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Level 6 – 2nd December 2024

Scientists find that rats love driving

FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:

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

Contents

The Article	2	Discussion (Student-Created Qs)	15
Warm-Ups	3	Language Work (Cloze)	16
Vocabulary	4	Spelling	17
Before Reading / Listening	5	Put The Text Back Together	18
Gap Fill	6	Put The Words In The Right Order	19
Match The Sentences And Listen	7	Circle The Correct Word	20
Listening Gap Fill	8	Insert The Vowels (a, e, i, o, u)	21
Comprehension Questions	9	Punctuate The Text And Add Capitals	22
Multiple Choice - Quiz	10	Put A Slash (/) Where The Spaces Are	23
Role Play	11	Free Writing	24
After Reading / Listening	12	Academic Writing	25
Student Survey	13	Homework	26
Discussion (20 Questions)	14	Answers	27

Please try Levels 4 and 5 (they are easier).

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THE ARTICLE

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more literal meaning. This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose-built car around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-driving rodents since 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not only learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a kick out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the 'lever engine' before their vehicles hit the road."

Lambert's study was to explore the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find out how their cognition developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other test rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a sweet cereal reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections in response to 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>

WARM-UPS

1. DRIVING: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about driving. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

rats / metaphors / scientists / cars / laboratories / neuroscientist / rodents / engines / relationships / cognition / new skills / toys / companions / cereal / neuroplasticity

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. THE RAT RACE: Students A **strongly** believe life today is too hectic and we need to slow down; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. RODENTS: What do you know about these rodents? What do you want to know? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	What We Know	What We Want to Know
Rats		
Squirrels		
Beavers		
Guinea Pigs		
Capybara		
Porcupines		

5. RACE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "race". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. RAT IDIOMS: Rank these with your partner. Put the best rat idioms at the top. You may have to research the meanings. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Rats!
- Rat race
- To smell a rat
- You dirty rat
- To look like a drowned rat
- To rat on someone
- Like a rat up a drainpipe
- Like rats from a sinking ship

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. metaphor | a. A small animal like a mouse, rat, or squirrel that has strong, sharp teeth for biting. |
| 2. rat race | b. To start a journey or leave a place. |
| 3. literal | c. A way of describing something by saying it is something else to show how they are similar. |
| 4. rodent | d. Taking words in their most basic meaning, without any exaggeration or special meaning. |
| 5. rev | e. A situation where people work very, very hard for money, but never seem to get ahead or be happy. |
| 6. get a kick out of | f. To make an engine go faster, or to increase speed. |
| 7. hit the road | g. To enjoy something a lot or find it fun. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 8. cognition | h. A person or animal you spend time with and enjoy being with. |
| 9. companion | i. To have a connection or relationship with something. |
| 10. correlate | j. Made better or improved. |
| 11. cereal | k. The process of thinking, learning, and understanding things. |
| 12. reward | l. The brain's ability to change and grow by learning new things. |
| 13. enhanced | m. Something you get for doing something good or for working hard. |
| 14. neuroplasticity | n. A food made from grains, usually eaten with milk for breakfast. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The article says rats in a laboratory had a race. **T / F**
2. Scientists built custom-made cars for rats to drive. **T / F**
3. The rats seemed to like driving. **T / F**
4. Some of the rats crashed their cars when they hit the road. **T / F**
5. Researchers wanted to find out more about how rats developed skills. **T / F**
6. Some rats were given lots of toys, while other rats had no toys. **T / F**
7. Rats were given a reward of cereal if they drove well. **T / F**
8. Neuroplasticity is how the brain responds when we touch plastic. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. metaphor | a. enjoy |
| 2. literal | b. shape |
| 3. tiny | c. exact |
| 4. get a kick out of | d. investigate |
| 5. hit the road | e. enhanced |
| 6. explore | f. reaction |
| 7. cognition | g. figure of speech |
| 8. enriched | h. leave |
| 9. form | i. perception |
| 10. response | j. miniature |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. The metaphor "rat race" may soon have | a. the road |
| 2. teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose- | b. the engines |
| 3. rev | c. test rodents |
| 4. get a kick | d. neuroplasticity |
| 5. hit | e. a more literal meaning |
| 6. lab | f. reorganize connections |
| 7. The other | g. out of it |
| 8. correlate driving | h. rats |
| 9. complex environments enhanced | i. with a sweet cereal reward |
| 10. the brain's ability to form and | j. built car |

