A RAT'S LIFE
AWESOME RATS! RATS ARE FASCINATING ANIMALS! DID YOU KNOW ...

Rats want their bodies to be very clean and will work really hard to rid themselves of dirt. Rat families grow up healthy if they have good food, water, and shelter.

If no one forces them to live in an unclean cage, their skin has a nice perfume-like scent.

Rats are smart, curious, and friendly. They can be as outgoing and gentle as any human.

If you are nice to them, rats can be happy just like us. Of course, they also feel pain, just as dogs, cats, and we do.

Rats have poor eyesight but excellent senses of smell, taste, touch, and hearing.
Hi, I'm Sally. You must be our new neighbor.

Yes, I'm Sam. This is my mom.

This is my sister, Kelly. Our dog's name is Jake. He's the best dog ever. Do you have a dog, too?

No, but I have a rat friend named Sunshine. Do you want to meet her?

A rat? Sure, I guess.

Hey, she's cute!

Yeah, and she spends hours grooming herself, just like a cat. She's really sweet and loves to be petted. When she wants attention, she'll nip my nose and run away. She's really careful not to bite too hard, though.
SHE LOVES TO PLAY AND GET INTO THINGS. YESTERDAY, SHE SPENT HOURS PULLING MY DIRTY CLOTHES FROM THE LAUNDRY BAG.

IF I LEAVE A GLASS OF ICE WATER ON THE FLOOR FOR HER, SHE’LL TAKE OUT EACH ICE CUBE AND CARRY IT AWAY FROM THE GLASS IN HER TEETH. SWEET POTATOES ARE HER FAVORITE TREAT. SHE LOVES THEM.

DID YOU GET HER FROM A PET STORE?

NO! I DON’T THINK PET STORES ARE GOOD PLACES. THE RATS ARE USUALLY KEPT IN SMALL, DIRTY CAGES AND GET VERY BORED BECAUSE THEY CAN’T EXPLORE OR DO OTHER THINGS THAT RATS NATURALLY LIKE TO DO. MY FATHER RESCUED HER.

SUNSHINE AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER RATS AND MICE WERE USED IN A CRUEL TEST AT A COLLEGE IN NORTH CAROLINA. SHE DIDN’T HAVE A NAME THERE, JUST A NUMBER.
SUNSHINE WAS LUCKY TO ESCAPE. THE OTHER ANIMALS ARE STILL CRAMMED INSIDE TINY CAGES. A LOT OF THEM ARE REALLY SICK OR HAVE BIG CUTS AND TUMORS.

THE RESEARCHERS DIDN’T CARE ABOUT THE ANIMALS. SOME WOULD THROW THEM INTO A COOLER, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE STILL ALIVE, OR CUT THE ANIMALS’ HEADS OFF WITH SCISSORS. THEY LAUGHED WHILE THEY WERE DOING MEAN THINGS TO THE ANIMALS.

GROSS!

THAT’S HORRIBLE! HOW CAN ANYONE BE SO MEAN?
IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME. LOTS OF ANIMALS ARE EXPERIMENTED ON, EVEN DOGS, CATS, MONKEYS, PIGS, FERRETS, COWS, RABBITS, SHEEP, GUINEA PIGS, HAMSTERS, CHICKENS, AND LAMBS.

THEY EVEN TEST ON DOGS?! LIKE JAKE?

THAT’S NOT NICE! JAKE IS LIKE FAMILY. HE EVEN SLEEPS IN MY BED!

IN LABS, DOGS DON’T EVEN GET BEDS, AND THEY SLEEP ALONE IN SMALL METAL CAGES.

WHO WOULD TEST ON DOGS?
Lots of places, the military gasses and shoots animals. Some doctors addict animals to drugs and alcohol, Others deprive them of sleep and do lots of other nasty things, like taking baby animals away from their mothers.

Even dog- and cat-food companies conduct cruel tests to measure how effective their food is. During the long tests, dogs and cats are often forced to live for years in cold, empty cages with no toys.

That’s crazy. Those companies are supposed to care about animals.

You’d think so, but many experimenters become pretty cold after years of testing and don’t even see the animals’ suffering.

Our cousin won’t buy any makeup that’s been tested on animals. She says there’s no excuse for testing cosmetics and cleaning stuff on animals when there are so many other companies that make cruelty-free products.

Right. Thousands of big companies, like the Body Shop, Toms of Maine, ELF, Method, Wet n Wild, Yes To, and Lip Smackers, don’t test on animals.
But you mean some other companies still test on animals?

