

Rats!: Teaching suggestions

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Activity 1

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1. Put the students in pairs or small groups to work out their definitions.
2. Let the students work together for a just a few minutes before stopping the activity and eliciting feedback.
3. If necessary, encourage them to think of an animal definition and a human one.

Suggested answers: Animal: Like a large mouse with a long tail.

Human: Someone who betrays others purely for his own benefit (unlike a traitor, for example, who may have a 'cause').

Activity 2

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1. Get a student to read the instructions out loud and check that the students understand them.
2. Let the students work together. They may use dictionaries for this if necessary.
3. Stop the activity and elicit feedback.

Answers: 1. the rat race 2. ratty 3. rat's tails 4. rat on 5. ratbag 6. a rat 7. Rats! 8. smell a rat

Activity 3

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1. Let the students begin their conversation in pairs or small groups.
2. Monitor closely then stop the activity and elicit feedback.

Activity 4

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1. Put the students in pairs or small groups to discuss their answers.
2. Monitor closely then stop the activity.
3. Elicit feedback. **Answers: 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. False 6. True 7. True 8. True**

Activity 5

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1. Put the students in pairs or small groups to discuss their answers.
2. Monitor closely then stop the activity.
3. Elicit feedback. **Answers: 1. b) 20% 2. a) 2/3 years 3. b) kittens 4. c) a mischief 5. c) rodent**

Activity 6

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If your students don't have access to computers in the classroom, set this for homework.

Answers: 1. 'Super rats' live longer than their forebears and are becoming increasingly resistant to modern rat poisons. 2. Their front incisor teeth never stop growing. 3. Rats were first used for experiments in 17th century. 4. See below.

Quick Quiz

Read the clues below and write the solutions on a piece of paper. Then take the first letter of each answer and rearrange them to find a word connected with this month's Talking Point subject: 'Rats!'

1. Rats can get**through**.....pipes with a diameter of under three centimetres.
2. In city environments they live in sewers and**eat**.....what they find there.
3. They are also cannibals and will eat each other, on occasion, as well as chewing through electricity cables. This last habit**often**.....results in fire.
4. They are also known carriers of more than fifty**diseases**.....including cholera and typhus.
5. In the future it is hoped to breed rats that will be able to locate people buried under...**rubble**....
6. Love them or loathe them, there is ...**no**...doubt that rats will be with us for a long time to come!

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Activity 6 (continued)

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Answers: RODENT (R for Rubble [5], O for Often [3], D for Diseases [4], E for Eat [2], N for No [6], T for Through [1]).

Activity 7

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This activity can be set as homework to be followed up and consolidated in a future lesson generating more discussion. What did most students feel about the question? What reasons were put forward in each case? Did the students read anything which changed their minds on the topic? (etc.)

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