GAP FILL

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more (1) _____ meaning. This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a (2) _____, purpose-built car around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-driving (3) _____ since 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not only learned to (4) _____ the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a (5) _____ out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an (6) _____ motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and (7) _____ the 'lever engine' before their vehicles (8) _____ the road."

rodents

literal

hit

kick

revving

tiny

intense

rev

Lambert's study was to (9) _____ the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find out how their (10) _____ developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she placed one group of (11) _____ rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other test rodents were put in an area with no toys and (12) _____ friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a sweet (13) _____ reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea that (14) _____ environments enhanced (15) _____. This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections in (16) _____ to learning.

cognition

neuroplasticity

cereal

explore

fewer

response

lab

complex

LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

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

- 1) The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a _____
 - a. more lateral meaning
 - b. more liberal meaning
 - c. more literal meaning
 - d. more littering meaning
- 2) teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose-built car _____
 - a. around a lavatory
 - b. around a lab oratory
 - c. around a labor story
 - d. around a laboratory
- 3) in the USA has been working with the car-driving _____
 - a. rodents stints 2019
 - b. rodents since 2019
 - c. rodents stance 2019
 - d. rodents mints 2019
- 4) she explained that the creatures not only learned to rev the engines of _____
 - a. their manure vehicles
 - b. their adventure vehicles
 - c. their miniature vehicles
 - d. their immature vehicles
- 5) motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving _____
 - a. the 'liver engine'
 - b. the 'river engine'
 - c. the 'lever engine'
 - d. the 'lover engine'
- 6) She wanted to find out how _____
 - a. there cognition developed
 - b. them cognition developed
 - c. their cognition developed
 - d. these cognition developed
- 7) she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many _____
 - a. toy and companion
 - b. toys and companion
 - c. toy and companions
 - d. toys and companions
- 8) Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a _____
 - a. sweet serial reward
 - b. sweet seer real reward
 - c. sweet sear all rewards
 - d. sweet cereal reward
- 9) Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea _____
 - a. that complex environments
 - b. that completes environments
 - c. that con-plex environments
 - d. that comp lex environments
- 10) This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections in _____
 - a. responds to learning
 - b. response to learning
 - c. responders to learning
 - d. responded to learning

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a (1) _____.

This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose-built car (2) _____. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car- (3) _____ 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not only learned to rev the engines of (4) _____, they seemed to "get a kick out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had (5) _____ for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the 'lever engine' before (6) _____ the road."

Lambert's study (7) _____ the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find out how their cognition developed, and how they (8) _____. In her tests, she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many (9) _____. The other test rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to (10) _____ a sweet cereal reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research findings supported the (11) _____ environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections (12) _____ learning.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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

1. What might have a more literal meaning soon?
2. Where do the rats go driving?
3. For how long has a neuroscientist been working with the driving rats?
4. What do the rats do to the engines of their cars?
5. What do the rats hit after jumping into their cars?
6. What was the neuroscientist interested in the development of?
7. What did one group of rats have lots of?
8. What treat did the rats get if they drove well?
9. What did Dr Lambert say complex environments improved?
10. What are connections in the brain reorganized in response to?

