

Research shows dogs used to more like cats

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via David Schiersner on flickr.com

New research suggests that climate change helped dogs develop from creatures resembling cats to the way they are today. Researchers from Brown University

in the USA believe that 40 million years ago, dogs were smaller and hunted like cats. They hid, stalked and ambushed their prey. As climate change transformed Earth's landscape, the physique and food-gathering habits of dogs changed. Thick forests that once covered the North American continent started to become less dense as the planet became cooler. The emergence of grassland meant dogs had fewer places to hide to ambush their victims. To adapt, they evolved their hunting styles and slowly grew longer legs.

The scientists analysed how dogs have evolved by looking at the elbows and teeth of 32 different species that lived between two million to 40 million years ago. The researchers said that the dogs' elbow in particular were good indicators of evolutionary change. Dogs from 40 million years ago had elbows that were more similar to those of cats. Their function was to allow the front paws to swivel so they could grab and hold onto prey. Those elbows changed in dogs to allow them to become endurance runners and thus be able to pursue their prey over long distances. Teeth in dogs also altered to be more efficient. They became more hard-wearing to be able to hold on to prey.

Sources: *Irish Examiner.com / Daily Mail / Press Examiner*

Writing

Cats are better than dogs. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

research / develop / million / prey / landscape / habits / continent / planet / cooler / analysed / elbows / species / evolutionary / change / function / long distances / teeth

True / False

- Research says climate change affected the development of dogs. T / F
- Forty million years ago dogs were more like cats. T / F
- Dogs changed because more forests developed on Earth. T / F
- Dogs grew longer legs so they could hunt. T / F
- Scientists looked at the teeth of 32 million dogs. T / F
- Dogs from the past had elbows similar to cats' elbows. T / F
- The changes in dogs' legs meant they could not run as far. T / F
- Dogs' teeth became softer. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. suggests | a. lay in wait for |
| 2. develop | b. especially |
| 3. ambushed | c. rotate |
| 4. dense | d. evolve |
| 5. emergence | e. examined |
| 6. analysed | f. purpose |
| 7. in particular | g. indicates |
| 8. function | h. changed |
| 9. swivel | i. arrival |
| 10. altered | j. thick |

Discussion – Student A

- Which are better- dogs or cats? Why?
- How useful are dogs?
- What do you think about what you read?
- How has climate change transformed other animals?
- What effect has climate change had on humans?
- How do you think humans will be different in a million years from now?
- What is the best kind of dog?
- How do dogs hunt?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. climate change helped dogs | a. ambush their victims |
| 2. creatures resembling | b. paws |
| 3. dogs were smaller and | c. dogs have evolved |
| 4. the planet became | d. develop |
| 5. dogs had fewer places to hide to | e. species |
| 6. The scientists analysed how | f. cooler |
| 7. 32 different | g. change |
| 8. indicators of evolutionary | h. cats |
| 9. front | i. wearing |
| 10. They became more hard- | j. hunted like cats |

Discussion – Student B

- Why do many people keep dogs as pets?
- What are the bad things about dogs?
- What does the phrase, 'It's a dog's life' mean? Is it true?
- How did humans use to hunt?
- Will keeping dogs as pets change their physique?
- People say dogs are a man's best friend. Why?
- How will global warming change other species from now?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- asceuerrrt resembling cats
- They hid, kldeetsa and ambushed their prey
- the hugpeiys and food-gathering habits
- the North American tnntiocen
- The reenmgeec of grassland
- they veelvod their hunting styles
- 32 different pesisce
- good indicators of nrotyluaovie change
- allow the front paws to iselwv
- become aeercudnn runners
- uesrpu their prey over long distances
- altered to be more ficieetfn

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Dogs

You think dogs are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't so interesting. Also, tell the others which is the most boring of these (and why): elephants, mice or snakes.

Role B – Elephants

You think elephants are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't so interesting. Also, tell the others which is the most boring of these (and why): dogs, mice or snakes.

Role C – Mice

You think mice are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't so interesting. Also, tell the others which is the most boring of these (and why): elephants, dogs or snakes.

Role D – Snakes

You think snakes are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't so interesting. Also, tell the others which is the most boring of these (and why): elephants, mice or dogs.

Speaking – Animals

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

- | | |
|---------|------------|
| • cat | • dog |
| • koala | • elephant |
| • mouse | • bear |
| • cow | • snake |

Answers – True False

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