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Level 5 – 2nd December 2024

Scientists find that rats love driving

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

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Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

The term "rat race" may soon mean actual rats racing in cars. This is because scientists have taught rats to drive tiny cars around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert has worked with the rodents since 2019. She told the news agency "The Conversation" that the creatures learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, and they seemed to "get a kick out of it". She said: "We found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the...engine before their vehicles hit the road."

Lambert's study explored the relationship between rats and their environment. She wanted to find out how their thinking developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she gave one group of lab rats many toys and companions. The other test rodents got no toys and fewer friends. Lambert trained the rats to associate driving with a sweet reward. The rats with the toys learned to drive better. She concluded that her research supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to reorganize connections during learning.

Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20241128-i-taught-rats-to-drive-a-car-and-it-may-help-us-lead-happier-lives>
<https://nypost.com/2024/11/17/science/scientists-teaching-rats-how-to-drive-discover-that-the-rodents-have-a-need-for-speed/>
<https://theconversation.com/im-a-neuroscientist-who-taught-rats-to-drive-their-joy-suggests-how-anticipating-fun-can-enrich-human-life-239029>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The term | a. vehicles |
| 2. drive tiny cars around | b. intense motivation |
| 3. worked with the | c. the road |
| 4. rev the engines of their miniature | d. rodents since 2019 |
| 5. get a kick | e. the engine |
| 6. the rats had an | f. a laboratory |
| 7. jumping into the car and revving | g. out of it |
| 8. before their vehicles hit | h. "rat race" |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Lambert's study explored the | a. with a sweet reward |
| 2. She wanted to find out | b. rats many toys |
| 3. how they processed | c. during learning |
| 4. she gave one group of lab | d. new skills |
| 5. The other test | e. neuroplasticity |
| 6. associate driving | f. relationship |
| 7. complex environments enhanced | g. rodents |
| 8. reorganize connections | h. how |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

The term "rat race" may soon (1) _____ racing in cars. This is because scientists have taught rats to drive tiny cars (2) _____. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert has worked with the rodents since 2019. She told the news agency "The Conversation" that the (3) _____ rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, and they seemed to (4) _____ out of it". She said: "We found that the rats had (5) _____ for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the...engine before their (6) _____ road."

Lambert's (7) _____ relationship between rats and their environment. She wanted to find out how (8) _____, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she gave one group of (9) _____ toys and companions. The other test rodents got no toys and fewer friends. Lambert trained the rats to (10) _____ a sweet reward. The rats with the toys learned to drive better. She concluded that her research supported the (11) _____ environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to reorganize (12) _____.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

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DRIVING SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about driving in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2412/241202-rats-love-driving-5.html>

Write about **driving** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.
