**Exercise 2** [**http://triproenglish.com/b2/**](http://triproenglish.com/b2/)

B2  Listening – Easy

What does a zoo represent for you? A place of education and entertainment or perhaps a fun day out for all the family? Supporters of zoos say that they contribute to our lives in many positive ways.

At a time when many species are threatened with extinction, zoos play a vital role in conservation. Animals in zoos are protected from hunting, habitat loss and predators. In addition, many zoos run breeding programmes in order to increase populations of endangered animals.

Zoos worldwide also claim that they serve an important function as educational establishments. They say that the experience of seeing these animals at close quarters makes the public more compassionate, and more likely to support environmental projects. In addition, zoos support science: we can learn about animal anatomy, physiology and behaviour, which might help us better understand our own species.

Many zoos help rehabilitate injured wild animals, and take in exotic pets which are no longer wanted by their owners, these animals might not otherwise survive.

However, some animal rights campaigners think that, when it comes to zoos, the negatives outweigh the positives. They say the main reason why zoos exist is because they are profitable, they make millions of pounds by providing, essentially, entertainment. They say that we have no right to deprive an animal of its liberty even for the benefit of science.

They also point to evidence which shows that many animals are stressed and bored in even quite well managed zoos. One study showed that elephants kept in captivity don’t live for as long as elephants in the wild. These critics say that taking intelligent, social animals, like elephants, away from their families is cruelty and cannot be justified.

Cute baby animals are more popular than older creatures. This means that older animals are less profitable, and some zoos sell them, and not always to caring new owners. Some zoos have sold animals to circuses, hunters and even for slaughter. Zoos can also be dangerous places. Animals can escape from their enclosures or cages, and cause harm to people or other animals.

Opponents of zoos strongly disagree with the idea that the public need to see animals at close range to care about them. Children are often crazy about dinosaurs, and they’ve certainly never seen one of them in a zoo!

A pragmatic approach would be to accept that while there is a demand for zoos, and while they are profitable, we should make the animals’ living conditions as good as possible, and raise awareness of the importance of protecting their wild cousins.

Support:

Zoos play a vital role in conservation
Animals are protected (from hunting/ habitat loss/ predators)
Breeding programmes
Education
Public will be more compassionate/ more likely to support environmental projects
Support science/ Learn about animals physiology/anatomy/behaviour
May help us understand our own species
Rehabilitate wild animals/take in exotic pets

Disagree:

Zoos are mainly for profit/ entertainment
Depriving animals of liberty
Animals are stressed and bored
Elephants in captivity don’t live for as long
It is cruel to split up families
Zoos sell older animals (to hunters/ circuses/ for slaughter)
Zoos can be dangerous: animals can escape and harm people/other animals
People don’t need to see animals at close range to care about them