

# Ask®

## Urban Jungle

Both the city and the countryside can provide a variety of good food, protection, and shelter for wildlife. However, when a species is forced to abandon their natural habitat due to human interference, countless problems can emerge. This issue of ASK magazine examines the chaos that can evolve from animals displaced to the city environment.

### CONVERSATION QUESTION

What happens when animal habitats shift?

### TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about rats by reading a realistic tale written from the first-person point of view.
- Students will learn about the similarities and differences between country and city life in the animal world.
- Students will learn how problems arise when humans and monkeys share the same living space.
- Students will collect evidence to support a claim.
- Students will compare and contrast habitats.
- Students will identify causes and effects.
- Students will model the format of an article to write an original informational tale.
- Students will use mathematical reasoning to create solutions to a word problem.
- Students will consider the duality of adaptability.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core STEM skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

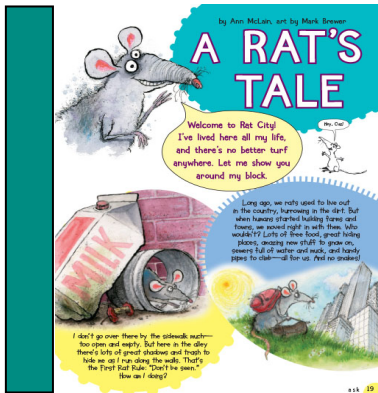
### SELECTIONS

- **A Rat's Tale**  
Expository Realistic Fiction
- **Country Moose, City Moose**  
Expository Nonfiction
- **Monkey Trouble**  
Expository Nonfiction

## A Rat's Tale

pp. 19–21, Expository Realistic Fiction

Rats are thin-tailed, medium-sized rodents that are found all over the world. Readers will discover a multitude of facts about this clever scavenger from the point of view of a rat living in “Rat City.”



## RESOURCES

Collect Evidence: Rat Race

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about rats by reading a realistic tale written from a first-person point of view.
- Students will collect evidence to support a claim.
- Students will model the format of the article to write an original informational tale.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **alley (p. 19)** a narrow passageway between or behind buildings
- **colonizing (p. 20)** the occupying of a habitat or territory by a single population of a species
- **clan (p. 20)** an extended family; a group united by a common interest or common characteristics

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What happens when animal habitats shift?

Present the title of the article, “A Rat’s Tale,” and have students predict the content of the text. Ask students what it means that the title uses the spelling T-a-l-e, instead of T-a-i-l. Review the definition of homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings and/or spellings). As a post-reading activity, have students locate other homonyms in the article (*too, be, so, feet, days, steel, etc.*).

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the key vocabulary words and definitions on the board. Then display the following cloze sentences and have students supply the correct word:

1. The tight-knit \_\_\_\_\_ always stuck together in times of trouble.
2. Mia did not want to walk down the dark \_\_\_\_\_ alone.
3. Rats were successful in \_\_\_\_\_ every last corner of the earth.

Have students write their own sentences using the words correctly.

## READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the concepts presented in the article by using the following questions to direct discussion.

1. Why did rats move into the humans’ towns and farms?
2. According to the rats, what is the best thing about humans?
3. What sentence in the article suggests that rats are nocturnal?
4. List and explain the three “Rat Rules.”
5. Why is it difficult for humans to get rid of rats?

## SKILL FOCUS: Collect Evidence

**INSTRUCT:** This article presents the reader with information about the colonization and habits of rats. Present the graphic organizer, *Rat Race*, and tell students that they will be reviewing the article and highlighting sentences that provide evidence to support each of the claims stated. Remind students to cite information and details using page numbers.

**ASSESS:** Have students peer-review their work by sharing completed worksheets with another student. Circulate and guide as they discuss.

## EXTEND

**Language Arts:** Post the title of the article on the board. Ask a volunteer to summarize the article. Discuss the fact that this article contains an abundance of factual information about rats, while also entertaining the reader. Ask: *Why do you think the author chose to use the first-person point of view to write an expository article?* Have students use this format to write their own informational article, “A \_\_\_\_\_’s Tale.” They will choose an animal, gather information, and write the article with humor, using the first-person point of view. Remind the class that the article should contain facts and can include drawings. Have them consult the article to review the format.

