinations walking the streets, or in parks, recently? Mostly dog-person duos, it's true, but a menagerie of stay-at-home creature-companions such as cats, birds, rabbits and others, have been quietly invading Japanese homes too.

Nowadays, more of us are living in built-up areas, cities, etc., and we are losing our connection to nature. Could it be that this increase in human-pet relationships is due to our inner need to maintain an affinity with nature, or, at least with our distant past? After all, the friendship between humans and animals goes back a long way, born of an ancient and mutual dependency – and a trip to the zoo can not replace this, can it?

Some research has suggested that pet owners live longer and healthier lives. A pet around the house will help reduce blood pressure, heart rate, stress and cholesterol levels. And, if you have a dog that needs to go for a regular walk, you can lose up to 5 kilos in a year by accompanying your mutt on their daily work-out!



In addition to health benefits, animals can bring out our nurturing and protective instincts, awakening in us a sense of responsibility to take care of the less-fortunate, the vulnerable. A practical example of this is the use of animal therapy to help disabled children.

Not only have studies shown that animal pets are of great significance for our physical and mental well-being, many cultures also link animals to our spiritual well-being as well. For example, in traditional Celtic culture, horses are even referred to as *aman cara* – “soul friends”....

Could all of this be the secret behind the recent increased interest in keeping a pet? Or is there something deeper connected to this phenomenon?

Ponder: Could Japan's declining birth rate, and an increase in singles living alone also have something to do with this? People are people, single or not, and, perhaps, we cannot ignore our natural instincts - in this case, our instinct to nurture



Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS? Try our *lessons on the net!*
About nurture: <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2022/02/18/pet-love-humans-nurture-their-animals-as-they-parent-their-children-heres-the-evolutionary-reason-why/>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua: Astronomically speaking, this month is a month of equals. That is, it's one of two times in the year when we will get an equal amount of daylight and night time, star-light – approximately 12 hours of each. This only happens when the sun lines up with the earth's equator. And here in Japan, we get a holiday because of this! The Spring (or Vernal) Equinox falls each year on the 20th or 21st of March. I think there is virtue in "celebrating equality"....

Junko Says: Lately, I've been wondering why we dream in images. I learnt that during REM sleep, the final fifth and deepest stage of our time asleep, our brain activity resembles the activity of processing visual information when we are awake. The rapid eye movement in REM sleep corresponds to what we are "seeing" in our dreams, so, this is the answer. But I also learnt that "non-visual dreams" are..... (to be continued in April).



Marek Says: One of my pastimes is exploring abandoned roads and paths in remote mountain regions of Ehime and Kochi. Asphalt roads seemingly leading somewhere, perhaps connecting villages or individual households deep in the forest, only to slowly begin to succumb to the force of nature degrading the road surface and blurring the boundaries between manmade structures and natural habitat. I find that quite fascinating, how nature can undo the scars we inflict on her surface with stoic patience and insistence.

Danielle dit: Les L'hiver dans la ville de Québec est féérique. Je vous recommande de dormir à l'hôtel de Glace. C'est une expérience unique. Et pourquoi ne pas essayer la longue glissade en bois face au Château Frontenac, le grand hôtel qui surplombe le fleuve Saint-Laurent ? Une activité hivernale autant pour les enfants que les adultes. Habillez-vous chaudement comme les Québécois !



Play A Game!
Find the answers on P1

ACROSS

- 2 relying on or needing support
- 4 a remarkable development
- 5 help, support development
- 8 shared or common understanding
- 12 being together with
- 14 give little or no attention to
- 16 healing treatment
- 17 pairs
- 18 collection of live animals
- 19 join, connect

DOWN

- 1 inborn, intuitive senses
- 3 put, add or exist together
- 6 unable to function normally
- 7 weak, defenceless
- 9 natural attraction, feeling
- 10 important
- 11 a current period of time
- 13 actual,, not theoretical
- 15 think about deeply
- 18 a mixed breed dog

(print version here)

Some words of advice from S(c)I's Emi Kawaguchi



What is nasal **irrigation**?

Nasal irrigation is a highly effective way of **flushing** out pollen, dust, and bacteria from your **nasal** passages. It's great for preventing colds and relieving symptoms of *sinusitis* or hay fever.

The three golden rules:

To avoid pain or ear infection, please follow these strictly:

1. Never use tap water. Using untreated water can cause a sharp, stinging pain and carry a risk of infection. Always use a **saline** solution (0.9% salt water).
2. Use **lukewarm** water (around 36°C / 97°F). Water that is too cold or too hot will irritate the delicate nasal lining.
3. Say "Ahhh" while rinsing.

Making an "Ahhh" sound keeps your throat closed, **preventing** the water from going into your ears or down your throat. Do not swallow the solution.

What you need:

While commercial kits are easiest, you can make your own solution.

- Water: **distilled** water or tap water that has been boiled and cooled.
- Salt: mix about 1 teaspoon (4.5g) of non-iodized salt into 500ml of water.
- Device: a nasal rinse bottle or a Neti Pot.

Step-by-step instructions:

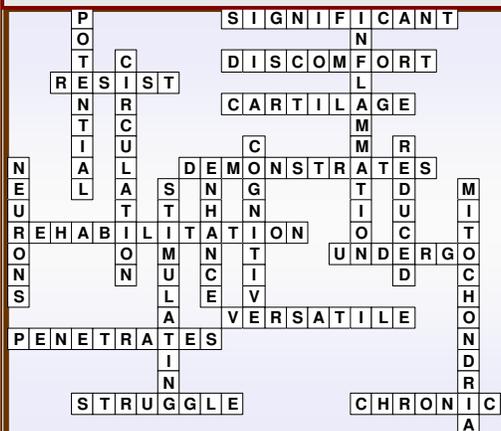
1. Position: lean forward over a sink and **tilt** you head slightly to one side.
2. Insert: place the **nozzle** into your right nostril. While saying "ahhh", gently squeeze the bottle to let the liquid flow in.
3. Drain: the water should flow out through the other **nostril** or your mouth.
4. Finish: gently blow your nose to remove remaining liquid. Do not blow hard, as this can push water into your ear canals.



It's perfectly normal to have some remaining solution **drip** out of your nose a while after the rinse. Tilt your head forward and from side to side to drain trapped water from your **sinuses**.

Find the words in Emi's writing that mean:

- leaning over, not vertical _____ (liquid) containing salt _____ projecting spout on a kettle _____
 cavities in the bones in your skull _____ just a little warm _____ fall by drops _____
 supplying dry land with water _____ purified by boiling _____ relating to the nose _____
 keep from happening _____ rinse or clean with a liquid _____ your nose has two of these _____



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 2 important effect or meaning
- 5 feeling pain, soreness
- 6 oppose, withstand,
- 7 body tissue mostly connected to bone
- 11 shows, makes clear
- 15 return to a useful state
- 16 experience something
- 17 changeable, able to move all directions
- 18 passes into or through
- 19 make a great effort
- 20 very bad, long lasting, serious

DOWN

- 1 expected, positive outcome
- 3 pain, swelling, redness and heat
- 4 flow, spread out
- 8 relating to thinking and reasoning
- 9 made less in some way
- 10 cells that conduct nerve impulses
- 12 add extra to, make more
- 13 exciting feelings or emotions
- 14 part of a cell that produces energy



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Ask Junko in our office, for the details.