

Is Your Cat Talking To You?

If you have a cat at home, you may have noticed that she has many ways of trying to get your attention. Do you understand what your cat is trying to say to you? Cats communicate with their tails, their eyes, their ears, and even by the way they walk. Of course, they also meow when they want to talk to people. In fact, did you know that cats only meow as a way of communicating with humans? It's true! Before cats started living with people as pets, they had no need to meow. Meowing is a sound that came about after cats started living with humans. If you have more than one cat, you will probably also hear them meow at each other once in a while. Since all pet cats speak this language for talking to humans, they might as well use it with each other, right?

If your cat's meows are short and high-pitched, he is having a pleasant conversation with you. It's like saying, "Hey. What's up?" If you don't pay attention, you may notice that the meows get lower and more drawn out. Now he is saying, "Hey! Listen to me!" Meows are not the only sounds that cats make. When your cat is angry or threatened, he may hiss or growl. When he is happy or trying to calm himself down, he will purr.

Cats also communicate without making sounds at all. When your cat rubs his head against your leg, he is saying, "You are mine!" Cats have scent glands on their chin that they use to mark their territory. They do this by leaving their scent, which only other cats can smell, on the object (in this case you) that they want to claim. They also have scent glands on their paws that they use for the same thing. So if you see your cat pawing at the floor around her food dish, again, she is saying, "This is mine!"

The way a cat holds her ears or tail can also tell you what she is thinking or feeling. If her ears or tail are straight up, she is in a playful mood. Flat ears means she is curious. If her ears are down, held back or her tail is big and bushy, she is upset about something. If her tail is twitching, she probably wants you to leave her alone.

Cats also communicate with their eyes. If you see your cat wink or blink at you, she is saying, "I love you." If she is staring at you, she may want you to leave her alone. If her pupils are slits instead of big and round, she is just hanging out waiting to see what will happen next. This may be a good time to find her favorite toy and play awhile!

Is Your Cat Talking To You? Questions

1. Cats communicate with
 - a. their ears.
 - b. their tails.
 - c. their eyes.
 - d. All of these

2. Which sound did pet cats start making as a way to communicate with people?
 - a. purr
 - b. hiss
 - c. meow
 - d. All of these

3. When a cat is angry, he will most likely
 - a. purr.
 - b. hiss.
 - c. meow.
 - d. paw at the ground.

4. When a cat is happy, she may
 - a. purr.
 - b. stare at you.
 - c. meow in a low, drawn out voice.
 - d. None of these

5. When your cat rubs his head against your leg, what is he saying/asking?
 - a. Leave me alone.
 - b. What are you doing?
 - c. What time is dinner?
 - d. You are mine.

Is Your Cat Talking To You? Questions (Cont'd)

6. Cats purr
 - a. when they are sad and when they are happy.
 - b. when they are happy and when they want to calm themselves down.
 - c. when they are tired and when they want to calm themselves down.
 - d. only when they feel safe.

7. When a cat is feeling playful, he may
 - a. hold his ears and tail up.
 - b. hold his ears and tail straight back.
 - c. hold his ears down and twitch his tail.
 - d. hold his ears straight back and his tail up.

8. What does it mean when a cat has a bushy tail?
 - a. She is angry.
 - b. She is feeling very playful.
 - c. She is hungry.
 - d. None of these

9. If your cat winks or blinks at you, what is she probably trying to say?
 - a. I am hungry!
 - b. There is something in my eye!
 - c. I love you!
 - d. You can't fool me!

10. What is one way your cat might be telling you to leave her alone?
 - a. She paws at the floor.
 - b. She twitches her tail.
 - c. The pupils in her eyes look like slits.
 - d. She purrs.

Name _____

Date _____

Is Your Cat Talking To You? Answers

1. d
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. d
6. b
7. a
8. a
9. c
10. b