

The River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon

Can you find 104 Letter R,r? Can you find the word 'River, river' 15 times?

The **R**ing-tailed **R**accoon was the **R**uler of the **R**iver. He came out at night and claimed the best slugs and bugs. The other animals of the forest got the leftovers.

One night, a hungry **R**iver **R**at wandered into the river bed area, looking for insects.

Now, the **R**ing-tailed **R**accoon thought he was more important than a **R**iver **R**at rodent.

“Dear Fellow,” he said, “Clearly, I am the better **R**uler of the **R**iver.

“I agree”, said the **R**iver **R**at, meekly. “Only one of us can be the **R**uler of the **R**iver.

Now, the **R**iver **R**at was more clever than he looked. “Why don’t we have a race to decide who rules the river?” he suggested.

The raccoon was a fast *runner* and thought this was a great idea.

The Black-winged **R**aven came to judge. The forest animals gathered to watch the race.

“On Your Marks – Get Set - GO!” cawed the **R**aven.

The **R**ing-tailed **R**accoon bolted off the starting line and was halfway to the finish line. But the **R**iver **R**at just sat. He could hear the laughter of the **R**accoon far away.

Suddenly, 'SPLASH', the **R**iver **R**at jumped in the river and was a streak of lightning down the stream.

The **R**accoon hurried but the **R**iver **R**at emerged from the water at the finish line, wet, but victorious. "**R**iver **R**ats are the fastest *swimmers!*" he cried.

The **R**ing-tailed **R**accoon knew he had been tricked and went away sad, but wiser.

The new **R**uler of the **R**iver let all the animals share the food from the waters of the **R**iver.

And, there was enough for everyone.

THE END!

Did You Know River Rats

- are also called Coypu and Nutria, according to where they live
- originally from South America
- Were brought to Europe, Asia, and North America for fur trade
- have huge, wide, long, orange front teeth
- can weigh up to 20 pounds; over 20 inches long and a 15-inch tail
- are mammal rodents
- have webbed toes
- eat water plants (herbivores)
- are nocturnal (come out at night)

Did You Know the Ring-tailed Raccoon

- Are native to North America and Mexico
- usually the size of a small dog (biggest recorded was 60 pounds)
- Are from a Native American word: “one who rubs and scrubs and scratches with his hands.
- Are fast runners and tree climbers
- Are omnivores (eat both meat and plants)
- live in woodlands by water and in cities
- are nocturnal
- Are closely related to bears
- Dip their food in water (not to wash it) but to get it wet and chewable

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True/False Quiz

See the Story and Did You Know for answers

1. The River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon were friends.
2. The Raccoon did not want to share food with his neighbors.
3. The Raccoon thought he was more important than a River Rat.
4. The River Rat is called other names, like *Coypu* and *Nutria*.
5. The Ring-tailed Raccoon has orange teeth.
6. Bears are a near relative to the River Rat.
7. *Omnivores* eat both meat and plants.
8. Both the River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon are *nocturnal*.
9. It was fair for the River Rat to win the race by swimming instead of running.
10. *Herbivores* eat only meat.

Happy River Rat



Sad Ring-tailed Raccoon



Draw these faces to show emotion. Make up your own.