Yes, although tests on animals for cosmetics have mostly ended in the U.S., there are some companies that choose to pay for tests on animals in order to sell their products in China, where tests on animals are required by the government.

Companies like these dump their products into animals’ stomachs, rub them onto their shaved and raw skin, squirt them into their eyes, and force animals to breathe them in.

Isn’t it illegal to test on animals? I saw a movie where animal testing was banned.

In many countries around the world, it’s illegal to test on animals for cosmetics, and other countries, including the U.S., are now considering laws that would ban these painful and deadly tests.

The Animal Welfare Act is supposed to help, but it doesn’t go far enough. It doesn’t even protect mice and rats, like sunshine, even though they’re the animals used most often.
WOW, YOU’RE REALLY SMART. HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?

I’VE ALWAYS LOVED ANIMALS, AND SO HAS MY MOM. SHE TAUGHT ME TO LOOK OUT FOR ANYONE WHO IS SMALLER AND WEAKER THAN ME.

C’MON, LET’S GO TALK TO HER. IT’S ALMOST TIME FOR LUNCH ANYWAY.

HI, MOM! CAN MY FRIENDS STAY FOR LUNCH?

OF COURSE. I MADE VEGGIE BURGERS. HAVE A SEAT.

DID YOU GIRLS ENJOY MEETING SUNSHINE?

SHE’S GREAT. I LOVE HER!

I CAN’T BELIEVE WHAT THOSE AWFUL SCIENTISTS WERE DOING TO THOSE POOR ANIMALS.

YES, IT’S VERY SAD. FORTUNATELY, SHE’LL NEVER HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN.
SAM, THAT REMINDS ME: WE HAVE TO LEAVE FOR THE HOSPITAL IN THREE HOURS TO SEE YOUR AUNT. SHE’S BEEN GOING THROUGH A LOT LATELY.

MY AUNT HAS CANCER. WE GO TO VISIT HER EVERY WEEK.

OH, I’M REALLY SORRY, SAM.

I HOPE SHE’LL GET BETTER. MY CLASS IS DOING A FUNDRAISER FOR THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY. MAYBE THAT WILL HELP?

THAT’S VERY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, BUT IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE HELPFUL IF YOUR SCHOOL RAISED MONEY FOR A CHARITY THAT DOESN’T PAY FOR EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS, LIKE THE DR. SUSAN LOVE RESEARCH FOUNDATION.

CHARITIES LIKE THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, THE MARCH OF DIMES, AND THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION STILL HURT ANIMALS.

BUT HOW ELSE WOULD DOCTORS BE ABLE TO SAVE PEOPLE’S LIVES?
Animal experiments really won’t help save anyone’s life. In fact, a lot of animals will suffer and die for nothing. Animal testing just uses money that could be spent helping people, not hurting animals.

Smart charities focus on prevention and direct care. And they use modern research methods like observing people, using computer models, conducting autopsies, and studying human cell and tissue samples.

Do they really work?

Yes, they are faster, more reliable, and less expensive than animal tests. Nowadays, there is a wide variety of humane research methods that mimic how the human body works. In this day and age, there’s just no reason to experiment on animals.

My mom’s right. Besides, it’s wrong to infect animals with diseases that they wouldn’t normally get. How could we look sunshine in the eye if we helped cause animals like her to suffer?

You’re right. I’m going to talk to my teacher and my classmates and tell them that we should do a fundraiser for a cruelty-free charity instead.
ALL RIGHT!

GOOD FOR YOU!

CAN WE SAY GOODBYE TO SUNSHINE BEFORE WE LEAVE?

SURE, I’LL BRING HER DOWN. SHE’D LIKE TO RUN AROUND SOME MORE ANYWAY.

GOODBYE, SUNSHINE! WE’LL COME VISIT YOU SOON.

AND WE’LL NEVER FORGET WHAT WE’VE LEARNED, EITHER. SEE YA LATER, SUNSHINE!
INSTRUCTIONS: RATS BELONG IN THE WILD, NOT IN A LAB. SHOW THAT YOU CARE ABOUT THEM BY COLORING IN THIS PICTURE OF RATS IN THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT!

RATS LOVE SNUGGLING WITH THEIR FAMILIES!

VISIT PETAKIDS.COM TO DISCOVER MORE FUN WAYS TO HELP SAVE RATS AND OTHER ANIMALS USED IN LABS.
DO YOU WANT TO HELP RATS AND OTHER ANIMALS IN LABORATORIES?

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