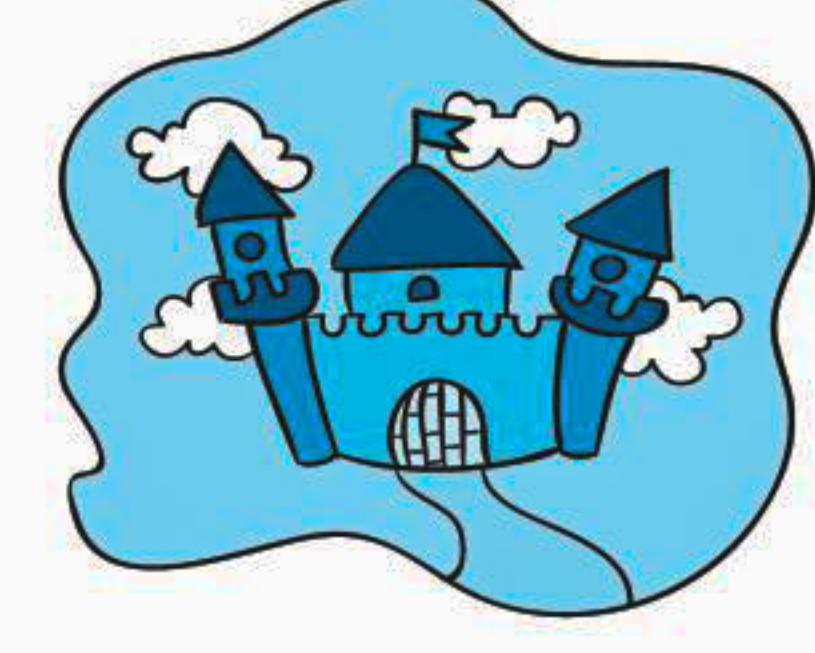# CATS ARE JUST AS CLEVER AS DOGS

For whatever reason, people assume dogs are more intelligent creatures than cats. This notion has been called into question by scientists in Japan, who have said that cats are as smart as dogs at certain memory tests. Cat lovers, of course, have always known this. Researchers at Kyoto University conducted tests on how well 49 cats could recall or relate to an event from the past – known as an episodic memory. The Japanese team got the felines to eat from one of two bowls. Fifteen minutes later, the cats were tested on their ability to remember which bowl they had eaten from and which remained untouched. The team found the cats could recall what they ate and where, suggesting they had episodic memory.

The scientists also said that cats were as good as dogs on a whole variety of mental tests, including responding to the gestures, facial expressions and emotions of humans. Researcher Saho Takagi told reporters that she believed cats think about past events similar to the way humans do. She said: "An interesting speculation is that they may enjoy actively recalling memories of their experience, like humans." She added: "Episodic memory is viewed as being related to an introspective function of the mind. Our study may imply a type of consciousness in cats." Ms Takagi said the research is good news for pet owners, saying: "Understanding cats more deeply helps to establish better cat-human relationships."

WARM-UPS

1. CATS: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about cats. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

reason / intelligent / creatures / memory tests / memory / felines / fifteen minutes / variety / gestures / facial expressions / emotions / consciousness / pet owners

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. INTELLIGENT: Students A strongly believe cats are more intelligent than dogs; Students B strongly believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. COMPARISON: Compare cats and dogs and how good they are at these things? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Cats are better because…	Dogs are better because…
Hunting		
Obeying humans		
Working		
Recognising people		
Helping people		
Being cute		

5. DOG: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "dog". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. PETS: Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- cat
- parrot
- hamster
- goldfish
- snake
- spider
- horse
- dog

BEFORE READING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

a. The article says people assume dogs are more intelligent than cats. T / F
b. Research into cat intelligence was done at a university in Japan. T / F
c. Cats ate from 15 bowls as part of a memory test. T / F
d. The cats could remember which bowl they ate from. T / F
e. Scientists said dogs were better at a whole variety of mental tests. T / F
f. Scientists said cats could not respond to facial gestures. T / F
g. A researcher said cats do not recall past memories like humans. T / F
h. The researcher said the research was good news for pet owners. T / F

GAP FILL

For (1) _____ reason, people assume dogs are more intelligent creatures than cats. This (2) _____ has been called into question by scientists in Japan, who have said that cats are as smart as dogs at (3) _____ memory tests. Cat lovers, of course, have always known this. Researchers at Kyoto University conducted tests on how well 49 cats could recall or (4) _____ to an event from the past – known as an episodic memory. The Japanese team got the (5) _____ to eat from one of two bowls. Fifteen minutes later, the cats were tested on their (6) _____ to remember which bowl they had eaten from and which remained (7) _____. The team found the cats could recall what they ate and where, suggesting they had (8) _____ memory.

