Name_____

Animal Intelligence

Did you know that animals can spy and retrieve information? People have trained animals to perform useful tasks, do entertaining tricks, and provide information as spies during wartime.

Often, the techniques and principles used to train animals for useful tasks have their roots in behavioral conditioning, as first described by B.F. Skinner. Subjects are trained to do things voluntarily based on cues in the environment. Rewards or consequences shape the likelihood of repeated behavior in the future. In classic experiments, animals learn to associate an action with a reward.

During the Cold War, ravens were trained to deposit and retrieve objects. The birds could recognize characteristics of objects and would be instructed accordingly. For example, a raven could be taught to always fly to a large or small table. Ravens are also able to carry quite a bit of weight, so they could transport objects that contained a message.

Intelligence agencies have also experimented with training cats. In one such instance, each feline was fitted with a wire, battery, and instruments to create a transmitter. While directing the cat remotely with ultrasonic sound, operators could eavesdrop on critical communications.

Advocates of such programs cite animals' low profiles as a benefit. People are less likely to pay attention to an animal arriving and leaving. In addition, animals can get into places people can't. On the downside, animals require ongoing training, care, and maintenance.

The details of specific intelligence programs actually put into use are relatively unknown. Many documents and records are classified information or have since been destroyed. It's safe to say, though, that studies in animal training for intelligence and security tasks continue. K-9 dog police units are one such example.

Text Questions

1. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
   a. It describes the types of animals that are used as spies.
   b. It explains the principles used to train animals for intelligence work.
   c. It states the reason the author wrote the article.
   d. It states the author's conclusion.
2. Which animals are <u>not</u> mentioned in the article as potential subjects for animal intelligence tasks?
   a. birds
   b. cats
   c. dogs
   d. rats
3. What does the word *associate* mean as it is used in the second paragraph?
   a. to be a companion with
   b. to connect in your mind
   c. to be a member with less than full status
   d. to ignore
4. What is one benefit of using animals for intelligence work?
   a. They can come and go without attracting attention.
   b. They require training.
   c. They need care and maintenance.
   d. They can understand critical communications.
5. How do we use trained animals today? Give examples and evidence to support your answer.

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