

Newsflash: Hello Kitty is a girl, not a cat

31st August, 2014



The creators of one of the world's most widely-recognised cartoon characters have set the record straight. Japanese toymaker Sanrio have declared that its iconic creation Hello Kitty is not a

cat. The bombshell came to light following publicity for an upcoming exhibition on the character at the Japanese American National Museum. The curator of the exhibition, anthropologist Christine R Yano, said she received a mail from Sanrio correcting her script for the show. Ms Yano confirmed that: "Hello Kitty is not a cat. She is a little girl. She is a friend....She's never depicted on all fours. She walks and sits like a two-legged creature." The Sanrio website states Kitty is "a bright little girl with a heart of gold".

Hello Kitty has taken the world by storm since its introduction in 1974. It has become ubiquitous worldwide, adorning everything from chopsticks to airplanes. The Japanese carmaker Daihatsu even sold a specially branded Hello Kitty car. It had Kitty-emblazoned upholstery, a speedometer with the character's face etched into the glass and a Kitty-shaped gear stick. The creators designed the character's face to epitomise cuteness. Sanrio account for her lack of a mouth, saying she doesn't have one because she speaks with her heart. Social media has been abuzz with the revelation that Kitty is a girl. Rapper Mike Shinoda tweeted: "This is worse than finding out Pluto is not a planet."

Sources: *Washington Post* / *CNN* / *New York Post*

Writing

Hello Kitty is not a cat. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cartoon characters / set the record straight / iconic / exhibition / bright / heart of gold / ubiquitous / chopsticks / upholstery / gear stick / cuteness / social media / revelation

True / False

- A Japanese toymaker has told the truth about Hello Kitty. T / F
- The toymaker set the record straight for an upcoming exhibition. T / F
- An archeologist is curating an exhibition on Hello Kitty. T / F
- Hello Kitty is often seen walking like a cat, on all fours. T / F
- The Hello Kitty character began 40 years ago. T / F
- A Japanese carmaker sold a Hello Kitty edition car. T / F
- Hello Kitty's mouth is heart shaped. T / F
- Hello Kitty was based on the Disney character Pluto. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. creators | a. portrayed |
| 2. declared | b. decorating |
| 3. came to light | c. intelligent |
| 4. depicted | d. everywhere |
| 5. bright | e. disclosure |
| 6. ubiquitous | f. engraved |
| 7. adorning | g. originators |
| 8. etched | h. embody |
| 9. epitomise | i. emerged |
| 10. revelation | j. announced |

Discussion – Student A

- Why do adults like cartoon characters?
- Do you buy anything adorned with cartoon characters?
- What do you think of the idea of a Hello Kitty branded car?
- What is the world's cutest cartoon character?
- What makes a character cute?
- Should there be more scary characters?
- Is finding out that Hello Kitty is not a cat worse than discovering Pluto is not a planet?
- What questions would you like to ask Sanrio's boss?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- the world's most widely-
- its iconic
- publicity for an upcoming
- She's never depicted on
- a bright little girl
- Hello Kitty has taken the world
- It has become
- a specially branded
- epitomise
- Social media has been abuzz
- ubiquitous
- with a heart of gold
- cuteness
- recognised cartoon
- by storm
- all fours
- Hello Kitty car
- creation
- with the revelation
- exhibition

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about Hello Kitty?
- Is there anything wrong about cartoon characters?
- Who is your favourite cartoon character?
- Why do you think Hello Kitty became so iconic?
- Would you like to see an exhibition on Hello Kitty?
- Are Disney characters the best?
- What do you think of goods branded with cartoons?
- This is a widely reported story. Why is it news?

Spelling

- widely-iodnesregc (UK) / erigcdnzoe (USA)
- its iconic tirnaceo
- The hbosmlle came to light
- an upcoming oiiintbexh
- She's never eedpdcit on all fours
- sits like a two-legged euarctre
- It has become jobsutiquu worldwide
- gndnoari everything
- It had Kitty-enmbezolda upholstery,
- ctehed into the glass
- oteepmiis (UK) / pmztoeeii (USA) cuteness
- media has been abuzz with the avnlotieer

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Hello Kitty

You think Hello Kitty is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their characters. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Minnie Mouse, Wonder Woman or Bubbles from the Powerpuff Girls.

Role B – Minnie Mouse

You think Minnie Mouse is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their characters. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Hello Kitty, Wonder Woman or Bubbles from the Powerpuff Girls.

Role C – Wonder Woman

You think Wonder Woman is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their characters. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Minnie Mouse, Hello Kitty or Bubbles from the Powerpuff Girls.

Role D – Bubbles (Powerpuff Girls)

You think Bubbles from the Powerpuff Girls is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their characters. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Minnie Mouse, Wonder Woman or Hello Kitty.

Speaking – Cartoons

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

- Hello Kitty
- Popeye
- Tintin
- The Simpsons
- Pokemon
- Spiderman
- Tom and Jerry
- Pink Panther

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.