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

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

- 1) What might have a more literal meaning soon?
 - a) the word "literal"
 - b) metaphor "the rat race"
 - c) laboratory testing
 - d) the word "rat"
- 2) Where do the rats go driving?
 - a) through sewers
 - b) in a rat race
 - c) on race tracks
 - d) around a laboratory
- 3) For how long has a neuroscientist been working with the driving rats?
 - a) since 2019
 - b) for 19 years
 - c) for 40 years
 - d) for a few years
- 4) What do the rats do to the engines of their cars?
 - a) nest in them
 - b) tune them
 - c) rev them
 - d) try to eat them
- 5) What do the rats hit after jumping into their cars?
 - a) each other
 - b) the road
 - c) the speed limit
 - d) lamp posts
- 6) What was the neuroscientist interested in the development of?
 - a) cognition
 - b) the rats' driving skills
 - c) rat evolution
 - d) medicine
- 7) What did one group of rats have lots of?
 - a) cars
 - b) speeding fines
 - c) toys and companions
 - d) kicks
- 8) What treat did the rats get if they drove well?
 - a) a sweet cereal reward
 - b) a trophy
 - c) a driving licence
 - d) a new car
- 9) What did Dr Lambert say complex environments improved?
 - a) neuroplasticity
 - b) driving skills
 - c) rat relations
 - d) ideas
- 10) What are connections in the brain reorganized in response to?
 - a) cells
 - b) driving
 - c) adrenalin
 - d) learning

ROLE PLAY

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

Role A – Rat Race

You think "rat race" is the best rats idiom. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their idioms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): "to smell a rat," "to rat on someone" or "Rats!".

Role B – To Smell a Rat

You think "to smell a rat" is the best rats idiom. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their idioms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): "rat race," "to rat on someone" or "Rats!".

Role C – To Rat on Someone

You think "to rat on someone" is the best rats idiom. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their idioms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): "to smell a rat," "rat race" or "Rats!".

Role D – Rats!

You think "Rats!" is the best rats idiom. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their idioms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): "to smell a rat," "to rat on someone" or "rat race".

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

1. WORD SEARCH: Look online / in your dictionary to find collocates, information on, synonyms for... the words 'rat' and 'driving'.

rat	driving
------------	----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• race• tiny• since• rev• intense• hit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore• new• group• trained• faster• ability
---	--

DRIVING SURVEY

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

DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'rat'?
3. What do you think of rats?
4. Why are rats always used in laboratory tests?
5. Are you part of the rat race?
6. What do you think of rats racing each other in cars?
7. Why do you think rats might like driving?
8. What things do you get a kick out of?
9. Cars have doors, so why do we 'jump' into them?
10. What do you have an intense motivation to do?

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DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'driving'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of driving?
15. How good are you at learning new skills?
16. Do you still like playing with toys?
17. In what kinds of environments do you learn faster?
18. What would you like to know about neuroplasticity?
19. What could we get rats in cars to do?
20. What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

LANGUAGE - CLOZE

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more (1) _____ meaning. This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose-(2) _____ car around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-(3) _____ rodents since 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures (4) _____ only learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a (5) _____ out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the '(6) _____ engine' before their vehicles hit the road."

Lambert's study was (7) _____ explore the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find (8) _____ how their cognition developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other (9) _____ rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving (10) _____ a sweet cereal reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert (11) _____ her research findings supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections (12) _____ response to learning.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) lethal | (b) literal | (c) liberal | (d) lateral |
| 2. | (a) builds | (b) built | (c) building | (d) builder |
| 3. | (a) drive | (b) driver | (c) drivers | (d) driving |
| 4. | (a) nor | (b) not | (c) never | (d) non |
| 5. | (a) header | (b) hit | (c) punch | (d) kick |
| 6. | (a) liver | (b) lava | (c) lever | (d) lover |
| 7. | (a) to | (b) for | (c) at | (d) on |
| 8. | (a) up | (b) in | (c) out | (d) to |
| 9. | (a) tests | (b) tested | (c) testy | (d) test |
| 10. | (a) with | (b) at | (c) of | (d) by |
| 11. | (a) concluded | (b) conducive | (c) concreted | (d) concerted |
| 12. | (a) in | (b) of | (c) at | (d) by |

SPELLING

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

Paragraph 1

1. The atmpeohr "rat race"
2. ursnecineitost Dr Kelly Lambert
3. car-driving oedrnts
4. the teacurres not only learned to rev
5. rev the engines of their miniature eivlches
6. revving the 'vleer engine'

Paragraph 2

7. find out how their gctinioon developed
8. toys and mpnacionos
9. trained the rats to rerolctae driving
10. a sweet recela reward
11. the more cedeinrh environment
12. enhanced eyrlittacniosup

PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

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

Number these lines in the correct order.

