

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

READING

Are Cat Brains Really Shrinking?

Vocabulary Preview

- Match the words on the left with the meanings on the right.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|
| 1. shrinking | <u>E</u> | A. a small wild cat that lives in mountains and forests |
| 2. measure | _____ | B. the process of making wild animals used to humans |
| 3. skull | _____ | C. threatening or violent behavior |
| 4. wildcat | _____ | D. the bones that surround the head and brain |
| 5. confirm | _____ | E. becoming smaller in size |
| 6. study (n.) | _____ | F. to show that something is true |
| 7. domestication | _____ | G. to find out the size of something |
| 8. aggression | _____ | H. a piece of research that examines something |

- Use the above words to complete the sentences. Change the forms of verbs and nouns when necessary.

1. Mark recently did a study on the effects of global warming.
2. I _____ my height yesterday. I am six feet tall.
3. Acts of _____ between countries often lead to war.
4. Our company isn't doing well. Its profits are _____.
5. The hotel called me to _____ my room booking for next Tuesday.
6. The _____ of many animals began thousands of years ago.
7. I saw a fossil of a dinosaur _____ in a museum last week.
8. One kind of _____ in North America is called a bobcat.

- Choose any two of the above words and write your own sentences.

1. _____
2. _____

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Topics: Cats / Animals and Birds

Are Cat Brains Really Shrinking?



It's true! Cat brains really are [redacted]¹! In the 1960s and 1970s, scientists [redacted]² the [redacted]³ and brains of modern house cats and compared them to the brains of [redacted]⁴ living in [redacted]. They discovered that the brains of house cats have been shrinking since they first began to live together with humans in the [redacted] 10,000 years ago. In January [redacted], an article in *The Royal Society Open Source* journal [redacted]⁵ this discovery in a new [redacted]⁶ done by a group of researchers in Vienna. The study compared the brain sizes of house cats to their wildcat relatives living not only in Europe, but also in Africa. The results were the same as the [redacted] study. The brains of house cats are about 25% smaller than their wild cousins. [redacted]s say this smaller brain size is caused by [redacted]n⁷, resulting in changes in the DNA of animals that have lived with humans for hundreds or even thousands of years. Smaller [redacted] size caused by domestication is not unusual, however. It is also seen in other animals such as sheep, rabbits, and dogs. This might mean that cats are becoming less intelligent ... or it might instead mean that other parts of the brain (related to [redacted] and [redacted]) are becoming smaller and less important. [redacted] cats are becoming less intelligent, because of shrinking brains, would [redacted] be an [redacted] question for future research.

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How Much Do You Understand?

- **Complete the statements.**

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The brains of house cats | A. brains than house cats |
| 2. Wildcats have bigger | B. than the brains of wildcats. |
| 3. Cats have lived | C. be less intelligent than before. |
| 4. Cats' brains are 25% smaller | D. animals' brains to shrink. |
| 5. Domestication causes | E. are becoming smaller |
| 6. It is possible that cats may | F. with humans for 10,000 years. |

Discuss

- **Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. Do you have a pet cat? If 'yes', what is its name? If 'no', would you like to have a pet cat? Why? / Why not?
2. Do you think house cats are less intelligent than wildcats? Why? / Why not?
3. Do you think house cats are smarter than dogs? Why? / Why not?

Write

- **Can you think of three other possible differences between house cats and wildcats?**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____