The scientists also said that cats were as good as dogs on a (9) _____ variety of mental tests, (10) _____ responding to the gestures, facial expressions and (11) _____ of humans. Researcher Saho Takagi told reporters that she believed cats think about past events (12) _____ to the way humans do. She said: "An interesting speculation is that they may enjoy actively recalling memories of their experience, like humans." She added: "Episodic memory is viewed as being (13) _____ to an introspective function of the mind. Our study may imply a (14) _____ of consciousness in cats." Ms Takagi said the research is good (15) _____ for pet owners, saying: "Understanding cats more deeply helps to establish better cathuman (16) _____."

emotions
whole
news
related
including
relationships
similar
type

notion
ability
episodic
relate
whatever
untouched
felines
certain

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

1) What was called into question by scientists?
a) a potion   b) a notion   c) a motion   d) a lotion

2) At which university was this research conducted?
a) Kyushu   b) Tokyo   c) Tokai   d) Kyoto

3) How many bowls could the cats choose to eat from?
a) 128   b) 7   c) 2   d) 15

4) What was the interval between cats eating and then being tested?
a) 15 minutes   b) 16 minutes   c) 17 minutes   d) 18 minutes

5) What did the research suggest cats had?
a) food   b) an episodic memory   c) a big appetite   d) lots of fun

6) What kind of expressions did scientists say cats respond to?
a) facial expressions   b) fixed expressions   c) regular expressions   d) gene expressions

7) What might cats think about in a similar way to humans?
a) future plans   b) sleep   c) past events   d) dinner

8) What might the study imply exists in cats?
a) a type of consciousness   b) a big appetite   c) deep intelligence   d) a sense of humour

9) For whom did the article say the research was good news?
a) researchers   b) scientists   c) cats   d) pet owners

10) What kind of improved relationships could the research establish?
a) dog-researcher relationships
b) scientist-cat relationships
c) cat-human relationships
d) cat-dog relationships

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in bold are from the news article.

1. creatures
2. notion
3. certain
4. felines
5. remained
6. variety
7. emotions
8. speculation
9. viewed
10. establish

a. assortment
b. cats
c. seen
d. belief
e. feelings
f. start
g. specific
h. stayed
i. conjecture
j. animals

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

1. For whatever
2. This notion has been called
3. as smart as dogs at certain
4. cat
5. cats were tested on their ability
6. a whole variety
7. facial
8. think about past events similar to
9. the research is good news
10. establish better cat

a. way humans do
b. to remember
c. of mental tests
d. into question
e. for pet owners
f. reason
g. human relationships
h. memory tests
i. expressions
j. lovers

ROLEPLAY

Role A – Cats
You think cats make the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst pet of these (and why): goldfish, dogs or horses.

Role B – Goldfish
You think goldfish make the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst pet of these (and why): cats, dogs or horses.

Role C – Dogs
You think dogs make the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst pet of these (and why): goldfish, cats or horses.

Role D – Horses
You think horses make the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst pet of these (and why): goldfish, dogs or cats.

CATS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What springs to mind when you hear the word 'cat'?
3. What do you think of cats?
4. What do you think about what you read?
5. Do you think cats are as intelligent as dogs?
6. In what way are cats intelligent?
7. Why are cats so popular as pets?
8. What is your memory like?
9. What can you do to improve your memory?
10. What is the best name for a cat, and why?

CATS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'intelligence'?
13. What do you think of dogs?
14. In what way are dogs intelligent?
15. What things can you remember very well? Why?
16. How good are you at doing mental tests?
17. What past events do you like recalling?
18. What is the best name for a dog, and why?
19. How are relationships with cats different to those with dogs?
20. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

AFTER READING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words 'cat' and 'dog'.

cat	dog

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

- whatever
- question
- lovers
- event
- felines
- team
- whole
- facial
- actively
- mind
- good
- establish

CATS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about cats in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What was called into question by scientists?
2. At which university was this research conducted?
3. How many bowls could the cats choose to eat from?
4. What was the interval between cats eating and then being tested?
5. What did the research suggest cats had?
6. What kind of expressions did scientists say cats respond to?
7. What might cats think about in a similar way to humans?
8. What might the study imply exists in cats?
9. For whom did the article say the research was good news?
10. What kind of improved relationships could the research establish?

Find the answers in next MONDAY issue