

THE RAT



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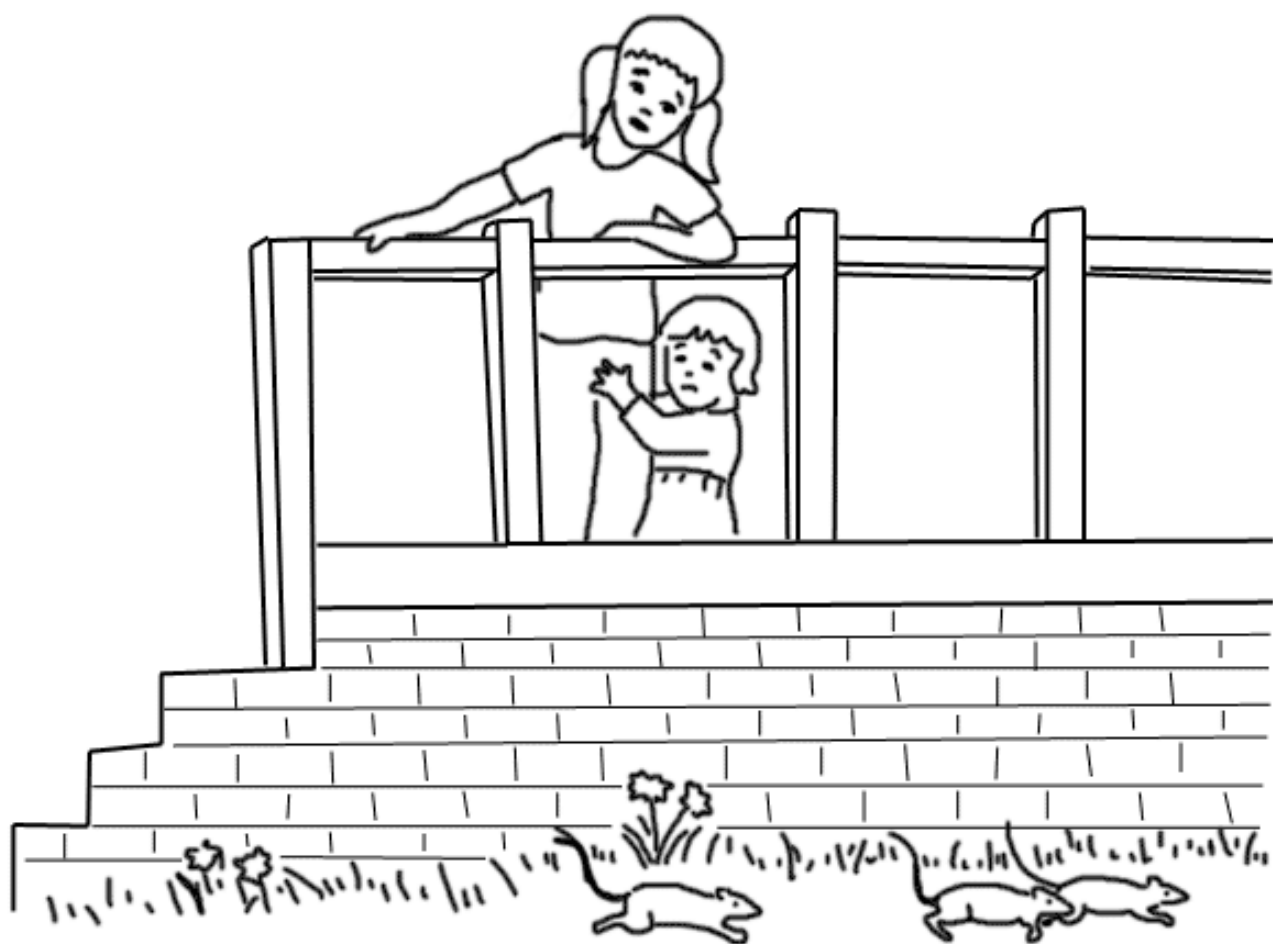
The rat is a mammal that's been around two million years. We're told they started out in China and then migrated, it appears. They moved in with the humans who went from place to place, And then before they knew it, they created a "rat race."



The rat is in the rodent family. He has long front teeth with which to chew. His tail is longer than his body and his feet have long claws, too.

The rat has two large, rounded ears and pointed little snout.

A rat will eat most anything, even sauerkraut!



