

National Reading Tests

KS3 - Rats

Reminder - Key Messages

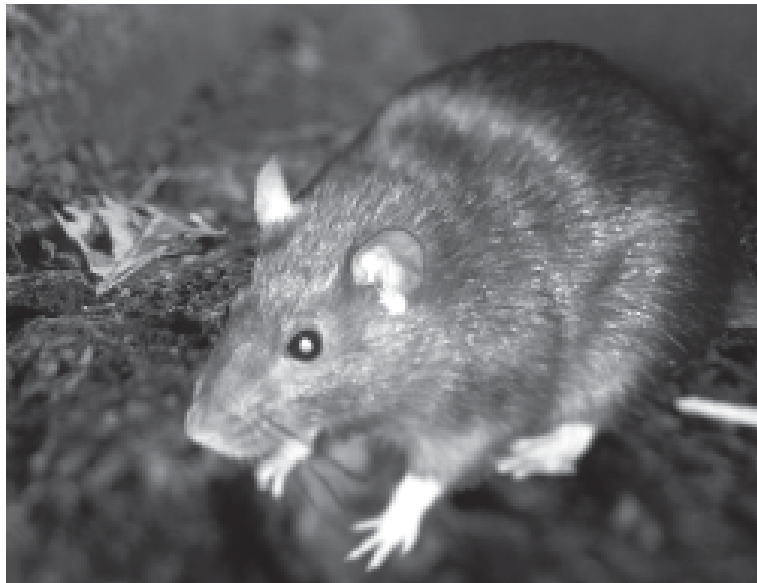
- Read the whole passage first.
- Read the question carefully.
- Make sure you follow the instructions exactly.
- Refer back to the text for answers, don't make them up or guess – the answers will be there somewhere, either explicitly or implicitly.
- Take your time.
- Check your answers carefully. Make sure you can confirm your answers in the text.

Oh rats!

SO, DO YOU LIKE RATS? Or do you hate them? Of all the pet shop animals, they are one of the most popular. However, after spiders and snakes, they are the creature that human beings hate the most!

But how can rats be so well-loved and – at the same time – so disliked? Are they so different from us? Think about it ...





*The black rat (*Rattus rattus*) is one of the most common species of rat and is found all over the world.*

RATS, LIKE US, ARE MAMMALS. Just like a human, a rat has a face, two eyes, a nose and a mouth. Each has a skeleton, with a skull and backbone, ribs, two bony rings or girdles (like our shoulders and hips) and four limbs – so do we. Rats also have bellybuttons and we both have a tail – really! Of course we all know about rats' long tails, but people also have tailbones in their lower backs¹.

UNLIKE US, rats belong to an order of mammals called rodents. The name comes from the Latin *rodere* – which means 'to gnaw' or 'to chew'. Rats have specialised gnawing teeth at the front, which are bright orange. Like us, rats have to take care of their teeth, but they don't use toothbrushes; they do it by chomping on grain or bits of wood. If they don't, their two big orange front teeth just keep on growing in a curve until they penetrate their lower jaw, so the rats can't eat and they die.



Rats are probing but shy.
They choose to run away rather than confront a potential threat.



Rats like playing collectively and love to sleep curled up in a huddle.



They take care of any injured and sick rats in their group.



When a rat is kept alone, it can become lonely and anxious.



A group of rats is called a mischief.



Rats have very poor eyesight and are colour blind.



Rats use their tail to control their body temperature because they cannot sweat.



Rats have strong teeth that can chew through glass or metal.



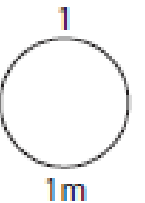
Rats belong to the largest family of mammals (*muridae*) which contains over 700 species of mice, rats and gerbils.

¹The tailbone is a small triangular bone at the base of the spine in humans. It is also called the coccyx.

Follow instructions precisely.

- 1 Look at the text in the box below.
Underline the **phrase of two words** that tells us that many people do like rats.

SO, DO YOU LIKE RATS? Or do you hate them? Of all the pet shop animals, they are one of the most popular. However, after spiders and snakes, they are the creature that human beings hate the most!



