

## Reading Lesson

## B1 Services: Pampered Pets

## Reading

Read the text about the pet care business. Do we take better care of our pets than we do of ourselves?

## Pampered Pets

Like most pet owners, Heidi Richardson wants what is best for her animals. Heidi estimates that she spends about \$150 per month to keep her two Labrador dogs, Toby and Jax, happy and healthy. This includes fresh (not canned) food, visits to the dog-grooming salon, dog biscuits, vet appointments, and day care for them when she is at the office. "I like spending money on them. They're so cute, aren't they?" says Heidi as she looks at a picture on her phone. "I love them."



Information from a new report shows that Heidi isn't unusual. The US pet care market is growing fast as more people become pet owners. In 2017, the last time numbers were available, there were about 90 million pet dogs in the US and 95 million pet cats. This helps to explain why there is a growing demand for pet care products such as pet food, pet furniture, and pet toys. Seventy-nine percent of dog owners say they love spending money on their dogs, with most pet owners spending about \$500 on their pet in a 12-month period.

So, what pet care products are the new generation of pet owners buying? As in other markets, technology is changing the way pet owners care for their animals. There are automatic feeding bowls so owners can feed their pets when they are away from home. Webcams mean that owners can watch their pets round-the-clock. Smartphone apps can check pets while they are in doggy day care. These apps also check a pet's health, keep a record of the food they are (or aren't) eating, and how much play time they have. They can also help an owner find their dog when it is missing.

Another pet care business that is growing is the mobile dog-grooming business. This is a service where someone visits your house and washes and cuts your dog's coat. "Many owners and their pets prefer it because it's easier than going to the dog-grooming salon where the dogs can get stressed," says Nikita Carter, owner of *Posh Dogs*. Nikita advertises her business in vets' offices and local pet stores. "Business is really good," she says. "This year, my profits are up by 55%. There is a great future in pet care!"

**dog-grooming salon** (n): a place where dogs go to get their coats washed and cut

**round-the-clock** (phrase): 24 hours a day, seven days a week; all the time

**automatic** (adj): (for a machine) working on its own; not controlled by a person

## Reading Lesson

## Vocabulary

Choose the correct option.

- Our business made a/an ... last year—the first time we made more than we spent.  
a amount                                      b money                                      c profit
- A ... from 2020 shows that 12% of pet owners buy fresh pet food.  
a report                                      b list                                      c record
- Why don't you find a local dog-walking ... if you're at work during the day?  
a product                                      b service                                      c market
- There are so many pet owners that there's a growing ... for pet-friendly holidays in the US.  
a demand                                      b estimate                                      c number
- The latest reports ... that the pet care business will grow by about 35% in the next year.  
a believe                                      b guess                                      c estimate

## Comprehension

Choose the correct option.

- Figures from 2017 show there were more **pet dogs** / **pet cats** in the US.
- On average, people spend about **\$500 per year** / **\$500 per month** on their pet.
- The US pet care market is changing as more pet owners use **pet food** / **technology**.
- Pet owners can now use a smartphone app to **feed their pet** / **check their pet's diet**.
- Nikita says that visiting a dog-grooming salon can be **more relaxing** / **more stressful** for dogs.

## Thinking

What other reasons can you think of for why people pamper their pets so much?