Part 5

You are going to read an article about anthropomorphism – attributing human characteristics or behaviour to animals. For questions **31–36**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text. Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Are humans and animals really so different?

Science correspondent Martha Hamlin looks at whether anthropomorphism – attributing human characteristics or behavior to animals – is necessarily a bad thing

One night not long ago, an octopus named Inky hauled himself out of his tank at New Zealand's National Aquarium, heaved himself across the floor and squeezed into a narrow drain leading to the Pacific Ocean. It was a story fit for a children's film, and was widely shared online. Part of the fun of the story and other such tales of escape, involving creatures as diverse as rats and llamas, is indulging in a bit of knowing anthropomorphism: animals, they're just like us! In the case of octopuses, this pleasure is especially pronounced, because the creatures' great intelligence comes packaged in bodies so vastly dissimilar to our own. How is it that eight-tentacled sea creatures can open jars, recognize faces, use coconut shells as portable armor and even exhibit sophisticated play behavior?

Anthropomorphism is often thought of as unscientific, but Dr. Frans de Waal, who studies primates such as gorillas and chimpanzees, argues that it is not in fact anthropomorphizing, but its opposite – an unwillingness to recognize the human-like traits of animals, or what he terms anthropodenial – that has too often characterized our attitudes toward other species. Analysing decades of animal-cognition research, he shows that, with the exception of fully-developed language, animals have been observed exhibiting many of the key behaviors that were thought to distinguish humans from animals: the ability to consider the past and the future, to demonstrate empathy and self-awareness, and to anticipate the motives of others. Animals, in other words, are far smarter than we've been giving them credit for.

Anthropodenial, in de Waal's opinion, is a relatively modern phenomenon. In medieval and early modern Europe, the animal mind was considered sophisticated enough that animals could be put on trial for crimes. And as recently as the nineteenth century, many naturalists sought out the connections between human and animal intelligence. 'The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind,' one nineteenth-century naturalist wrote. And this was no radical supporter of animal rights; it was Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution changed the way we understand our place in the world.

The advent of behaviorism in the twentieth century, with its emphasis on conditioning animals through reward and punishment, shifted public views of animal intelligence. For most of the twentieth century, the two dominant schools of thought viewed animals as either stimulus-response machines or as robots endowed with useful instincts. It is perhaps no accident that this shift occurred during the same century that saw humans tearing down animal habitats at unprecedented rates, polluting land and water, and developing methods of rearing livestock which ignored the welfare of the animals.

Happily, de Waal believes that we are emerging from this dark period and learning to think of animal cognition as being on the same spectrum, though not necessarily at the same point, as that of humans. *line 63*
'The times are changing,' he writes. 'Everyone must have noticed the avalanche of knowledge emerging over the last few decades, diffused over the internet.' The most effective tests of animal intelligence, he argues, are designed with a species' particular traits and skills in mind. Squirrels may fail at human memory tasks, but whereas we need apps to find our misplaced phones, they can remember where they've hidden tiny caches of nuts. In her book *The Soul of an Octopus*, naturalist Sy Montgomery points out that if an octopus were to measure human intelligence, it might test us on the number of color patterns we can produce on our skin. Seeing us fail the test, it might conclude that we are pretty stupid.

De Waal remains skeptical of Inky's happy ending. He points out that, while captive octopuses have escaped their tanks before, it's probably overly optimistic to think that Inky figured out how to get to a drain leading to the ocean. But de Waal is aware of the power of viral stories to fuel appreciation of animal intelligence. He once ran an experiment to test whether capuchin monkeys can experience envy. When the monkeys were rewarded with either cucumbers (a well-liked monkey food) or grapes (an even better one), those given cucumbers shrieked and raged at seeing their peers get the superior treat. The study was published in a prominent scientific journal soon afterwards. But what really convinced people of the findings was a one-minute video clip of the experiment, released ten years later. Just one of the oddities of our particular kind of animal mind.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

31 What point does the writer make about octopuses in the first paragraph?

A Their playful nature would make them a good subject for a children's film.
B They are no more likely to be able to escape captivity than any other creature.
C People still underestimate their intelligence despite what is known about their abilities.
D Their human-like behaviour surprises people more as they are so unlike humans in appearance.

32 In the second paragraph, the writer says that Dr. Frans de Waal

A gave a more accurate name to a changing behaviour.
B conducted experiments to back up his arguments.
C came to a conclusion based on existing data.
D questioned the research of other scientists.

33 In the third paragraph, the writer emphasises the fact that

A accepting de Waal's ideas requires people to alter the way they see themselves.
B human knowledge has progressed considerably since medieval times.
C putting animals on trial was not universally considered reasonable.
D de Waal's views are backed up by the work of respected scientists.

34 What does 'that' in line 63 refer to?

A dark period
B cognition
C spectrum
D point

35 What is the main idea put forward in the fifth paragraph?

A Even with technology, humans are unable to match animal abilities.
B Being able to test other species doesn't mean you are superior to them.
C It is logical to assess a species' intelligence according to its unique abilities.
D The internet has played a major role in changing people's views of animal intelligence.

36 In the last paragraph, the writer thinks it is significant that

A a video has more impact on people than written data.
B people are interested in whether monkeys can feel envy.
C de Waal waited ten years to release the video of his experiment.
D people invent a happy ending if a story doesn't already have one.

→ p. 115

LIVEWORKSHEETS