There are several different kinds of rats that live on planet Earth.

Whether they are wild or tame can determine a rat's worth.

There are brown rats; there are black rats that live out in the wild.

We were taught to stay away from wild rats as a little child.



A wild rat can cause a problem with disease, or it may bite.

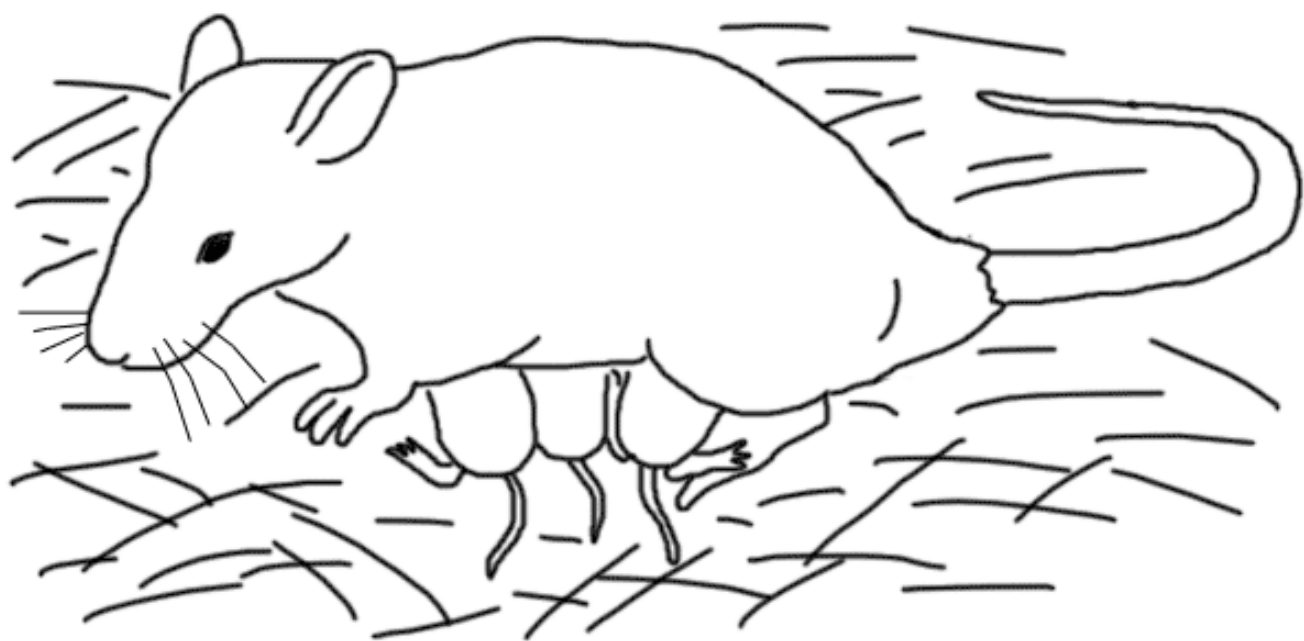
The wild rat likes to live in darkness.

He does his foraging at night.

There are rats that are domestic.

That means it is a pet.

If you were going to bring one home, a "fancy rat" is what you'd get.



Young rats are born in litters in a nest that's made of straw.

The rat carries food in his mouth, and then it eats it from its paw.

Rats live near food supplies or sewage.

They know each other by their smell.

If you see a well-worn trail near garbage, somewhere nearby is where they dwell.

RATS !



The word "rat" is sometimes used in a derogatory way.

If someone were an informer, "He's a rat," someone might say.

The word "rats!" can be an exclamation of disgust or disbelief.

To "smell a rat" means you're suspicious, and there could be some mischief.

