

Grades 6-8

Nova, "Cat Tales"

Worshiped as a goddess, condemned as satanic and spun into a stunning array of breeds, cats have long fascinated humans. But did we ever really domesticate them? (Any cat owner will tell you cats do whatever they heck they want.) And what can science tell us about our most mysterious companions?

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- What clues can you point to in the program to explain the author's purpose? What is the intent or purpose of the writer?
- Provide an objective summary of the program.
- What interaction influenced future events? Provide evidence.
- Why were cats worshipped as Goddesses?
- Are cats truly domesticated? What does this episode suggest? What evidence is provided?
- What does science tell us about domesticated cats?

Question Box 2

- What did/do you enjoy about this program?
- What is the one thing you particularly want people to notice when they watch this TV program?
- What were some of the most interesting parts to this program? Explain.
- Are there differences with different breeds of cats? What might be some of the differences? Why are some people attracted to one breed over another?
- Do you have a cat or know someone who does? What do you like or not like about cats? Explain.

Box 3 (Tasks)

- Statistics state that there are 86.4 million cats compared to 78.2 million dogs in the U.S. One third of households have at least one cat. 52% of those households have more than one cat. How would you convince a dog owner to own a cat? Just mathematics in your justification.
- People who have university degrees were 1.36 times more likely to own a cat than any other pet. Justify or refute that statement using mathematics.
- Research/discuss, with evidence, from which cat the modern house cat descended.

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Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Discuss with evidence, which animals were first domesticated by humans.
- Research a timeline of cat domestication by humans.
- Research how many breeds of cats are there in the world today.

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- Explore careers that work with animals. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/working-with-animals-coolest-jobs/> . Did any of these intrigue you? Explore that career further to determine if this is something that you might pursue.
- Social-Emotional Connection: We can practice mindfulness with animals and pets. Here are some things you can do to practice mindfulness with animals.
 - Observe an animal mindfully. What do they look like? What colors or patterns do they have on their skin, coat, or feathers?
 - Does this animal make vocalizations, or are they quiet? Can you hear any sounds as they move?
 - If it's safe/permitted to touch the animal, what do they feel like (i.e., soft, scaly, smooth, fluffy, silky)?
 - Look into the animal's eyes if you can. NOTE: Some animals consider staring a sign of aggression, so focus on looking at them kindly, smiling with your eyes, and blinking softly and slowly.
 - If you're doing an activity together (i.e., walking a dog, riding a horse), mindfully observe your physical bodies as you move. What can you notice about how you move together?