

Ask®

Purr-fect Felines

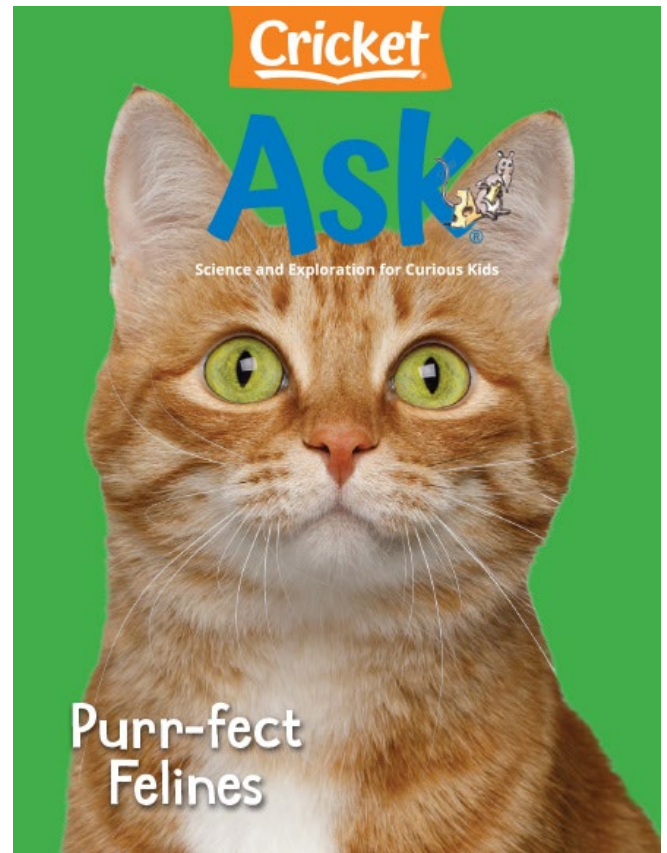
American writer Ernest Hemingway once said, “A cat has absolute emotional honesty: human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not.” Scratch the surface with this month’s issue of ASK magazine. The issue explores the domestication and natural instincts of our feline friends, as well as the desperate predicament of tigers in the wild.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What are the characteristics of wild and domesticated cats?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how wild cats became domesticated.
- Students will learn about the physical features of cats.
- Students will learn about the plight of tigers in the wild.
- Students will collect evidence to support a claim.
- Students will examine structure and function.
- Students will construct explanations.
- Students will represent a large number in different forms.
- Students will classify animals according to behaviors.
- Students will identify cause and effect relationships.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core STEAM skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

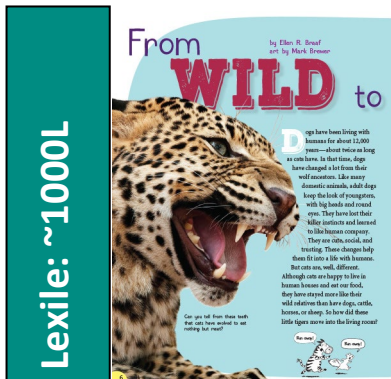
SELECTIONS

- **From Wild to Mild**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1000L
- **Born to Hunt**
Expository Nonfiction/Infographic, ~1010L
- **Saving the Tigers**
Expository Nonfiction, ~990L

From Wild to Mild

pp. 6–12, Expository Nonfiction

Although domesticated dogs have lost their killer instincts and have learned to enjoy human companionship, cats remain more independent like their wild relatives. This article details the journey from wild cat to housecat.



RESOURCES

Collect Evidence: Catty Comments

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how wild cats became domesticated.
- Students will collect evidence to support a claim.
- Students will represent a large number in different forms.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **slosh** (p. 7) to move with a splashing motion through water, mud, or slush
- **pesky** (p. 9) annoying
- **cunning** (p. 12) very good or very clever at using special knowledge or skills in a sly manner

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What are the characteristics of wild and domesticated cats?

Lead students in a game of “20 Questions” in which they will try to guess the topic of the article (cats). In this game, the players are allowed to ask yes/no questions one by one in order to unravel the mystery. Instead of calling out answers, have students write their guess on a piece of paper after each question. At the end of the 20 questions, did all students have the word, *cat*, written? Pose the following question: *What is the difference between a domesticated cat and a wild cat?*

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and review the three vocabulary words and definitions. Allow students to roll a die for vocabulary activities for each word.

- 1 = Use the word in a sentence.
- 2 = Draw a picture that demonstrates the word.
- 3 = List 2 antonyms for the word.
- 4 = List 2 synonyms for the word.
- 5 = Break the word into syllables and list the part of speech.
- 6 = Make a connection between the word and your life, a book, or a movie.

READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the concepts presented in the article by using the following questions to direct discussion.

1. In what ways do cats still largely resemble their wild relatives?
2. How are cats adaptable?
3. List three reasons that ancient civilizations may have wanted cats around.
4. Why did cats start to regain their popularity toward the end of the middle ages?
5. Why do feral cats pose a big problem?

SKILL FOCUS: Collect Evidence

INSTRUCT: This article presents the reader with detailed information about a cat’s evolution from wild to domestic. Instruct students to review the article and highlight sentences that provide evidence to support each of the claims listed on the *Catty Comments* organizer. They will record and cite the information with details.

ASSESS: Have students peer-review their work by sharing completed worksheets with another student. Circulate and guide as they discuss.

EXTEND

Mathematics: Read aloud this sentence from page 12: “Scientists estimate that today there are more than 220 million pet cats, making them one of the most popular pets in the world...” Have students analyze the number 220 million and then represent the number in the following forms: standard, word, expanded, exponential, and on a place-value chart. (Review different number forms, if necessary.)

Catty Comments

Collect Evidence: Gather evidence from the article to support each claim listed below. Include details and cite your findings by using page numbers.

Claim: Felids—as scientists call members of the cat family—are very adaptable.

Supporting evidence (p. _____)

Claim: Cats big and small are part of a loose cat society.

Supporting evidence (p. _____)

Claim: As time passed, the cat's importance in Egyptian religion and culture grew.

Supporting evidence (p. _____)

Feline Features

Structure and Function: Gather information from the photographs and words in the article to explain the function of each part of a cat's body. Use pictures and words to record your answers. Include details.

Physical Feature	Show/use pictures What does it look like?	Tell/use words What does it do?
whiskers		
teeth		
foot pads		
spine		

Saving the Tigers

pp. 20–25, Expository Nonfiction

Tigers are the largest cat species in the world, and unfortunately also one of the most endangered. This article explores the current predicament, as well as possible solutions for saving this majestic animal.



RESOURCES

Problem and Solution: Tiger Time

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the plight of tigers in the wild.
- Students will construct explanations.
- Students will identify cause and effect relationships.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **unsuspecting** (p. 21) not aware of the presence of danger
- **forbid** (p. 22) refuse to allow
- **conservationists** (p. 24) people who work to protect animals, plants, and natural resources or to protect the loss or waste of natural resources

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What are the characteristics of wild and domesticated cats?

Activate prior knowledge by taking a poll. Pose the following question: *Which has more tigers—zoos or the wild?* Allow students to discuss among themselves and have them vote in the poll. Then reveal the answer: There are more tigers in captivity than in the wild. Invite students to share their thoughts on this sad fact. Present the article, “Saving the Tigers” and tell them that the article explores why tigers are disappearing and how people are trying to save them.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary terms. Review how to infer the meanings of new words by using context clues and background knowledge. Then have partners work together to determine the meaning of each word. Reveal definitions.

- The ring of thieves targets unsuspecting tourists.
- Environmental laws forbid littering.
- The conservationists made plans to relocate the endangered cubs.

READ & DISCUSS

As a post-reading activity, lead a discussion based on the following questions.

1. How does a tiger kill its prey?
2. Why have humans hunted tigers?
3. How do poachers make money by killing tigers?
4. What are the two things that a tiger cannot live without?
5. How is the Indian government using Dr. Ullas Karanth’s findings?

SKILL FOCUS: Construct Explanations

INSTRUCT: Advise students to review the article focusing on WHY tigers are losing their homes and HOW science is helping. Distribute the graphic organizer, *Tiger Time*, and tell the class that they will use information from the article to complete the worksheet independently.

ASSESS: Review the chart. Give students the opportunity to visit the World Wildlife Foundation (p. 25) to learn more about the plight of endangered tigers (www.worldwildlife.org/species/tiger). Challenge students to organize an event to raise funds for a one-time donation.

EXTEND

Analytical Thinking: Remind students that a “cause and effect” relationship is one in which one event makes another event or series of events happen. It has been proven that people that can identify interrelated causes and effects of events in any field are more successful at solving problems in real life. Have students revisit the article (or the entire February issue) to identify causes and effects. See example below.

Cause: Humans are destroying tiger habitats through deforestation.
Effect: The number of wild tigers is quickly dwindling.

Tiger Time

Constructing Explanations: Read the statements in the ovals. Use information from the article to explain the WHY and HOW of each statement by listing reasons and details.

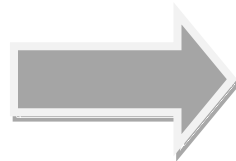
Statement:
Tigers are losing their homes.



WHY?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Statement:
Science provides the best tools for saving these endangered cats.



HOW?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.