



## Cat Communication - What is your cat trying to tell you?

### Fact

- Cats have lots of different ways of communicating with you and other cats.
- Kittens are born blind and deaf, they don't develop their sight and hearing for a while, so they need some way of communicating with their mother. Scientists believe the mother cat purrs so the kitten can feel the vibration, and can find its way to milk, warmth and protection. The kitten learns to purr back to let its mother know that it's getting everything it needs.
- Meowing is used when a cat wants something. Most cats will meow when they want something to eat!
- Hissing is a sound the cat makes as a warning defence system.
- When a cat's tail is flicking back and forth quite forcefully the cat's usually angry. If the cat's tail is relaxed, then usually the cat is too. But if a cat is flat against the ground and it's tail is twitching back and forth along the ground, it's getting ready to pounce.

### Do you know

- Scientists believe that a cat's purring comes from blood vibrating as it passes through a large vein in the cat's chest.
- Before cats became pets they lived in the desert and they'd bury their poos in the sand to cover their tracks from potential predators so the predators couldn't follow the little trail of poos and catch the cat! Most cats still bury their poo.
- Cats lick themselves to keep clean and in wintertime licking smoothes the fur down which traps air to keep the cat warm. In summer licking works a bit like human's sweating. The saliva evaporates off the fur and helps to keep the cat cool. But a very important reason why cats lick themselves is that sunlight causes cats fur to produce Vitamin D which cats need to stay healthy
- Some scientists think that cats see humans as belonging to them, so they bring in dead mice and birds to teach you how to hunt for yourself.
- When a cat rubs their head against you, they're marking you as their territory. Cats have special glands on their forehead and chin, that produce a chemical called a pheromone and it lets other cats know that you belong to them.

### Experiments you can do

Watch your own cat or a friend's cat. Can you tell how he or she is feeling? Is it feeling relaxed, angry or maybe scared? What's the cat's tail doing?

### Other Investigations

Next time you go to the Zoo, or see "big" cats on the television, watch them to see if their actions are similar to small cats. One action that you might recognize is sleeping. Cats do a lot of sleeping!

### Jokes

What do you call a cat that likes lemons? A sourpuss

What do you call a cat that joins the Red Cross? A first-aid kit