

Upside-down rhino experiment wins Ig Nobel Prize

13th September, 2021



Everyone is familiar with the Nobel Prizes, which are awarded for physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace. These are given to those who have contributed "the greatest benefit to humankind". However, fewer people are aware

of the Ig Nobel Prize. This is bestowed to "honor achievements that first make people laugh, and then make them think". One of this year's Ig Nobel awards has been given to scientists who experimented on the effects on rhinoceroses of hanging them upside down. The rhino study won the award for transportation research. Researchers from Cornell University were trying to ascertain the healthiest way to relocate the animals by helicopter.

The Ig Nobel prizes are organized by the science humor magazine Annals of Improbable Research. Wikipedia says: "The Ig Nobel Prize is a satirical prize awarded annually since 1991 to celebrate ten unusual or trivial achievements in scientific research." It added: "The name of the award is a pun on the Nobel Prize, which it parodies, and on the word ignoble (not noble)." Other recipients of this year's award studied the bacteria in chewing gum stuck to pavements, conducted tests on forms of cat communication, and carried out research on whether humans evolved to grow beards to protect themselves from punches to the face. All award winners receive a now-defunct Zimbabwean \$10 trillion note.

Sources: wikipedia.org / bbc.com / yahoo.com

Writing

Nobel Prizes are the most important prizes in the world. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Nobel / prizes / physics / literature / peace / humankind / achievements / helicopter / science / humor / satirical / award / bacteria / chewing gum / beards / punch / face

True / False

- 1) The article says there is a Nobel Prize for medicine. T / F
- 2) The article says many people are familiar with the Ig Nobel Prize. T / F
- 3) The Ig Nobel Prize is for people who make us laugh and think. T / F
- 4) Researchers looked at ways to relocate hippos by helicopter. T / F
- 5) The Ig Nobel Prize is organized by a science humor magazine. T / F
- 6) The Ig Nobel Prize was first awarded 20 years ago. T / F
- 7) An Ig Nobel winner studied chewing gum stuck to train seats. T / F
- 8) Ig Nobel Prize winners receive an old \$10 trillion note. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. familiar | a. unimportant |
| 2. benefit | b. consequences |
| 3. achievements | c. obsolete |
| 4. effects | d. find out |
| 5. ascertain | e. well known |
| 6. satirical | f. beneficiaries |
| 7. trivial | g. feats |
| 8. recipients | h. developed |
| 9. evolved | i. plus point |
| 10. defunct | j. mocking |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about the Nobel Prizes?
- b) Who has contributed the most to benefit humankind?
- c) What have you contributed to humankind?
- d) What do you think of the Ig Nobel prizes?
- e) Why are scientists relocating rhinoceroses?
- f) What do you think is the best way to relocate rhinoceroses?
- g) What is the effect on rhinoceroses of hanging them upside down?
- h) How can we keep rhinoceroses safe in the wild?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Everyone is familiar with | a. \$10 trillion note |
| 2. those who have contributed the greatest | b. animals by helicopter |
| 3. make people | c. this year's award |
| 4. experimented | d. the Nobel Prizes |
| 5. the healthiest way to relocate the | e. satirical prize |
| 6. The Ig Nobel Prize is a | f. laugh |
| 7. celebrate ten unusual or | g. to the face |
| 8. Other recipients of | h. benefit to humankind |
| 9. protect themselves from punches | i. trivial achievements |
| 10. a now-defunct Zimbabwean | j. on the effects |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of the Nobel Prizes?
- How do you think the Ig Nobel winners feel about winning?
- How can knowledge of the bacteria in chewing gum help us?
- Why is research on cat communication important?
- Do you think humans developed beards to protect themselves?
- What do you think of the Ig Nobel prize?
- What questions would you like to ask the Ig Nobel committee?

Spelling

- Everyone is ariilmfa with the Nobel Prizes
- medicine, tureteilar, and peace
- the greatest inbefet to humankind
- This is estbdweo to honor achievements
- eptirdnemxee on the effects
- trying to acainrest the healthiest way
- The Ig Nobel Prize is a lraitasci prize
- unusual or rtiavil achievements
- a pun on the Nobel Prize, which it aroesdp
- Other trpnieicse of this year's award
- humans vdeloey beards
- a now-tdfencu Zimbabwean \$10 trillion note

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. g	4. b	5. d
6. j	7. a	8. f	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Rhinos

You think rhinos are the best animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): hippos, bears or kangaroos.

Role B – Hippos

You think hippos are the best animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): rhinos, bears or kangaroos.

Role C – Bears

You think bears are the best animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): hippos, rhinos or kangaroos.

Role D – Kangaroos

You think kangaroos are the best animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): hippos, bears or rhinos.

Speaking – Animals

Rank these with your partner. Put the best animals at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • Lions | • Rhinos |
| • Bears | • Hippos |
| • Cows | • Elephants |
| • Kangaroos | • Buffalo |

Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.