

# TEACHERS ACTIVITIES



## Theme:

Pets and people can have very special relationships, but they have to work at it.

## Topics For Discussion:

Discuss with students why Dolores behaved the way she did when Duncan first became her pet. What was she doing wrong? Why did the situation improve between Duncan and Dolores when she began to ignore him?

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Faye tried to help Dolores become friends with Duncan by giving her advice. Invite students to share the advantages and disadvantages of having older brothers and sisters. Also discuss ways in which they have been helpful as older brothers and sisters to their younger siblings.

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Discuss the differences between animals as pets and wild animals. How do people behave differently around wild and domesticated animals and why is it important to do so?

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Compare the way the trainers in the program played with the tigers to the way the students play with their pets.

## Curriculum Extension Activities:

Brainstorm words that describe a cat. Encourage students to think about behaviors of cats in addition to the way they look and feel. Write the words on a large cutout of a cat and display the chart in the classroom so that students may add to it and use the words in stories and poems they write.

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Revisit the chart of cat words and focus on the words that suggest behaviors and movements. Take the students to an area large enough for them to move around and pantomime the different actions.

Invite cat experts into the classroom to talk with students about cats. Someone who raises or shows cats might bring in some cats and talk to students about the differences among breeds and special needs and characteristics of cats. A veterinarian might talk with students about the appropriate care of a cat.

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Obtain face paint and enlist the aid of some parent volunteers to paint a variety of cat faces on the students. Have students act out cat stories and/or poems wearing their cat faces or masks (see activity below).

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Make cat masks. Paper plates tied around the head with covered elastic thread or grocery sacks that slip over the head make good bases for the masks. Facial features can be drawn or made from construction paper, pipe cleaners, yarn, felt, and other materials.

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Make cat collages. Have students search magazines and catalogues for pictures of all types of cats (wild and domesticated) in a variety of situations, cut them out, and glue them onto an outline of a cat cut from tagboard. Display the collages in the classroom.

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Have students research members of the cat family to find "Amazing Cat Facts." Display the facts they find in a series of mobiles. For example, have students make pictures of a tiger, cheetah, lion, etc., and suspend facts about those animals from the pictures. Hang the mobiles in the classroom.

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Have students conduct a survey of favorite types of cats. Record the results of the survey in a graph. Make the graph a pictograph by using student-made thumbprint cats. (An inked stamp pad works well for the thumbprints. Students can add features with a felt-tip pen.)

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Have students make a Big Book with alternating pages about a cat and a tiger. Use the sentence frames, "A cat can \_\_\_\_\_," (turn the page) "but a tiger can \_\_\_\_\_." Have them illustrate the sentences and bind the pages into a book.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

CHARLIE ANDERSON

by Barbara Abercrombie, illus. by Mark Graham (McElderry)

MY CAT MAISIE

by Pamela Allen (Viking)

CATS

by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House)

TIGER, TIGER, GROWING UP...

by Joan Hewett, photos by Richard Hewett (Clarion)

NUGGET & DARLING

by Barbara M. Joose, illus. by Sue Truesdell (Clarion)

A ROSE FOR PINKERTON

by Steven Kellogg (Dial)

GRANDMA'S CAT

by Helen Kettelman, illus. by Marsha Lynn Winborn (Houghton Mifflin)

CATS ARE CATS

by Nancy Larrick, illus. by Ed Young (Philomel)

THREE STORIES YOU CAN READ TO YOUR CAT

by Sara Swan Miller, illus. by True Kelley (Houghton Mifflin)

KITTEN CARE AND CRITTERS, TOO!

by Judy Petersen-Fleming & Bill Fleming, photos by Debra Reingold-Reiss (Tambourine)

YOUR CAT'S WILD COUSINS

by Hope Ryden (Lodestar)

**BIG CATS**  
by Seymour Simon (HarperCollins)

**GINGER**  
by Charlotte Voake (Candlewick)

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P.O. Box 80669  
Lincoln, NE 68501-0669  
Phone: 800-228-4630  
Fax: 800-306-2330  
Email: [gpn@unl.edu](mailto:gpn@unl.edu)  
Web site: [gpn.unl.edu](http://gpn.unl.edu)

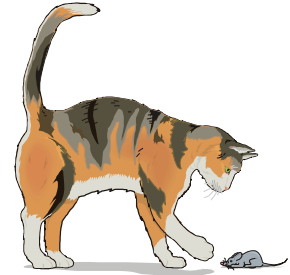
# Binocular Vision



**Key Words:** cats, field of vision, binocular vision

**Concept:** Cats and people have binocular vision.

Cats, big and small, have a kind of vision called binocular vision. Animals with binocular vision have eyes that are close together in the front of their face and can judge distances very well. For instance, an animal with binocular vision can tell the distance to a mouse it is trying to catch for dinner. However because of the placement of their eyes, they cannot see what is behind them or beside them very well.



