THE ARTICLE

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: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/pigs-can-learn-play-video-games-if-tempted-
            treats-180977018/
            https://theconversation.com/pigs-can-play-video-games-scientists-discover-154993
            https://bigthink.com/surprising-science/pig-intelligence

WARM-UPS

1. PIGS: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about pigs. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

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

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RESEARCH: Students A **strongly** believe we should spend more money on researching pig intelligence; Students B **strongly** believe we shouldn't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. SKILLS: How intelligent are these creatures? What skills do they? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	How Intelligent?	Skills
Pigs		
Dolphins		
Ants		
Crows		
Dogs		
Bears		

5. JOYSTICK: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "joystick". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. 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

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

1.	intelligent	a.	The thing computer screen that shows where the mouse is at.
2.	conducted	b.	Carried out; did.
3.	simple	c.	A small arm used to control and airplane or a video game console.
4.	joystick	d.	Being clever; having the ability to get and use knowledge well.
5.	snout	e.	A newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity.
6.	cursor	f.	Easy to understand; basic.
7.	journal	g.	A pig's nose.

Paragraph 2

8.	extensive	h.	Something special you get or give yourself.
9.	round	i.	Did what you wanted to do.
10.	successful	j.	Having the ability to do something.
11.	treat	k.	Covering or affecting a large area.
12.	behavior	l.	One of a number of different actions or events.
13.	capable	m.	Act in such a way as to have an effect on other people or things
14.	interacting	n.	The manner in which you act.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

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

2. 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

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

1. Pigs may be more intelligent		a.	they got a tasty treat
2. play a simple game at different		b.	with humans
3. If they were successful,		c.	extensive
4. It's very clear they had some		d.	in the journal
5. a paper published		e.	levels
6. The research was quite		f.	understood
7. The higher levels had better		g.	than we thought
8. The pigs clearly		h.	of learning
9. what they are capable		i.	conceptual understanding
10. interacting		j.	treats

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What university carried out the research?

2. How many pigs were in the tests?

3. What did the pigs have to move a joystick with?

4. Where did the pigs have to move a cursor to?

5. What is "Frontiers in Psychology"?

6. How many rounds did the pigs spend playing in three levels?

7. What was better in the higher levels?

8. What news agency did a researcher talk to?

9. What did a doctor say it was important to understand?

10. Who might we have a better understanding of pigs' interactions with?

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

1) What university carried out the research?
a) New York
b) MIT
c) Purdue
d) Stanford

2) How many pigs were in the tests?
a) 4
b) 5
c) 6
d) 7

3) What did the pigs have to move a joystick with?
a) their tail
b) their snout
c) their feet
d) their mind

4) Where did the pigs have to move a cursor to?
a) a target
b) the top of the screen
c) a treat
d) a coloured wall

5) What is "Frontiers in Psychology"?
a) a movie
b) a website
c) a journal
d) a book

6) How many rounds did the pigs spend playing in three levels?
a) 40
b) 50
c) 60
d) 30

7) What was better in the higher levels?
a) the colours
b) the air
c) the excitement
d) treats

8) What news agency did a researcher talk to?
a) BBC
b) CNN
c) RT
d) ABC

9) What did a doctor say it was important to understand?
a) pig psychology
b) how pigs get information
c) game rules
d) treats

10) Who might we have a better understanding of pigs' interactions with?
a) humans
b) other pigs
c) researchers
d) farmers

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words 'pig' and 'game'.

pig	game

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

• intelligent	• days
• skills	• three
• surprised	• better
• simple	• between
• wall	• information
• clear	• help

PIGS DISCUSSION

<u>STUDENT A's QUESTIONS</u> (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?

2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'pig'?

3. What do you think of pigs?

4. What do you think of video games?

5. How intelligent do you think pigs are?

6. What do you think of pigs playing video games?

7. Why do you think the researchers did this research?

8. What kinds of games might pigs be good at?

9. What kind of personality does a pig have?

10. Would you like to read the research paper?

Pigs are intelligent enough to play video games – 21st March, 2021
Thousands more free lessons at breakingnewsenglish.com

PIGS DISCUSSION

<u>STUDENT B's QUESTIONS</u> (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?

12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'game'?

13. What do you think about what you read?

14. What do you know about pigs?

15. What's your favourite video game?

16. What are your favourite treats?

17. How good are you at video games?

18. How dangerous are pigs?

19. How do different cultures look at pigs?

20. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?