

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter January, 2020

RATS!

Like most of us, you are probably horrified by rats and mice, right...? and, to some extent, with good reason! Wild rats and mice cause serious damage to property, steal our food, attack our pets and even small children. They frighten us when they unexpectedly scurry out of concealed places and, of course, they spread diseases. Utterly disgusting critters, right?

Well, as we are now entering the Year of The Rat, it's time to set the records straight for these most maligned and misunderstood little critters.

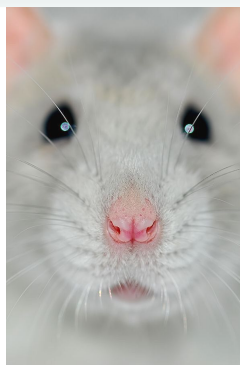
You might be surprised to learn that mice and rats have been kept as pets by humans for thousands of years. The first written records of this go back in China to 1100BC and there are ancient Egyptian artifacts depicting colored domesticated mice too.

In the 1700's breeding mice for their color variations became all the rage in Japan, much as breeding carp is today. By the early 1800's, colored mice found their way into European homes as pets and as show animals. The term "Fancy Mice" was coined towards the end of the 19th century by the British. It refers to mice and rats specially bred as show animals or as pets.



These days there are many fancy rats and mice kept as pets by people all over the world. Some celebrities are known to be rat-lovers, "tough guy" Clint Eastwood among them.

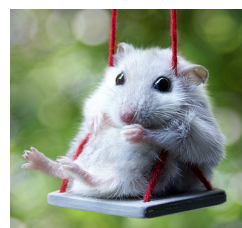
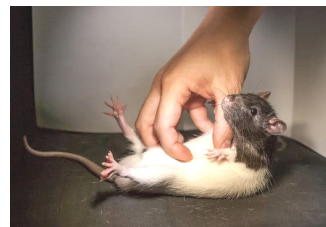
"Come on..." you may say. "What could be so appealing about rats?" Well, for one thing, they are extremely clean. "What?" It's true, pet rats and mice are even more fastidious about cleaning and grooming themselves than cats!



They are also very sociable, affectionate and friendly and form strong bonds with their cage buddies, even their human keepers. They will take care of any sick members in their group and they're known to get lonely and depressed if they are separated from their friends or their human keepers for too long.

They are very easy to take care of compared to other pets, and as they are very quiet and take up very little space, your landlord would never know you had a "forbidden" pet in your apartment!

Rats and mice are also very mischievous, playful and very intelligent. They will laugh their heads off when you tickle them and they love to learn new tricks. They can remember their names and recognize their human keepers as distinct from other humans that may visit them.



And, they are very romantic too. Male rats have been observed "singing" after mating with their significant other!

So, how can you *not* love them knowing all this?

Happy New Year!

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Form pets to Gods in an Indian rat temple here:

<https://www.boredpanda.com/20-000-rats-temple-in-india-karni-mata-temple/>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: We're at a new beginning again. Not only is it a new year, but we also have a new teacher joining us. As you know, Kevin left us last month to take up a teaching position in China. Marek will take over teaching our students from this year. Marek is originally from Poland but has been living in England many years where he also graduated. We welcome Marek and look forward to an interesting and productive time together

Junko Says: We're entering the Year of the Mouse, one of the 12 signs of the Chinese zodiac. The Chinese sign of the mouse implies "reproduction." Although 12 animals are used as symbols of the zodiac now, the traditional Chinese zodiac originally expressed the life cycle of plants. And the first sign symbolized the beginning of life with a seed. The year of the mouse, then, symbolizes a new start. It is a good year to start, or restart, that which you want to achieve, including becoming a good speaker of English.



Marek Says: Greetings! My name is Marek and I am your new English teacher! I was born in 1980 in Poland and, in 2004, I moved to the UK. I love fishing, hiking, and cycling. I like reading about science, history and politics. I am fascinated about Japan, its culture and traditions. I'm very happy to be here, and I'll do my best to give you a great learning experience!

Darrin Says: Happy New Year to you all. I hope that 2020 brings you all the best of health and happiness. I really feel like twenty twenty has a positive ring to it and with the upcoming Olympics coming to Japan, it's an exciting chance for this country to really shine. How about you? What are you excited about for the upcoming year?



Mandcy dit: Quelle surprise ce dimanche en allumant la télévision. Monsieur Carlos Ghosn s'est échappé. On dirait un film d'action! Il s'est caché dans une valise et il est parti au Liban. Voilà qui est choquant, mais en même temps très divertissant!! Je vous souhaite donc à tous une tres bonne année 2020. Mes vœux de bonheur à tous!! J'attends avec impatience d'entendre vos résolutions!!

