

Improving Your Reading with Rex Retriever: The Rats of Franchville



Newtown, or Franchville, as it was called in days of old, is a sleepy little town upon the Solent shore. Sleepy as it is now, it was once noisy enough. What made the noise? Rats. The place was so infested with them that it was scarcely worth living in.

There wasn't a barn, a storeroom or a cupboard that rats hadn't eaten their way into. There was not a wheel of cheese that they had not gnawed hollow, nor a bag of sugar they hadn't emptied. Even the wooden barrels of mead and beer were not safe from them; they'd gnaw a hole in the rim and lower themselves down while holding on to another rat's tail.



However, eating produce was not their worst trait. Between the squeaking and shrieking and the hurrying and scurrying, you could neither hear yourself speak nor get a wink of good honest sleep. Not to mention that mothers across the town had to keep watch over their baby's cradle all night long to prevent a big ugly rat from running across the poor little fellow's face and doing who knows what mischief.

1. What were residents of Newtown unable to do? Tick **two**.

- stand guard
- sleep and rest
- hear themselves speak
- leave the town

2. Give one historic name for the town of Newtown.

3. Give three reasons why residents of Newtown despised the rats. .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

Statement	True	False
Rats lowered themselves into barrels of oil.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mothers stayed up all night long to protect their babies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The rats would hollow out loaves of bread.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residents could not abide the shrieks and squeaks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