- () out how their cognition developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she placed one group
- () kick out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving
- () only learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a
- () from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-driving rodents
- () findings supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's
- () ability to form and reorganize connections in response to learning.
- () training, often jumping into the car and revving the 'lever engine' before their vehicles hit the road."
- (**1**) The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more literal meaning. This is because scientists have been
- () teaching rats to drive a tiny, purpose-built car around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert
- () toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a sweet cereal
- () of lab rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other test rodents were put in an area with no
- () reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research
- () Lambert's study was to explore the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find
- () since 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not

PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

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

1. have race Rat meaning . literal a more may
2. scientists have rats to been drive . teaching The
3. car-driving with worked They've rodents 2019 . since the
4. get They kick all it . a of out
5. engine . Jumping the revving and the into car
6. between the their relationship Explore and environments . rats
7. wanted to She cognition know how their developed .
8. to the learned in enriched environment Those drive .
9. supported the her concluded idea . findings research Lambert
10. connections . ability the to reorganize is brain's This

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more *lateral / literal* meaning. This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a *tiny / tinny*, purpose-built car around a *lavatory / laboratory*. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-driving *rodent / rodents* since 2019. *Speaking / Spoken* to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not only learned to *rev / ref* the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a *kick / punch* out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an *inverse / intense* motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the '*lever / liver* engine' before their vehicles hit the *sidewalk / road*."

Lambert's study was to *explore / implore* the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find out how their *ignition / cognition* developed, and how they processed new *skill / skills*. In her tests, she placed one group of *fab / lab* rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other *test / testy* rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to *corrugate / correlate* driving with a sweet *cereal / serial* reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea *what / that* complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability *to / at* form and reorganize connections in response *to / in* learning.

Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct. Look up the definition of new words.

INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

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

Th_ m_t_ph_r "r_t r_c_" m_y s__n h_v_ _ m_r_ l_t_r_l m__n_ng. Th_s _s b_c__s_ sc__nt_sts h_v_ b__n t__ch_ng r_ts t_ dr_v_ _ t_ny, p_r_p_s_-b__lt c_r _r__nd _ l_b_r_t_ry. N__r_sc__nt_st Dr K_lly L_mb_rt fr_m th_ _n_v_rs_ty _f R_chm_nd _n th_ _S_ h_s b__n w_rk_ng w_th th_ c_r-dr_v_ng r_d_nts s_nc_ 2019. Sp__k_ng t_ th_ _nl_n_ n_ws _g_ncy "Th_ C_nv_rs_t__n," sh_ _xpl__nd th_t th_ cr__t_r_s n_t _nly l__rn_d t_ r_v th_ _ng_n_s _f th__r m_n__t_r_v_h_cl_s, th_y s__m_d t_ "g_t _ k_ck __t _f _t". Sh_ s__d: "_n_xp_ct_dly, w_ f__nd th_t th_ r_ts h_d _n _nt_ns_ m_t_v_t__n f_r th__r dr_v_ng tr__n_ng, _ft_n j_m_p_ng _nt_ th_ c_r _nd r_vv_ng th_ 'l_v_r _ng_n_' b_f_r_ th__r v_h_cl_s h_t th_ r__d."