ACROSS

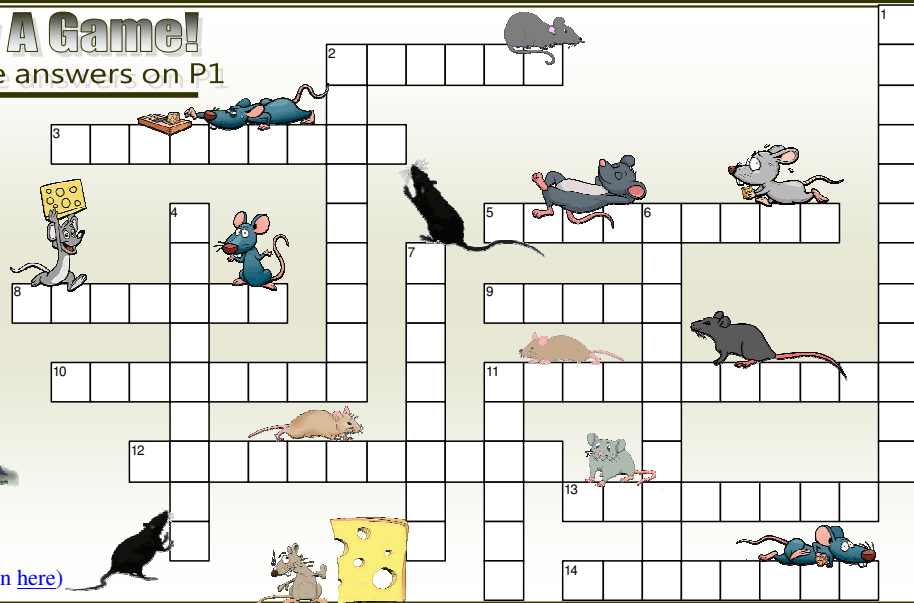
- 2 made up
- 3 attractive or favorable
- 5 man made objects (often ancient)
- 8 completely
- 9 strong connections
- 10 unfavorably spoken about
- 11 special or important
- 12 annoyingly playful
- 13 giving a neat appearance to
- 14 easily recognizable

DOWN

- 1 tamed
- 2 not seen
- 4 shocked and revolted
- 6 giving careful attention to detail
- 7 seen
- 11 rushing about hurriedly

Play A Game!










Find the answers on P1



([print version here](#))

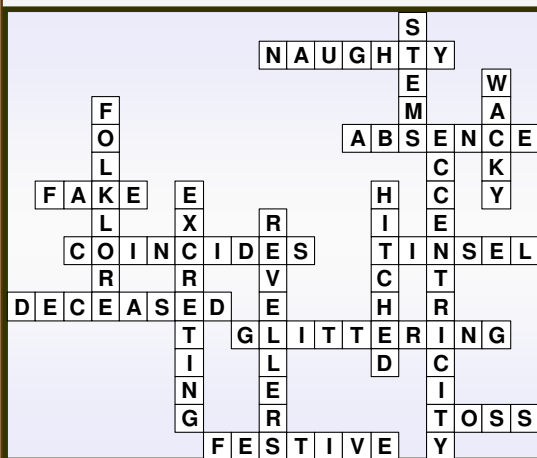
A few rat and mice idioms for the new year

Below is a story about a fictitious character, "Ratty," who just loves idioms!

My friend Ratty opted out of the  a long time ago. He used to work in a very large investment company but it wasn't long after he started there that he began to . It seems that management was very lax and, well, . He noticed some serious irregularities in the accounts department. This became so severe that he finally decided to  on those responsible. While the investigation proceeded he continued to work for the company but, as the main whistleblower, he had to remain  during that time. Finally the company was reprimanded and had to pay a huge penalty. But as a result of his intervention, Ratty had to finally leave the company and he hasn't had a normal job ever since. To see him now, you'd think he was . He has worn the same raggedy clothes for years and he  most of the time even on days when the weather's fine. But the truth is he's been  with everyone. I couldn't quite figure out how he was surviving day to day so I asked him if he needed any help getting by. He laughed and told me he was fine. He has now become quite a  running his own investment company from his home computer.

* Can you match the idioms below with the images in the text above?

- 1) when the cat's away, the mice will play – when the person in charge is not watching or absent, others start to misbehave or get into trouble
- 2) as quiet as a mouse – very quiet and shy
- 3) as poor as a church mouse – very poor
- 4) rat race – a modern life-style where people constantly compete for power and money
- 5) looks like a drowned rat - to look untidy, disorganized
- 6) smell a rat – to feel suspicious about something or someone
- 7) playing cat and mouse – to trick or fool someone by changing behavior or habits
- 8) rat on – report someone's bad behavior
- 9) mouse potato – someone who spend an enormous amount of time using a computer



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 2 bad behavior
- 5 not being there
- 7 not genuine, not real
- 11 go or happens with
- 12 valueless decoration
- 13 no longer living
- 14 flashing, shining
- 15 throw in a casual, careless manner
- 16 offering fun and gaiety

DOWN

- 1 grows out of or from
- 3 foolish, strange
- 4 unwritten stories, proverbs of a culture
- 6 strange, unconventional behavior
- 8 discharging bodily waste matter
- 9 get married
- 10 people celebrating in a noisy party



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See our notice board, or ask Junko in our office, for the details.