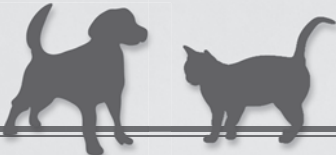


A Pair work Read the title. What do you think the article is about? How could someone have a pet without owning one? Discuss and share your ideas with the class.

Rent a pet



With increasing demands on our time, many people say they just can't fit in one more thing – like owning a cat or dog. But some busy people are proving you don't have to own a pet to have a pet.

Erika Lupercio and her dog Rupert have a very loving relationship. "We do lots of fun stuff. We go to the dog park, beach, hang out." But Rupert isn't Erika's dog all the time – just some of the time. She actually borrows Rupert from a service called Flex Petz. For a fee, Flex Petz screens customers and then lets them rent out a pet. It could be for just a few hours, or up to a whole week. The company says all of their pets would otherwise be homeless.

Marlena Cervantes of Flex Petz says, "We're connected with our dogs through local rescue groups and shelters. We're also connected with dogs that are retired show and racing dogs." Flex Petz provides the food, toys, a bed, and veterinarian care.

However, some people feel pets should not be for rent. John Snyder of the Humane Society remarked, "Pets are not like bicycles to rent for two hours. We just don't think that's in the best interest of the animal. We're concerned about different owners, different training, different handling. It's hard for animals to adjust to constant changes."

But Flex Petz says clients are trained to give good care, and dogs enjoy the extended family. For Erica, a part-time pet is perfect. "I don't have a lot of time to spend with them. It's really unfair to leave a dog sitting alone all day. Being a part-owner like this is great. I love it!"

Flex Petz has locations in San Diego and Los Angeles, California, but they plan to open a center in San Francisco and in other cities worldwide. They say that in the future, Flex Petz members will be able to visit a city abroad and rent a furry travel companion to stroll around with.

Source: "Flex Pets Helps Owners Rent Pets," www.abclocal.com.

B Read the article. Are these statements true, false, or not given?

	True	False	Not given
1. Pet rental businesses like Flex Petz can be found in most cities in the United States.	☐	☐	☐
2. Erika has probably rented Rupert from Flex Petz only once.	☐	☐	☐
3. Flex Petz won't rent animals to customers without screening and training them first.	☐	☐	☐
4. Rupert would be a homeless animal if it wasn't for Flex Petz.	☐	☐	☐
5. Marlena Cervantes is the founder and managing director of Flex Petz.	☐	☐	☐
6. The Flex Petz concept is so popular that the business is rapidly expanding.	☐	☐	☐

C Group work Discuss these questions. Then share your answers with the class.

1. Do you agree with the view expressed by Marlena Cervantes of Flex Petz or the one expressed by John Snyder of the Humane Society? Explain.
2. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of renting a pet?
3. Would you ever consider using a service like Flex Petz? Why or why not?