L_mb_rt's st_dy w_s t_ _xpl_r_ th_ r_l_t__nsh_p b_tw__n r_ts _nd th__r _nv_r_nm_nts. Sh_ w_nt_d t_ f_nd __t h_w th__r c_gn_t__n d_v_l_p_d, _nd h_w th_y pr_c_ss_d n_w sk_lls. _n h_r t_sts, sh_ pl_c_d _n_ gr__p _f l_b_r_ts _n _ sp_c_ th_t c_nt__nd m_ny t_ys _nd c_m_p_n__ns. Th_ _th_r t_st r_d_nts w_r_ p_t _n _n _r__ w_th n_ t_ys _nd f_w_r fr__nds. Dr L_mb_rt tr__n_d th_ r_ts t_ c_rr_l_t_ dr_v_ng w_th _ sw__t c_r__l r_w_r_d. Th_s_ _n th_ m_r_ _nr_ch_d _nv_r_nm_nt l__rn_d t_ dr_v_ f_st_r. Dr L_mb_rt c_ncl_d_d h_r r_s__rch f_nd_ngs s_pp_rtd th_ _d__ th_t c_mpl_x _nv_r_nm_nts _nh_nc_d n__r_pl_st_c_ty. Th_s _s th_ br__n's _b_l_ty t_ f_rm _nd r__rg_n_z_ c_nn_ct__ns _n r_sp_ns_ t_ l__rn_ng.

PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

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

the metaphor rat race may soon have a more literal meaning this is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive a tiny purposebuilt car around a laboratory neuroscientist dr kelly lambert from the university of richmond in the usa has been working with the cardriving rodents since 2019 speaking to the online news agency the conversation she explained that the creatures not only learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles they seemed to get a kick out of it she said unexpectedly we found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving training often jumping into the car and revving the lever engine before their vehicles hit the road

lamberts study was to explore the relationship between rats and their environments she wanted to find out how their cognition developed and how they processed new skills in her tests she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many toys and companions the other test rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends dr lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a sweet cereal reward those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster dr lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity this is the brains ability to form and reorganize connections in response to learning

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

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

The metaphor "rat race" may soon have a more literal meaning. This is because scientists have been teaching rats to drive in tiny, purpose-built cars around a laboratory. Neuroscientist Dr Kelly Lambert from the University of Richmond in the USA has been working with the car-driving rodents since 2019. Speaking to the online news agency "The Conversation," she explained that the creatures not only learned to rev the engines of their miniature vehicles, they seemed to "get a kick out of it". She said: "Unexpectedly, we found that the rats had an intense motivation for their driving training, often jumping into the car and revving the 'lever engine' before their vehicles hit the road." Lambert's study was to explore the relationship between rats and their environments. She wanted to find out how their cognition developed, and how they processed new skills. In her tests, she placed one group of lab rats in a space that contained many toys and companions. The other test rodents were put in an area with no toys and fewer friends. Dr Lambert trained the rats to correlate driving with a sweet cereal reward. Those in the more enriched environment learned to drive faster. Dr Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea that complex environments enhanced neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to form and reorganize connections in response to learning.

ACADEMIC WRITING

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

We must end scientific tests that use animals. Discuss.

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. DRIVING: Make a poster about driving. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. DRIVING RATS: Write a magazine article about training rats to operate driverless cars. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

6. LETTER: Write a letter to an expert on driving. Ask him/her three questions about driving. Give him/her three of your ideas. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. c 2. e 3. d 4. a 5. f 6. g 7. b
8. k 9. h 10. i 11. n 12. m 13. j 14. l

TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- 1 F 2 T 3 T 4 F 5 T 6 T 7 T 8 F

SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

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

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

1. The metaphor "the rat race"
2. Around a laboratory
3. Since 2019
4. Rev them
5. The road
6. Cognition
7. Toys and companions
8. A sweet cereal reward
9. Neuroplasticity
10. Learning

WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.19)

1. Rat race may have a more literal meaning.
2. The scientists have been teaching rats to drive.
3. They've worked with the car-driving rodents since 2019.
4. They all get a kick out of it.
5. Jumping into the car and revving the engine.
6. Explore the relationship between rats and their environments.
7. She wanted to know how their cognition developed.
8. Those in the enriched environment learned to drive.
9. Lambert concluded her research findings supported the idea.
10. This is the brain's ability to reorganize connections.

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. b 2. d 3. a 4. c 5. b 6. a 7. c 8. a 9. a 10. d

ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.
(It's good for your English ;-)