

Two monkeys were paid unequally

Cucumber or grapes? What happens when two monkeys do the same task but get 'paid' in different ways? Watch this funny video to find out how monkeys react to inequality.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises. You can also read the transcript.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. fairness
2. willing to do something
3. in a row
4. inequity
5. to turn out
6. right
7. to test
8. the Wall Street protest

Definition

- a. correct
- b. open to doing something
- c. treatment of everybody in the same way
- d. to have a particular result; to become obvious
- e. again and again, with no break or exceptions
- f. a situation which is not fair or just (more commonly called 'inequality')
- g. to experiment; to do something to discover if it works correctly
- h. a social movement which happened in New York in which people expressed their anger about economic inequality

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answers	
	True	False
1. After the first experiment, the scientists did a similar study with other animals.	True	False
2. The man says that capuchin monkeys are generally not very social.	True	False
3. If both monkeys get cucumber for the task, they both get angry and throw away the cucumber.	True	False
4. The experiment used grapes because capuchin monkeys like them more than cucumber.	True	False
5. The monkeys in the video had previously done this experiment many times.	True	False
6. The monkeys' task in the video is to touch the scientist's hand.	True	False
7. The monkey hits the wall with a rock because she is so angry.	True	False
8. The man says that humans react to inequality in a similar way to monkeys.	True	False

Task 2

Write a word to complete the sentences.

1. If you give both of them cucumber for the task, ... they're perfectly to do this 25 times in a row.
2. If you give them grapes, it's a far better food, then you create between them.
3. Recently we videotaped it with new monkeys who'd never done the task, thinking that maybe they would have a reaction, and that turned out to be right.
4. She a rock now against the wall.
5. So this is the Wall Street protest that you see here.

Discussion

At the end of the video, why does the man compare the monkeys to humans?

Transcript

So, the final experiment that I want to mention to you is our fairness study. And so, this became a very famous study. And there's now many more, because after we did this about ten years ago, it became very well known. And we did that originally with capuchin monkeys. And I'm going to show you the first experiment that we did. It has now been done with dogs and with birds and with chimpanzees. But with Sarah Brosnan we started out with capuchin monkeys.

So what we did is we put two capuchin monkeys side by side. Again, these animals, they live in a group, they know each other. We take them out of the group, put them in a test chamber. And there's a very simple task that they need to do. And if you give both of them cucumber for the task, the two monkeys side-by-side, they're perfectly willing to do this 25 times in a row. So cucumber, even though it's really only water in my opinion, but cucumber is perfectly fine for them. Now if you give the partner grapes – the food preferences of my capuchin monkeys correspond exactly with the prices in the supermarket - and so if you give them grapes, it's a far better food, then you create inequity between them. So that's the experiment we did.

Recently we videotaped it with new monkeys who'd never done the task, thinking that maybe they would have a stronger reaction, and that turned out to be right. The one on the left is the monkey who gets cucumber. The one on the right is the one who gets grapes. The one who gets cucumber notes that the first piece of cucumber is perfectly fine. The first piece she eats. Then she sees the other one getting grape, and you will see what happens. So she gives a rock to us. That's the task. And we give her a piece of cucumber and she eats it. The other one needs to give a rock to us. And that's what she does. And she gets a grape and she eats it. The other one sees that. She gives a rock to us now, gets, again, cucumber.

(audience laugh)

She tests a rock now against the wall. She needs to give it to us. And she gets cucumber again.

(audience laugh)

So this is basically the Wall Street protest that you see here.

Answers

Preparation task

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

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. True

Task 2

1. willing
2. inequity / inequality
3. stronger
4. tests
5. basically