

Is That How Cats Really Are?

Goal: Students will learn about general cat care and cat behavior.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Interpret cat behavior.
2. Investigate and identify the differences between cartoon, book, and film cat characters and real cats.
3. Compare and contrast qualities, traits, behavior, and basic information about cats using a Venn Diagram.

Grades: 3-5

Key Words: Domestication, Companion Animal, Guardian, Spay, Neuter, Stray, Veterinarian, Shelter, Venn Diagram

Standards: NCTE English Language Arts #1, & #4
NAEA Visual Arts #1

Materials: 1. Information and materials on basic cat care facts to share with students.
2. *Kitty I.Q.* -- A fun follow-up activity for your students

Procedure:

Real Cats

Ask students to describe the characteristics and behaviors of the cats they have seen-- especially ones they know well. List these characteristics and behaviors on the board. Next, ask the kids to consider why cats are the way they are. Break the class into small groups. Assign each group a characteristic/behavior from the class list and have them further research the qualities, traits, behavior, and basic information about cats. You may prefer to provide them with the information and resources. You may wish to have each group report their findings to the class.

Fictional Cats

Ask your students to name cat characters from cartoons, books, and film. List their responses on the board. Some examples are Simba (from *The Lion King*), the Cat in the Hat, Salem (from *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*), the Aristocats, and Garfield. Ask students to express opinions based on prior knowledge about how realistically each character is portrayed. You may wish to write the characteristics and behaviors of the fictional cats on the board next to the list of characteristics and behaviors of real cats. Using these lists, ask the students to create a compare-and-contrast chart or Venn diagrams that show how closely the fictional cat resemble real cats.

Comparing Real versus Fictional Cats

Have students use their research to write short reviews in which they critique the cartoon or film character. Alternatively, the students can create a poster by drawing a picture of the assigned character and describing how real cats behave. Students can discuss these questions: What human characteristics are given to the characters? Is that what cats are really like? Are there some human characteristics that are given to the cats most often? Why do you think the authors, etc. gave these human traits to their cat characters?

Give students the *Kitty I.Q.* handout as a fun follow-up activity.



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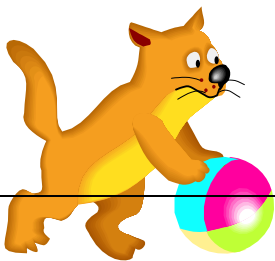
Discussion Questions:

Does learning *why* cats act the way they do change how you feel about cats? What are some things you will do differently for and around cats now that you understand them better? What are the basic needs of a cat? What factors do we need to consider when adopting a cat? Do kittens need more attention than older cats? What else should people think about before adopting a cat? Explain and review with students basic cat care needs such as food, shelter, toys, veterinary care, exercise, grooming, and love. In addition, discuss the cost of having a pet and the time and dedication needed for a happy and healthy pet.

Assessment:

1. Students can explain the difference between the behaviors of real and fictional cats.
3. Students can list the characteristics and behaviors of cats.

Kitty I.Q.



Can you name all of these famous cats? These purr-fect little kitties have become part of many homes through fairytales, stories, cartoons, and movies!

See how many of these questions you can answer. Measure your skills against your friends and find out who is the most media cat-savvy! So, get to it and test your Kitty I.Q.! See below for answers.

1. This cat's famous words are "Sufferin' Succotash."
2. What is the name of the bouncy tiger in *Winnie the Pooh*?
3. She is the famous feline burglar in *Batman's Gotham City*.
4. This first cat lived in the White House with former President Clinton and his family.
5. In *Alice in Wonderland*, when this cat disappears, his smile remains for a long time.
6. This cat grows up to be a king in the movie *The Lion King*.
7. This cat loves lasagna and loves to play jokes on his pal Odie.
8. What is the name of the cat in the *9Lives* cat food commercials?
9. On *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, who is the cat that talks to Sabrina?
10. In the movie *The Truth About Cats & Dogs*, who is the leader of all cats?

Bonus: What is the name of the first cat cartoon?

Scoring: Calculate your score giving yourself one point for each correct answer (see answers at the bottom of the page.)

1 to 3 correct: Not bad. A few more catnaps will put you on the map.

4 to 6 correct: Good job! You're the coolest cat this side of the litter box.

7 or 8 correct: Cat-tastic! You're paws and whiskers above the rest!

9 to 11 correct: You're the cat's meow!

Congratulations!

Now that you have successfully answered one...or all...of the questions, choose a famous cat from the questions above (or another one you can think of) and surf the net for more interesting information about your character.



1.Sylvester 2.Tigger; 3.Cat Woman 4.Socks 5.Cheshire Cat 6.Simba 7.Garfield 8.Morris 9.Salem 10.Mr. Tinkles BONUS: Felix the Cat