## Rat Race

**Collect Evidence** Gather evidence from the text to support each claim. Include details and cite your findings by using page numbers.

**Claim:** Rats are resourceful.

Supporting evidence (p. \_\_\_\_\_)

**Claim:** Rats have a social hierarchy.

Supporting evidence (p. \_\_\_\_\_)

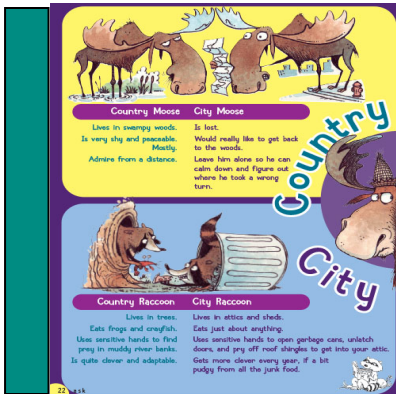
**Claim:** Rats are adaptable.

Supporting evidence (p. \_\_\_\_\_)

## Country Moose, City Moose

pp. 22–23, Expository Nonfiction

This article contains cartoon drawings and uses whimsy to compare country and city living. A variety of animals use short sentences to list the pros and cons of each.



## RESOURCES

Compare and Contrast: I'm Home!

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the similarities and differences between country and city living in the natural world.
- Students will compare and contrast habitats.
- Students will use mathematical reasoning to create solutions to a word problem.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **peaceable** (p. 22) not argumentative or hostile
- **pry** (p. 22) to pull apart, usually with a lever
- **swamps** (p. 23) areas of land permanently saturated or filled with water

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What happens when animal habitats shift?

Introduce the article, “Country Moose, City Moose,” and ask students to make a text-to-text connection to the title (“Country Mouse, City Mouse”). If the class is unfamiliar with the story, you can locate an animated version of “Country Mouse, City Mouse” online. Discuss the comparison of the country and the city and ask the class what they expect to read about in the article. Inform students that a work based on a story already told is called an *adaptation*.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and review the three vocabulary words and definitions. Allow students to roll a die for vocabulary activities for each word.

- 1 = Use the word in a sentence.
- 2 = Draw a picture that demonstrates the word.
- 3 = List two antonyms for the word.
- 4 = List two synonyms for the word.
- 5 = Break the word into syllables and list the part of speech.
- 6 = Make a connection between the word and your life, a book, or a movie.

## READ & DISCUSS

As a post-reading activity, lead a discussion based on the following questions:

1. Why does the City Moose say he is lost in the city?
2. Where can raccoons live?
3. Which animal suggests that it is nocturnal?
4. Why shouldn't you feed an alligator?
5. What are the reasons that people live in the country or in the city?

## SKILL FOCUS: Compare and Contrast

**INSTRUCT:** Advise students to review the article and to study the differences and similarities between the animals and their habits and living environments. Distribute the graphic organizer, *I'm Home!*, and tell the class that they will work with a partner and use information directly from the text to complete the worksheet. Have students complete the activity in the **THINK TANK** independently.

**ASSESS:** Reconvene and review the *I'm Home!* worksheet. Invite students to read their comparison paragraphs aloud.

## EXTEND

**Mathematics:** Tell students that there are eight subspecies of moose worldwide. Provide students with the following information: *The average weight for a male moose is 1,100 pounds and 800 pounds for a female. Forest Brook Bridge, a small wooden bridge crossing a creek, has a weight limit of 9,000 pounds.* Have students use mathematical concepts and critical thinking skills to determine different combinations of males and females that could be on the bridge at the same time.

## I'm Home!

**Compare and Contrast** Use information from the article to record your answers on the lines. Label the statement with the correct animal and the habitat that it is referring to.