Some animals that do not have binocular vision, like mice, have eyes on the sides of their head. They cannot judge distances as well, but they have a different advantage. They can see what is in front of them, beside them, and almost behind them—like a cat jumping at them from behind a bush.

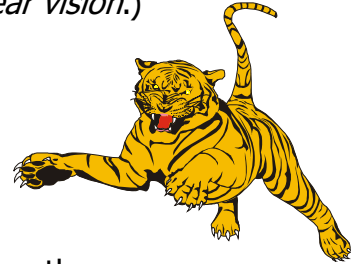
**Materials:** pencil, photograph or small picture, tape.

1. Show students the illustration of a cat's binocular vision that works well for judging distances and the contrasting vision of a mouse that has a wider range of vision. Tell students that in this activity they will learn if they have binocular vision.
2. Tape a photograph on a wall at eye-level. Stand directly in front of the photograph and about 3 feet away.
3. Hold a pencil vertically in your right hand. Move your right arm so the pencil is at eye level and as far behind your shoulder as you can hold it. You should not be able to see the pencil without turning your head to look at it.
4. Look straight ahead at the photograph and slowly move your right arm forward until you can first see the pencil out of the "corner of your eye." Try to keep the pencil at eye level. The hardest part about this is keeping your eyes facing forward. If you move your eyes or your head to look at the pencil, start over. Once you can see the pencil while still looking forward, hold the pencil still and then turn just your head to see where it is. It will likely be at or in front of your shoulder. This is the edge of your field of vision. Try the same thing using your left arm. Is your field of vision the same on both sides? (*It is usually about the same.*)

5. Ask students the following questions:

- Is their vision like that of a cat, binocular vision, or is it like the vision of a mouse? (*A cat's.*)
- How do they know? (*Because we have limited vision of what is beside and behind us without turning our heads. We can also judge distances well.*)
- Would people be safer drivers if they had eyes on the sides of their head like a mouse? (*People would have trouble judging distance, but they would have better side and rear vision.*)

## Walking A Line



**Key Words:** cats, balance, center of gravity

**Concept:** Cats use their tails to help them keep their balance as they move.

As the tiger in this episode playfully chased his trainer, the tiger's tail swung from side to side. When tigers and other cats are running or jumping they use their long tails to help them balance. We don't have a tail but we often use our arms in much the same way.

**Materials:** Yardstick, tape.

1. Tape a yardstick down on the floor.

2. Ask students to quickly walk along the yardstick trying not to fall off. Then ask the students to try again, but this time ask them to hold their arms and hands down and against the sides of their bodies. Students may find this very difficult. Ask the students why it was easier to walk along the stick using their arms and hands held out. Help them to understand that they use their hands and arms to balance.

3. Walk along the yardstick and demonstrate for the students how our arms help us to balance. Show them that if you start to fall to one side, you raise an arm, or even a leg, on the other side. This moves your center of gravity back over the yardstick and helps you to straighten back up.

4. Ask students how cats like tigers, lions, and cheetahs, keep their balance. Explain that when they are chasing an animal, they must run very fast and make quick turns, yet they do not have an arm to hold out to help them keep their balance. Students may guess that they use their tails or you may need to tell them. If possible show the clip in the show where the tigers at Tiger Island are playing with and chasing the trainer. Help the children to note how the tigers use their tails. When the tigers are walking their tails are usually down and relaxed but when they are running or jumping their tail are out moving from side to side, helping them to keep their balance.

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P.O. Box 80669  
Lincoln, NE 68501-0669  
Phone: 800-228-4630  
Fax: 800-306-2330  
Email: [gpn@unl.edu](mailto:gpn@unl.edu)  
Web site: [gpn.unl.edu](http://gpn.unl.edu)