

# Animal Sounds

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The Noises Animals Make in English  
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If you want to win a pub bet, ask your drinking friends which animal makes the loudest sound: an elephant, a donkey, a lion, or a chimpanzee?

The surprising answer is a lion – with a roar as loud as up to 114 decibels, it can be heard more than five miles away. This remarkable performance **is attributable to** a lion's unique larynx. While most animals' vocal cords are triangular, a lion's are square and flat. This allows air to pass through more easily and results in a loud roar that requires relatively little effort.

It's not for nothing that lions are considered the 'kings of the jungle', and the English verb 'to lionize' means to give a lot of public attention and approval to someone, or to treat them as a celebrity.

Lions may roar, but can you guess what sounds other animals make in English? Try matching these onomatopoeic words to their equivalent animal: 1. purr; 2. howl; 3. oink; 4. hee-haw; 5. gobble; 6. hoot; 7. honk; 8. chirp; 9. cluck; 10. cock-a-doodle-doo.

1. We all know that cats meow when they want something, but when they're happy being stroked, they PURR. A purring cat sounds like a well-oiled little engine! Unhappy cats sometimes yowl, or they may even hiss like a snake when angry.

2. Children soon learn that dogs say woof, but they make many other noises too. **Depending upon** their size and mood, angry dogs growl, frightened dogs whimper, and some dogs (like wolves)

HOWL. Tiny dogs are said to yip and yap – and, by the way, a yappy person is someone who talks a lot.

3. In English, pigs say OINK, but they also squeal, which is a high-pitched whine. Humans squeal too, but usually to show sudden happiness. 'She squealed in delight when she saw her birthday present.' Another pig noise is the grunt. Humans sometimes grunt too, especially when doing something physically difficult – which led to the term 'grunt work', describing boring jobs that no one wants to do.

4. The two-toned HEE-HAW of a donkey is also called braying and sounds very funny. 'Hee-haw' is the American spelling – the British version is written as 'eeyore', which is also the name of the sad donkey in the *Winnie the Pooh* stories.

5. Turkeys GOBBLE, which means to eat quickly and loudly. You can gobble up a turkey, but it wouldn't be considered good manners.

6. Despite being very silent predators, owls will sometimes HOOT when not in flight, and like other birds of prey such as eagles and hawks, they also make loud and frightening screeching noises.

7. Although ducks and geese sound very much the same, we say in English that ducks quack and geese HONK. Cars and trucks also honk their horns, and a quack is a fake doctor.

8. Birds of all kinds CHIRP, trill, and warble. They also tweet and twitter, which we all recognize as the name

of a very popular social media service with a blue, flying bird logo.

9. A hen is a female chicken **recognizable by** its CLUCKING sound. Baby chickens say cheep cheep and are called chicks. Different languages seem to agree on these sounds pretty closely, but male chickens are a quite different matter!

10. Roosters cry COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO in the morning, but only in English-speaking countries – in Germany, roosters greet the day with Kikeriki, in Spain with Quiquiriquiin, in Turkey with U Uru Uuun, in China with Goh-Goh-Gohi, and in Wales with coc-a-dwdl-dw, go-go-go.

The sound of a rooster may travel a few miles, but the **outright winner** is the king of the jungle, whose roar is augmented with growling, snarling, meowing, purring, and humming.

Paul Smith

### Vocabulary Trainer

• <b>to be attributable to</b>	auf etw. zurückzuführen sein
• <b>depending (up)on ...</b>	je nach ...
• <b>recognizable by sth.</b>	an etw. erkennbar
• <b>outright winner</b>	eindeutiger Gewinner/ eindeutige Gewinnerin