

TV Cartoon Shows – ‘Corrigan’s Zoo’

Challenge: Ben’s work experience at a local zoo reveals rather more than twenty one top TV cartoon shows.

Difficulty rating – easy

	TV Cartoon Shows	✓
1	Ben 10	
2	Top cat	
3	Family Guy	
4	The Pink Panther Show	
5	Wacky Races	
6	Thundercats	
7	Scooby Doo – Where are You?	
8	King of the Hill	
9	The Jetsons	
10	Count Duckula	
11	Pokemon	
12	Popeye	
13	Fantastic Four	
14	Rhubarb and Custard	
15	Rugrats	
16	Dangermouse	
17	South Park	
18	Star Wars - Clone Wars	
19	Dilbert	
20	Futurama	
21	Transformers	

The unkempt ginger hair, deep staring eyes and careworn frown made Ben wonder whether the real zookeeper had put one of his orangutans in dungarees and a donkey jacket to, *'Fool the new work experience lad!'*

Only, an orangutan wouldn't spit chewing tobacco on Ben's green wellies, nor thrust a bucket of overripe meat and entrails at him. Ben tentatively took the brimming bucket, spilling offal down his new overalls, as the zookeeper sloped off in the direction of the 'Wildcat Zone', saying, *'Follow me, lad.'*

Ben hurried as fast as his heavy burden would allow, then came to a stop, catching his breath as they reached a gated feeding area protected by steel bars that jutted into a moated enclosure. Apart from boulders and logs the enclosure was as empty as the zoo at this early hour. Ben held out the bucket. *'Here you are, sir.'* Keen to impress he added, *'I asked Mr Corrigan for the Health & Safety Rules but he told me you'd soon sort me out on that front.'*

'I bet 'e did,' said the zookeeper, weighing up the teenager carefully before spitting in the bucket and saying, *'Rule number 1: I'm just a family guy, so me name's Bert not sir. Rule 2: You get on-the-job training as the boss is too skint to pay for 'owt. Rule 3: we pull in the money 'owever we can so don't be expecting no bleeding London Zoo!'* He turned, took a ring of assorted-sized keys from his pocket and unlocked the gate to the feeding area. There was movement from behind a log beyond the moat. *'This 'eres the pink panther. Sure brings in the punters,'* said Bert, throwing chunks of meat into the enclosure.

'I've never seen one that colour,' said Ben as a small day-glo panther pounced on the meat.

'We call him Dulux,' muttered Bert. Ben started to ask why but was ushered out by the taciturn zookeeper. The next enclosure should have contained a 'Mongolian Hibernating Tiger' but Bert said it liked its beauty sleep when Ben asked why it didn't come out for food. In another pen labelled 'Tara the Spotless Lebanese Cheetah', an animal that reminded Ben of his Uncle's whippet bounded to the fence.

'Tara's a bit wacky. Races round 'er enclosure all day,' explained Bert. *'It's a common trait wiv spotless cheetahs.'* Tara promptly sat, raised one paw and woofed. *'Barking mad, she is,'* said Bert, throwing her a piece of gristly steak before hurrying on. There was a distant rumble of thunder. *'Cats don't like thunder,'* said the zookeeper, *'makes 'em nervous, and we're the ones who have to pick up their scooby doo.'*

'Where are you from, son?' asked Bert as they left the wildcats and entered a zone called 'All Creatures Great & Small'. Ben told him he attended St Martin's on the Hill. 'Still goin' 'eh.' said Bert. 'In my day the 'eadmaster thought 'e were king of the hill...' He coughed and spat a treacly lump into a lion-shaped litter bin that proclaimed, 'We take pride in our Zoo!' *'...that is, until he died of an 'eart attack dishing out six o' the best.'* As Bert cut himself another piece of chewing tobacco he added, *'They put real effort into punishment in them days.'*

Approaching a high-walled concrete arena the zookeeper pointed at two hoses coiled on hooks. *'Pass over the jets, son.'* Soon, Ben learned how hard it was to wash the zoo's herd of white elephants. Even though, according to Bert, a quick rinse was all they needed otherwise, *'the buggers will need an extra coat.'* Ben was surprised 'White Elephants from Tibet' could get cold so easily.

'Mind old Bess,' warned Bert, 'swings her trunk like a plank. Last youngster we 'ad got knocked out for the count. "Duck you laggard!" I called but 'e weren't quick enough.' Bert pointed at a large male. *'And never use a stick to give Raja there a poke. A man – built like a marshmallow he was – tried it once. Raja grabbed the stick and skewered 'im like a lollipop. I 'ad to fetch the vet.'* Bert chuckled. *'Took three tranquilliser shots to subdue 'im...and I don't mean the elephant.'*

Come midday, Ben didn't think the lunch his mother had packed for him looked that fantastic. Fortunately Bert had a deal going with Madge, the lady in charge of the cafeteria – apparently her prize-winning roses thrived on elephant dung. Swapping his pitta-bread and houmous for sausage and beans, Ben finished with a delicious, if slightly congealed, bowl of rhubarb and custard.

In the rodent house Ben learned not all the creatures were in cages. Sweeping the food store, he reached to pick up an old blanket until Bert warned, *'Don't touch that rug! Rats might be nestin' in there. Use your broom.'* Ben prodded and poked, mindful of danger. Mouse droppings were all he found. He then changed the bedding in cages containing exotically-named rodents like the Dutch Mountain Rat and the Long-tailed Icelandic Desert Rat – although to a non-expert like Ben they all looked the same. He offered to clean the glass fronts to the cages but Bert said it was better to keep things a bit murky.

Later, they walked south. Parked by an unoccupied, iron-barred enclosure was a sign with a faded picture of an immense gorilla. *'Twas Kong's,'* said Bert. *'Now there were a true star...was cologne was 'is downfall.'* At Ben's confused look, Bert explained, *'Liked the smell of aftershave. American tourist musta bathed in the stuff and got too close. Ended up with the great smell of brute all over 'im.'* Bert went

misty-eyed. *'Corrigan settled outa court but we 'ad to let Kong go.'* Pointing at the cage's weeds and solitary daffodil, Bert said, *'In future, armadillos will be in there – should this place ever mek any money that is. What we really need is some of that lottery cash.'* Bert sighed. *'Aye, that'd transform us that would.'*

Come closing, Bert said, *'You dun good, son. Bring your family sometime an' I'll show 'em round.'*

'Thanks Bert, my Dad's a massive animal fa'

'What's 'e do?'

'He works for the Council...' Ben shook his head. *'...but he hates his job. Can we come this weekend?'* Bert nodded. *'Great, Dad'll love it! He always says he wishes he'd been a zookeeper instead of a boring old Trading Standards Officer.'*

Bert's choking fit proved to Ben that chewing tobacco was a really nasty habit.

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Answers

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