

E | Fur and Feather

Police Dogs

In the Kent countryside, south of London, there is a big training centre for police dogs. All police dogs in this part of England come here to go on courses. A dog trainer told us a bit about dog training.

– *What kind of breeds do you use as police dogs?*

We have tried Weimeraners, Rottweilers and Dobermans, but the German Shepherd is the best dog. It is easy to train and not too aggressive. A Rottweiler can sometimes be a bit too heavy and not so good at jumping.

Dobermans work better in pairs. That is a problem, because we usually work one policeman and one dog paired together.

Springer Spaniels are very good as drug dogs and explosive search dogs. They are very intelligent dogs, and they are most happy when they are working.

– *Do you breed your own dogs here?*

Yes, we do. We keep them until they are about eight weeks old. They come back to go on different courses until they are twelve months old. At that age they are ready to go out on the street. But the training goes on for the rest of their lives.

The dogs get one training day here every month as long as they are police dogs. We also start teaching the dogs tracking here. We start when the puppies are around twenty weeks old.

– *What is tracking?*

It is following a track. Dogs have a very good sense of smell. It is probably 1,000 times better than ours. We train the dogs to follow different smells. Sometimes we are looking for a criminal, and sometimes a person has gone missing. The dog helps us find the person we are looking for.

It is much easier to follow a track on the grass than on the street. But it is not easy when it is raining. The rain washes away the smell.

– *What about the drug dogs? Can the drug dogs find all kinds of drugs?*

Oh, yes. All the drugs have their own smell. It is very difficult to find drugs without a dog.

- 1 Why do the English police use the German Shepherd so much?
- 2 At what age is a police dog fully trained?
- 3 What kinds of drugs can a drug dog smell?
- 4 Tell your partner about what you feel about dogs. Do you like them? Do you have a dog? Does anyone else in your family have one? Are there any dogs in your neighbourhood? If so, describe one of them.
- 5 Pick eight new words from this chapter and write either eight sentences using one new word in each sentence or write a short text where you use all of them.