

THE RAT

Elise Gravel



ACTIVITY GUIDE



TUNDRA BOOKS

DISGUSTING CRITTERS

DEAR EDUCATOR

The Rat is a hilarious illustrated non-fiction book about the Black Rat. With the perfect blend of scientific fact and humor, this book will surely have students laughing and learning at the same time! The activities and discussion prompts that follow will help students use what they have learned to identify and describe some of the major physical and behavioral characteristics of the Black Rat, recognize its likes and dislikes, and explain just how intelligent a critter it is!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ELISE GRAVEL has always been fascinated by disgusting little creatures. At three-and-a-half, she founded the Organization for the Defense of Disgusting Critters, of which she was both president and the only member. Nowadays, when she's not busy petting a fly, worm, slug, rat, head lice or a spider, she writes and illustrates strange children's books.



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BUT, WAIT!

Before sharing the book with the class, read out the following clues:

- I look like a mouse, but I am bigger and meaner.
- I have a long tail.
- I have sharp teeth.
- I am very intelligent.
- Who am I?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Discover what your students already know about rats. Consider using the following questions as prompts:

- Who has seen a rat before?
- What did you notice about it?
- Did it make any noise?
- Where did you see it?
- What else do you know about rats?
- What do you want to know about rats?

RAPSCALLION RATS!

Show what you have learned about the Black Rat. Circle the correct answer(s).

What is the Latin word for Black Rat?

Debbie Debbie

Rattus Rattus

Ratatouille Noir

Consigli Nero

What are incisors?

Fur

Legs

Eyes

Teeth

What do Black Rats like to eat?

Car tires

Garbage

Mice

Grass

What type of living thing is a Black Rat?

Amphibian

Reptile

Mammal

Fish

What does a Black Rat use its tail for?

To lift things

Make crafts

Keep its balance

All of the above

The Black Rat has *long* / *short* teeth.

The Black Rat may carry *diseases* / *a purse*.

The Black Rat can *swim* / *fly*.

VOCABULARY LIST

Introduce and/or review the following terms with your students. Assign one of the vocabulary terms to individuals or pairs of students to present.

- Incisors
- Transmit
- Disease
- Intelligent
- Complicated
- Mammal
- Behaviors

CLEVER AS A RAT

Black Rats are very intelligent. Re-read *The Rat* and locate the following in the text:

- A word that rhymes with “rat”
- A five syllable word that has the word “rat” hidden inside of it
- Three words with the letter “y” that sounds like “ee”
- Two words with the “qu” letter combination
- A word with the “f” sound at the end, but it is not spelled using the letter “f”
- Five words from the book that you would like to learn how to spell

RAT OLYMPICS

The Black Rat can squeeze in and out of all kinds of different places. He has different features that make it easy for him to go where humans might not want him. Draw and/or write an adventure about a Black Rat that goes out into the world. Try to include at least three pieces of information about the Black Rat’s physical characteristics in your story. Make sure your story has a clear beginning, middle and end.

BLACK RAT: FRIEND OR FOE?

The book outlines many features of the rat that could be considered positive or negative. From a human’s point of view, what are some of the positive things a Black Rat can do? What are some of the negative things about a Black Rat?

Pretend you are a Black Rat. What do you like about yourself? What would you like to change? Write a journal-style entry describing yourself.

SUPER RAT

Rats have many surprising abilities. Create a superhero rat and describe some of its special talents based on what you have learned in the book. Draw a picture of your rat and give him or her a superhero name.

SPEECH BUBBLES

To create your own story, begin by locating all of the speech bubbles on the photocopied pages of the book (provided by your teacher). Replace the speech bubbles' text with your own words and read the book again with the new text.

FACT OR FICTION?

Ask your students to spread out along the wall of your classroom. Read out the following statements. If the statement is fact, students move a step. If the statement is fiction, they remain still.

1. Some people keep rats as pets.
2. Rats can act like humans sometimes.
3. Rats have short tails.
4. Rats are not able to chew through plastic.
5. Rats have six incisors.
6. Rats are good jumpers.
7. Rats and mice are the same size.
8. Another type of rat is called the Brown Rat.

INTERESTING OR DISGUSTING?

Write down two facts about the Black Rat that you found interesting.

1.

2.

Write down two facts about the Black Rat that you found totally disgusting.

1.

2.

Write down one more question that you have about Black Rats.
