

Creature Feature



Gary Gero is wild about animals. He trained the cool creatures in the *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* movie.

Recently, Gero spoke to *Scholastic News* about working with these animal actors.

Reading Tip

This article is an interview. It is written in question-and-answer format. The interviewer (*Scholastic News* editor) asks the questions. The animal trainer (Gary Gero) answers them. To help you, read the article with a partner. Have one person read the part of Gary Gero, and the other person read the part of the *Scholastic News* editor.



Gero has trained animals for almost 40 years. He says he has only been bitten once or twice. "If you get a bite, then you've made a mistake!" he says.



Scholastic News: How do you train the different animals?

Gary Gero: They're all trained the same way. They're given a toy or a treat when they do what they're supposed to.

Scholastic News: Owls are thought of as smart. Are they?

Gary Gero: Owls are not the brightest. An owl learns something after doing it a thousand times. It takes a raven or parrot only 10 times to learn the same thing.

Scholastic News: Are rats difficult to train?

Gary Gero: Rats are very intelligent. They learn simple things quickly. We trained them to go and stay in a certain spot and to retrieve (bring an object back).

Scholastic News: Were any of the actors on *Harry Potter* afraid of any of the animals?

Gary Gero: No. The kids were great. They all loved the animals.

Scholastic News: What advice do you have for kids interested in working with animals?

Gary Gero: Keep up your interest in animals, like your pets. And remember: It's very hard work, and the well-being of all the animals is in your hands.

Movie Animals as Pets

Animals that seem cute and cuddly in the movies may not be that way in real life. Which animals make great pets, and which ones are born to be wild?



Dalmatians were popular, or liked by many people, after the 1996 movie *101 Dalmatians*. In real life, many Dalmatians are nervous around kids.



Owls were bought as pets after the first Harry Potter movie. In real life, they need to be in the wild, so they do not make good pets.



Pug dogs became favorites after the *Men in Black II* movie came out. In real life, they are very good pets and love kids!

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Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

- Which of the following statements is not true?
 - Toys and treats are used to train animals.
 - Owls learn tricks very quickly.
 - Training animals is very hard work.
 - Rats can be trained to pick up small things.
- Which animal makes the best pet for young children?
 - owl
 - Dalmatian
 - snake
 - pug dog
- An **intelligent** animal is _____ .
 - fast
 - dumb
 - smart
 - well-trained
- How is this article different from most magazine articles?
 - It has photographs.
 - It is written using questions and answers.
 - It is much longer than most articles.
 - It is about real people and events.
- Which animal in the article is most interesting to you? _____
Underline the sentences that tell about that animal.

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Complete the chart using facts from the article.

ANIMAL	FACTS LEARNED
owl	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
rat	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Dalmatian	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
pug dog	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Write About It

Write 3 more questions you would like to ask animal trainer Gary Gero.

1. _____?
2. _____?
3. _____?