

Issue 37, 2021 **Founded by Betty Debnam**



Next Week: iComidas favoritas!



Have you ever been around a pet rat,

perhaps in your classroom? Maybe you have

seen rats in an alley or field near your home.

trouble for people. But they have also helped

looks at this sometimes creepy, sometimes

The rodent family

Rodents all have

long, sharp teeth called

incisors. Many other

humans, have incisors

too. But in rodents, the

long. They keep growing

throughout most of a rodent's life.

incisors are especially

dig with their incisors.

The Norway rat

likely see in cities or as a pet.

animals, including

helpful animal.

us learn more about ourselves. The Mini Page

A rat is a rodent. Rodents include animals

such as mice, guinea pigs, hamsters, squirrels,

chipmunks and beavers. Rodents make up the

largest group of mammals on Earth. There are

Rodents also have powerful jaw muscles.

Rodent jaws and incisors are specially adapted

to gnaw through hard material. For example,

chew through lead and aluminum. Rats also

the United States. It is the kind you will most

The Norway rat is the most common rat in

a beaver can chew through trees. Rats can

about 2,300 species, or kinds, of rodents.

Over the centuries, rats have caused a lot of

Mini Fact:

There are about as many rats in the United States as there are humans. However, many species of rats live in the wild, away from humans. They live in fields, forests and marshes.

It is also known as the brown rat, wharf

The Norway rat probably came from China. It got its name because people thought it came to Norway from Asia and then spread through Europe.

Norway rats thrive in cities, living in garbage dumps, sewers and buildings. They are mostly nocturnal, which means they are most active at night.

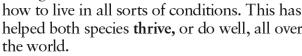
A Norway rat's incisors grow about 4 to 5 inches a year. They need to keep chewing on things to wear down their teeth.

Rats and humans

Some rats, such as Norway rats, share many behavior traits, or characteristics, with

 are social animals; they like to hang out with others of their kind.

• are adaptable. Rats and humans



can learn new things.

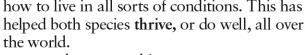
can teach what they have learned to their

rat, sewer rat or water rat. It can be white, brown or black.

Norway rats are great swimmers. They eat almost any type of food.

humans. Both:

can figure out



young

Helping humans

Scientists have learned a lot about humans by studying rats. Partly because rats adapt and learn so quickly, they are great subjects for experiments.

They can learn to go through mazes or hit certain levers to get food. They can teach their young how to perform the same tasks.

Also, rats are small and reproduce quickly. That makes them good animals to study as well.

Hurting humans

Rats have caused people a lot of trouble. Sometimes rats attack, and even kill, humans.

They carry more than 40 diseases harmful to humans. Some of these diseases include bubonic plague, typhus and rat-bite fever.

Rats destroy about 20% of all the agricultural products in the world every year. What they don't eat, they may contaminate, or make unsafe, with their droppings.

Experts believe many unexplained house fires have been caused by rats chewing on

the wiring. They also chew on wires in cars. Rats can tunnel under buildings, weakening the structure.



On the Web:

bit.ly/MPrats

At the library:

- "Oh, Rats! The Story of Rats and People" by Albert Marrin
- "Rats Around Us" by Rachel Eagen

"RAT TRAP" with three letters?

Mini Jokes

Ronny: Can you spell

Eco Note

A U.S. survey of wild

deer in four states found that many

of the animals showed signs of being

infected with the COVID-19 virus. The

finding suggests that even if the virus

is brought under control in the human population, wild animals could act as reservoirs for the virus in the future. The

U.S. Department of Agriculture says none of the infected animals appeared

to be ill, and it is not certain how they

Ruth: C-A-T!

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of rats are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ISORDL I W YYJAWS LTNED SHCWCONTAMI RPQHRQDHI E M S Ν WXAEZ L Т V T C G N F S MSDAY S S C SEPSUSKDE Т Υ

Cook's Corner **Strawberry Gelatin Treat**

You'll need:

- 1 (6-ounce) package sugar-free gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup fat-free strawberry yogurt
- 2 cups sliced strawberries

1 small banana, sliced



an

You'll need



For later:

were exposed.

Look in your newspaper for stories about researchers using rats to help cure diseases or learn more about humans.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



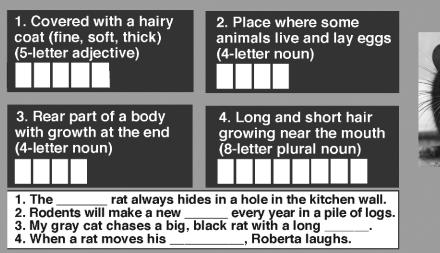
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What to do:

- 1. Dissolve gelatin powder in 2 cups boiling water. (Do not add additional cold
- 2. Stir in strawberry yogurt until well-mixed.
- 3. Add fruit to mixture.
- 4. Chill for several hours until set. Serves 4.



ROOTONYM® by Jan & Carey Orr Cook

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