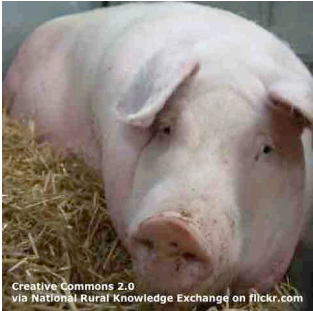## Pigs are intelligent enough to play video games

21st March, 2021

Pigs may be more intelligent than we thought. They may be able to play video games. Researchers at Purdue University in the USA conducted research on pig-gaming skills. The researchers were surprised that their test pigs were able to play some games. Researchers got the four pigs, named Ebony, Hamlet, Ivory and Omelet, to play a simple game at different levels. They had to move a joystick with their snout to make a cursor move to a coloured wall. If they were successful, they got a tasty treat. Lead author Dr. Candace Croney said: "It's very clear they had some conceptual understanding of what they were being asked to do." The research is in a paper published in the journal "Frontiers in Psychology".

The research was quite extensive. The pigs spent many days playing the game. During the last 50 rounds, the pigs played the game on three different levels. If they were successful at one level, they moved to the next level. The higher levels had better treats. A scientist told CNN that: "The pigs clearly understood the connection between their own behavior, the joystick, and what was happening on the screen." Dr. Croney said it was important to understand how pigs get information, and what they are capable of learning and remembering. She said this would help us to learn what pigs think of interacting with humans. We could also understand what pigs think of different environments.

Sources: *smithsonianmag.com / theconversation.com / bigthink.com*

Writing

We need to do more research into pigs' intelligence. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

pigs / intelligent / researchers / gaming / skills / joystick / cursor / author / journal / successful / connection / behaviour / screen / information / humans / environments

True / False

a) Researchers conducted research on pig-gaming skills. T / F

b) Researchers conducted tests on over 40 pigs. T / F

c) The pigs had to move a joystick with their snout. T / F

d) A researcher said the pigs had a conceptual understanding of what to do. T / F

e) The pigs played on three different levels in the final 50 rounds. T / F

f) The higher levels of the game had the least tasty treats. T / F

g) The pigs did not understand what was happening on the screen. T / F

h) The researcher said we do not need to understand what pigs think. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**intelligent**	a.	obvious
2.	**conducted**	b.	straightforward
3.	**simple**	c.	mixing
4.	**treat**	d.	large
5.	**clear**	e.	clever
6.	**extensive**	f.	actions
7.	**connection**	g.	reward
8.	**behavior**	h.	carried out
9.	**interacting**	i.	situations
10.	**environments**	j.	link

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) What do you know about pigs?

c) What's your favourite video game?

d) What are your favourite treats?

e) How good are you at video games?

f) How dangerous are pigs?

g) How do different cultures look at pigs?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. Pigs may be more intelligent
2. play a simple game at different
3. If they were successful,
4. It's very clear they had some
5. a paper published
6. The research was quite
7. The higher levels had better
8. The pigs clearly
9. what they are capable
10. interacting

a. they got a tasty treat
b. with humans
c. extensive
d. in the journal
e. levels
f. understood
g. than we thought
h. of learning
i. conceptual understanding
j. treats

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think of pigs?

b) What do you think of video games?

c) How intelligent do you think pigs are?

d) What do you think of pigs playing video games?

e) Why do you think the researchers did this research?

f) What kinds of games might pigs be good at?

g) What kind of personality does a pig have?

h) Would you like to read the research paper?

Spelling

1. cndutedco research on pig-gaming
2. The researchers were dersuispr
3. a simple game at different llseve
4. They had to move a jkoyscti
5. make a ucrors move
6. a paper published in the arojnul
7. The research was quite evesxtien
8. better tsraet
9. The pigs clearly understood the otceinonnc
10. their own iaevorhb
11. what they are lbaceap of learning
12. ttgeainnicr with humans

Role Play

Role A – Pokemon Go
You think Pokemon Go is the best video game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least enjoyable of these (and why): Grand Theft Auto, Fortnite or Super Mario.

Role B – Grand Theft Auto
You think Grand Theft Auto is the best video game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least enjoyable of these (and why): Pokemon Go, Fortnite or Super Mario.

Role C – Fortnite
You think Fortnite is the best video game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least enjoyable of these (and why): Grand Theft Auto, Pokemon Go or Super Mario.

Role D – Super Mario
You think Super Mario is the best video game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least enjoyable of these (and why): Grand Theft Auto, Fortnite or Pokemon Go.

Speaking – Video Games

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Pokemon Go
- Minecraft
- The Legend of Zelda
- Grand Theft Auto
- Fortnite
- Cyberpunk
- Super Mario
- Final Fantasy

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. g	5. a
6. d	7. j	8. f	9. c	10. i

Answers – True False

a T	b F	c T	d T	e T	f F	g F	h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.