

Why dogs stick their heads out of car windows

Have you ever wondered why dogs put their heads out of car windows? Watch this video and learn more about this common behavior.

Before you watch

Match the words with the definitions.

an odor	a part of the body that sends messages to the central nervous system
to decipher	to discover the meaning of something which contains a hidden message
to drool	to allow saliva to flow out of your mouth
nostrils	a smell, often an unpleasant one
a sniff	a pleasant, natural smell
a receptor	the two openings in the nose through which air moves when you breathe

Transcript

For dogs too, getting out and about excites their wild senses. And for such intelligent animals, you can't beat a road trip. While we are obsessed with visual landmarks, they focus only on scents. We have a measly six million smell receptors, but a dog's nose contains 300 million.

They use it to unravel stories about the world around them. Predictably, most are about food.

Forty times more of their brain than ours is devoted to deciphering smells.

They home in on those with special significance. A single chemical aldehyde found in blood makes this one-time hunter drool.

There is a way to bring their smelly world to life. Schlieren photography visualizes the air currents that carry odors and shows the remarkable workings of a dog's nose. Dogs breathe out through the side slits in their nostrils. As the expelled air rotates, it helps draw more scent into the nose. This two-way current helps a dog gather scent almost continuously. But that's not all.

A male can smell a female in heat at concentrations of one part in a trillion.

Licking helps capture more of her alluring scent. His tongue takes the odor to a second smell organ in the mouth, hardwired to the brain and tuned to these sexual pheromones. It's love at first sniff.

For dogs, being a passenger rivals any wild experience, but it can be tinged with disappointment too.

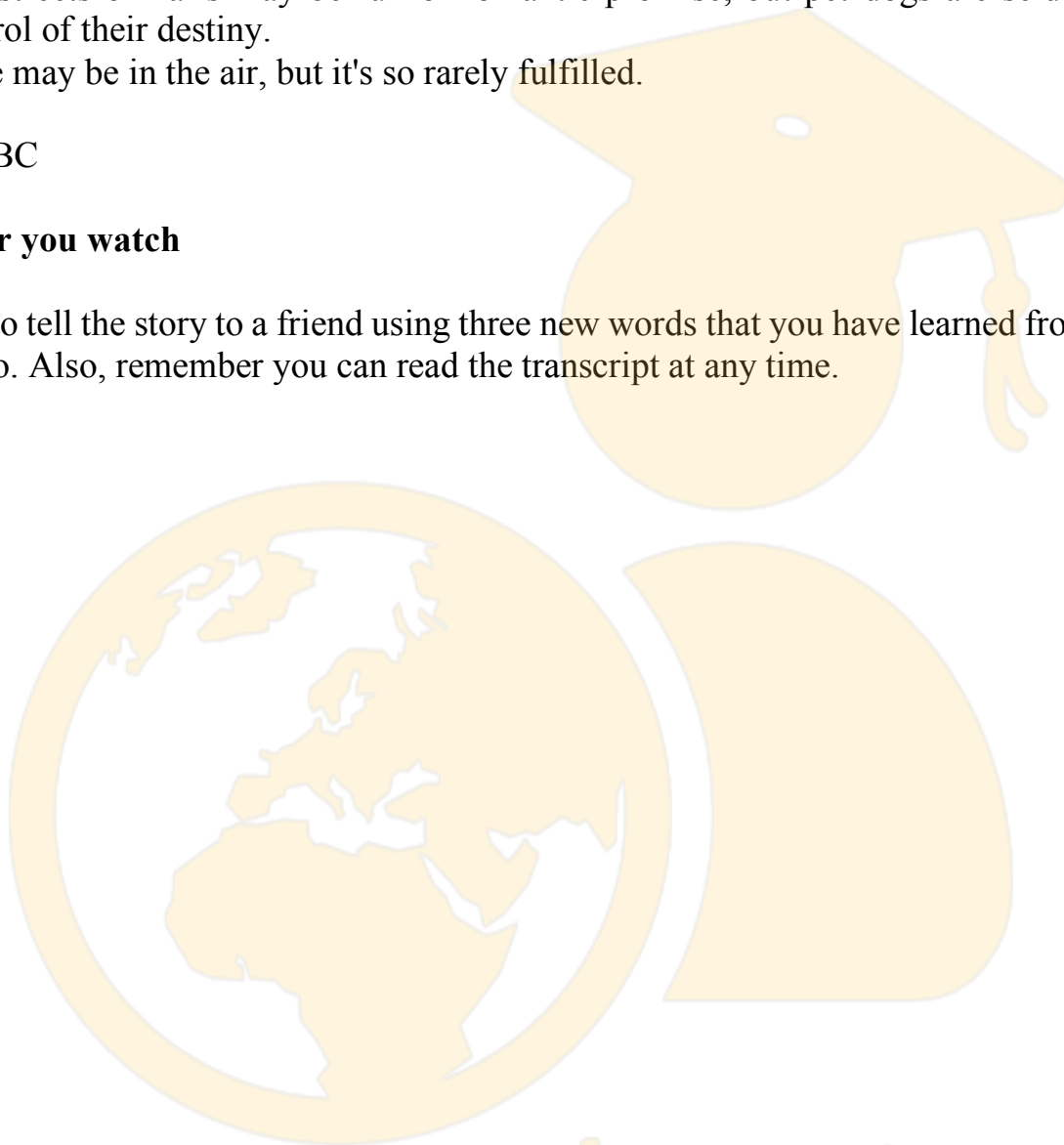
The streets of Paris may be full of romantic promise, but pet dogs are seldom in control of their destiny.

Love may be in the air, but it's so rarely fulfilled.

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After you watch

Try to tell the story to a friend using three new words that you have learned from the video. Also, remember you can read the transcript at any time.



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