**M** = moose     **R** = raccoon     **C** = coyote

**1** = country     **2** = city

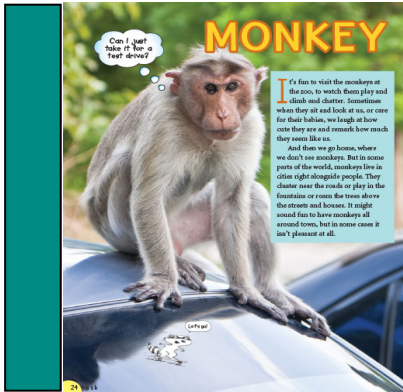
- R2** 1. Lives in attics and sheds.
- 2. Is very shy and peaceable.
- 3. Hunts rabbits, squirrels, rats, cats, and small dogs.
- 4. Eats frogs and crayfish.
- 5. Would be totally lost in the city.
- 6. Is active all day.
- 7. Uses sensitive hands to find prey in muddy riverbanks.
- 8. Lives in swampy woods.
- 9. Howls a lot and avoids humans.
- 10. Gets a bit pudgy from all the junk food.

**THINK TANK:** Construct a Venn diagram on the back of this paper to compare and contrast the habits, food, and lifestyle of *humans* living in the country and living in the city. Use the information on the diagram to write a brief essay comparing the two.

## Monkey Trouble

pp. 24–26, Expository Nonfiction

While visiting monkeys at the zoo is often a charming experience, monkeys roaming the streets of a city can cause big problems. This article examines the issues that arise when monkeys are forced by certain circumstances to live alongside humans.



## RESOURCES

Cause and Effect: Monkey Business

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how problems arise when humans and monkeys share the same living space.
- Students will identify causes and effects.
- Students will consider the duality of adaptability.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **chatter** (p. 24) to utter rapid short sounds suggestive of language but inarticulate or indistinct.
- **sacred** (p. 25) considered to be holy and deserving of respect, especially because of a connection with a god
- **roving** (p. 27) constantly moving from one area or place to another

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What happens when animal habitats shift?

Create interest in the topic by introducing the kinesthetic activity, “Monkey See, Monkey Do.” This quiet game proceeds as follows:

1. Have students sit in a large circle.
2. Choose someone to be **IT**. (Ex: Carl) Carl leaves the room and closes his eyes and ears while someone in the circle is chosen to be the **MONKEY**. Everyone keeps the identity of the monkey a secret.
3. Carl stands in the middle of the circle and the monkey starts making continuous hand gestures or small movements (tapping knees, rubbing belly, etc.).
4. Everyone else in the circle has to copy the monkey, without making it obvious who the monkey is.
5. Once Carl guesses who the monkey is, he/she is the new **IT**.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary terms. Review how to infer the meanings of new words by using context clues and background knowledge. Then have partners work together to determine the meaning of each word. Reveal definitions.

- The chatter of birds awakened me.
- The owl is a sacred animal for many North American people.
- The roving pack of wolves was searching for food.

## READ & DISCUSS

Post and discuss questions prior to reading. Have students read the article independently and answer the questions in full sentences.

1. Explain the problems caused by monkeys and humans living too closely together.
2. Why are people divided about what to do about the problems?
3. What caused the rhesus monkey to infiltrate the city of New Delhi?
4. Why did the city resort to using paper cut-outs of langur monkeys?
5. How have snow monkeys in Japan lost their homes?

## SKILL FOCUS: Cause and Effect

**INSTRUCT:** Guide students to acknowledge that an event in nature is often surrounded with causes and effects. Distribute the *Monkey Business* organizer and tell students that they will be recording the causes and effects of the events that have shaped the current problems with monkeys. Have them reread the article with a partner to underline passages that will be helpful for this purpose.

**ASSESS:** Review the answers and invite students to share their responses.

## EXTEND

**Critical Thinking:** The article states, “Monkeys are smart animals who can adjust to new conditions—a lot like people.” We often think of adaptability as being positive. Discuss ways it can also be negative. Have students make a T-chart titled **ADAPTABILITY**, with the column headings **POSITIVE** and **NEGATIVE**. They will work with a partner to list examples of each on the chart. Invite groups to share their work.

## Monkey Business

**Cause and Effect** Consult the article to identify and explain the cause of the events listed below, as well as the effects.

Cause	Event	Effect
	Much of the forest land around New Delhi is being clear cut.	
	Monks at temples feed and care for wild monkeys.	
	City trucks bring food out to relocated monkeys.	
	The practice of using langur monkeys as a deterrent was banned.	