Cats are just as clever as dogs, says study

28th January, 2017

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."

Sources: *bbc.com / telegraph.co.uk / yahoo.com*

Writing

Cats are more intelligent than dogs. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

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

True / False

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

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**creatures**	a.	assortment
2.	**notion**	b.	cats
3.	**certain**	c.	seen
4.	**felines**	d.	belief
5.	**remained**	e.	feelings
6.	**variety**	f.	start
7.	**emotions**	g.	specific
8.	**speculation**	h.	stayed
9.	**viewed**	i.	conjecture
10.	**establish**	j.	animals

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think of dogs?

b) In what way are dogs intelligent?

c) What things can you remember very well? Why?

d) How good are you at doing mental tests?

e) What past events do you like recalling?

f) What is the best name for a dog, and why?

g) How are relationships with cats different to those with dogs?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

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 the
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

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think of cats?
b) What do you think about what you read?
c) Do you think cats are as intelligent as dogs?
d) In what way are cats intelligent?
e) Why are cats so popular as pets?
f) What is your memory like?
g) What can you do to improve your memory?
h) What is the best name for a cat, and why?

Spelling

1. people aeumss dogs are more
2. intelligent racuseert
3. arencit memory tests
4. decudtnco tests
5. got the nleeifs to eat
6. suggesting they had eisodpic memory.
7. a whole aivyetr of mental tests
8. responding to the geusrste
9. lafaci expressions
10. interesting teasonpcilu
11. related to an itpisneotrecv function
12. a type of noeisuosccnss in cats

Role Play

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.

Speaking – Pets

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

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

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. d	3. g	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. e	8. i	9. c	10. f

Answers – True False

a T	b T	c F	d T	e F	f F	g F	h T

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.