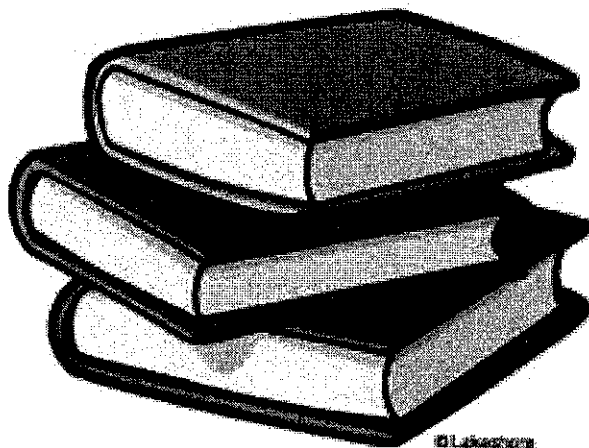




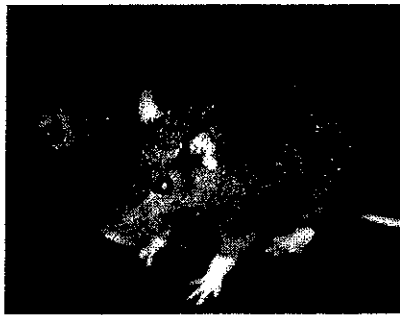
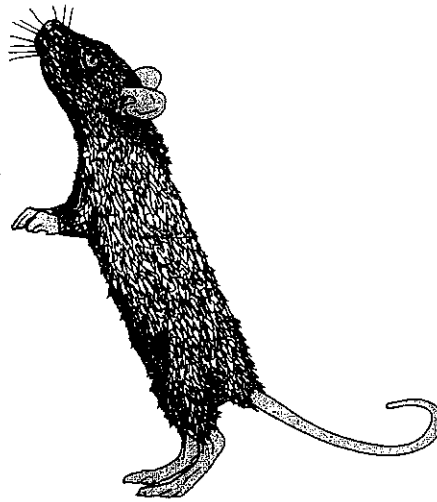
National  
Literacy Test  
Year 7  
Practice Paper



# 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 backs<sup>1</sup>.

**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.

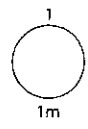
<sup>1</sup>The tailbone is a small triangular bone at the base of the spine in humans. It is also called the coccyx.



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!



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

What does this mean?

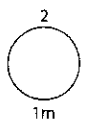
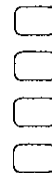
Tick **one**.

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.



In what ways are rats similar to humans?

Tick **two**.

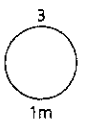
They are very popular.

Their skeletons are similar.

They also hate spiders and snakes.

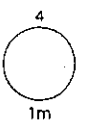
They sweat when hot.

They are mammals.



**Find and copy** another name for the human tailbone.

\_\_\_\_\_



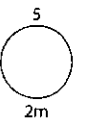
*A group of rats is called a mischief.*

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. \_\_\_\_\_



*please turn over*



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

*rodere*

a common species of rat

*muridae*

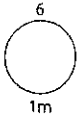
the animal family to which rats belong

*mischief*

the origin of the word rodent

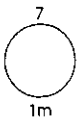
*Rattus rattus*

a group of rats



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



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.

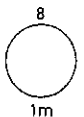
emotional characteristics

similarities between humans and rats

dental care

popularity of rats  1

origin/meaning of their name





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

**End of sample materials**

9

10

11

12

13