This question is asking for a best fit explanation.

2

But how can rats be so well-loved and – at the same time – so disliked?

What does this mean?

Many people like rats, but rats do not enjoy human company.

Most people cannot make up their mind whether they love or hate rats.

People tend to have extreme opinions about rats.

Rats have both appealing and repulsive habits.

Tick **one**.

2



1m

3

In what ways are rats similar to humans?

Tick **two**.

They are very popular.

They also hate spiders and snakes.

They are mammals.

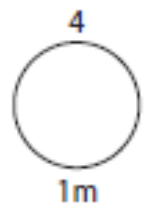
Their skeletons are similar.

They sweat when hot.

3
1m

Note that there is only ONE mark available, so you must get both ticks correct to get the mark.

4 Find and copy another name for the human tailbone.



The size of the line is indicative of the size of the answer required. Here, you only need the name not a whole sentence.

from the Latin *rodere* – which means to gnaw or to chew. Rats have specialised gnawing teeth at the front, which are bright orange. Like us, rats have to take care of their teeth, but they don't use toothbrushes; they do it by chomping on grain or bits of wood. If they don't, their two big orange front teeth just keep on growing in a curve until they penetrate their lower jaw, so the rats can't eat and they die.



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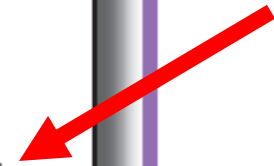
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Don't ignore the small print. Sometimes an answer may not be easy to find, but it is always there somewhere e.g. the answer to Q4 is right at the bottom of the page.



5



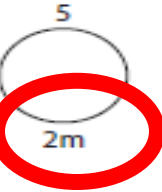
A group of rats is called a mischief.

Look at the other rat facts at the end of the article.

Find and copy two words that tell us rats like to do things in groups.

1. _____

2. _____



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6 Draw **four** lines to show which word matches each definition.

rodere

muridae

mischief

Rattus rattus

a common species of rat

the animal family to which rats belong

the origin of the word rodent

a group of rats

6

1m

This type of question is tricky, but use your reading strategies to work out the meanings of the words. Go back to the text, find the word and read the rest of the sentence for clues as to what it could mean.

Note that the question is only worth ONE mark so you have to get ALL FOUR links correct to get the mark.

7

Put ticks to show which statements are **true** and which are **false**.

	True	False
Rats are the creature that human beings hate the most.		
Rats enjoy living alone.		
Rats' tails prevent them from becoming overheated.		
Rats look after their companions if they are ill.		

This means sequencing.

8 Look again at the text.

Show the order in which the following aspects are presented in the text by numbering them from 1 to 5. One has been done for you.

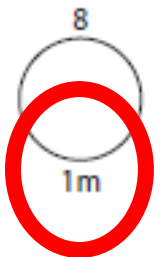
emotional characteristics

similarities between humans and rats

dental care

popularity of rats

origin/meaning of their name



9 Choose the **best word** or group of words to fit the passage and tick your choice.

The passage is about rats and their relationship to human beings. The main purpose of the passage is to

- a) **provide information.** **highlight the differences.** **translate from Latin text.** **prove the similarities.**

It presents a selection of

- b) **scientific** **exaggerated** **factual** **controversial**

statements which may delight or disgust the reader depending on

- c) **whether they believe them or not.** **how they feel about rats.** **whether they have heard them before.** **how difficult they are to understand.**

9a

1m

9b

1m

9c

1m

One mark for each so take care to get them all correct.

Reminder - Key Messages

- Make sure you follow the instructions exactly.
- Refer back to the text for answers, don't make them up or guess – the answers will be there somewhere, either explicitly or implicitly.
- Take your time.
- If you are stuck on a question, read the question and the text again. If you're still stuck, move on to the next one but remember to come back to it at the end.
- Check your answers carefully. Make sure you can confirm your answers in the text.
- Once you have done all of the above, go back to any you have missed out and try them again.
- Only guess if you definitely can't reach an informed decision, but try to make a sensible guess.