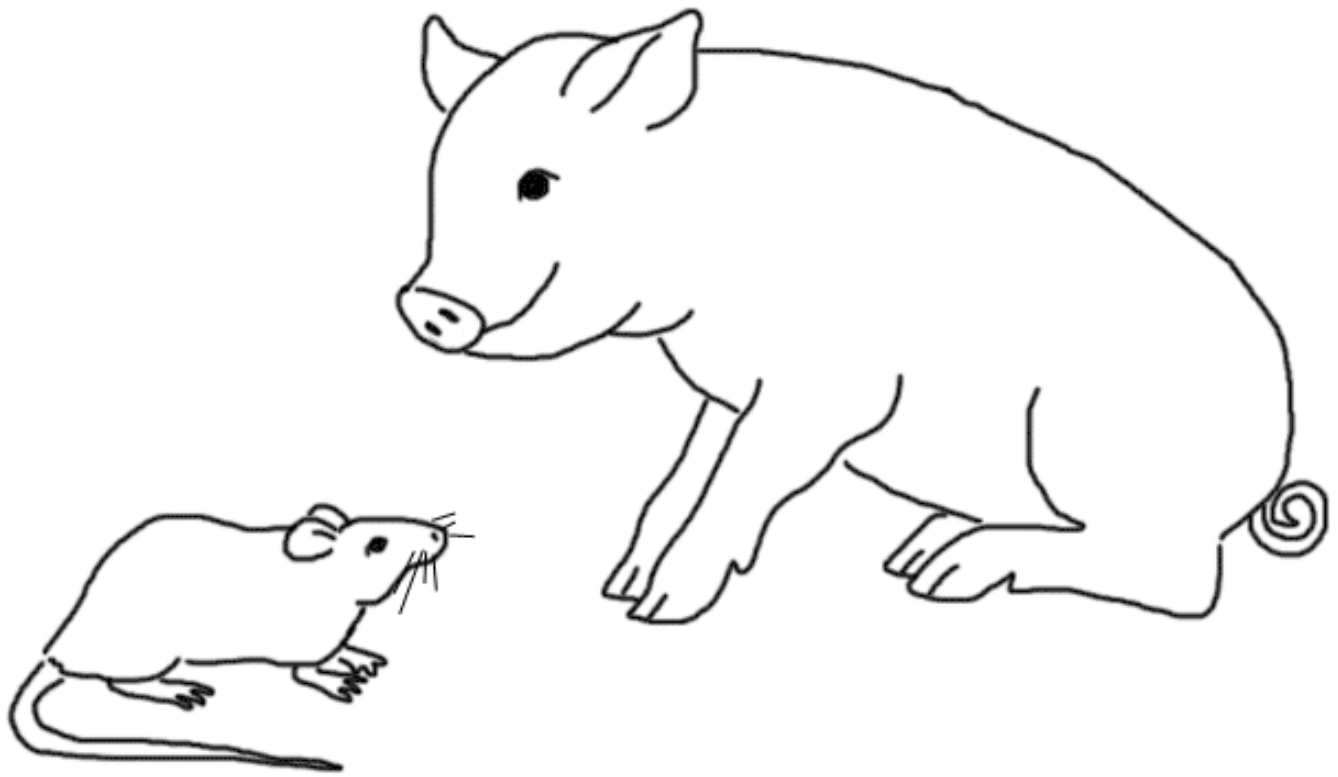


Considered pioneers and conquerors,
the "leader of the pack,"

The rat is the first animal in the
Chinese zodiac.

In China, it's an honor to be born in
the "Year of the Rat."

Do you think the rat is happy that
there is no "Year of the Cat?"



There are some well-known rats in stories that have earned a little fame: *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh* is one that we can name.

There is Templeton of *Charlotte's Web*, written by E.B. White.

There is Rizzo from "The Muppets," seen on "Muppets Tonight."



Rats are also beneficial in the study of disease

Or the study of intelligence. Do rats know their ABC's?

Rats have been around two million years, so they are a hearty breed. Even though sometimes they're dangerous, they're animals we need.

1. What kind of animal is a rat?
 - a. a fish
 - b. a mammal
 - c. a bird
 - d. a reptile

Answer: _____

2. How long is the rat's tail?
 - a. shorter than its body
 - b. longer than its head
 - c. shorter than its ears
 - d. longer than its body

Answer: _____

3. What is one problem with a wild rat?
 - a. It can eat a lot.
 - b. It can carry disease.
 - c. It can live in a tree.
 - d. It can make a nest.

Answer: _____

4. When we say, "He's a rat," what do we mean?
 - a. He's a rattlesnake.
 - b. He's a furry animal.
 - c. He's a tattletale.
 - d. He's a clown.

Answer: _____

5. What is the first animal in the Chinese zodiac?

- a. the rat
- b. the lion
- c. the bear
- d. the cat

Answer: _____

6. How are rats beneficial?

- a. They listen to music.
- b. They play games with marbles.
- c. They are used in the study of disease.
- d. They are sent on trips.

Answer: _____