

Teaching News Is Elementary January 8, 2016

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times e-Edition, pencil and paper.

Article: “Study: Tortie cats’ ‘tude is not your imagination”

Pages: NW Monday, B4

Date: Monday, January 4, 2016

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Look at the title and image on page B4. What is a tortie cat? What is a ‘tude? What do you think about the cat’s expression in the photograph? Would you want a cat with that kind of coloring? Why or why not?

Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it’s used in the sentence:

“So your calico has “catitude?” Your tortie is **temperamental**?”

(likely to become upset or angry or unpredictable in behavior or performance)

“Calicoes and torties have reputations for being **feisty** and unpredictable, characteristics that the study appears to confirm.”

(not afraid to fight or argue: very lively and aggressive)

(discarded: thrown away because something is useless or unwanted)

“She said the research suggests that the same genetics that **dictate** coat color may play a role in aggression, but that more study needs to be done to explore that theory.”

(to make (something) necessary)

Journal Writing Prompts:

“Aggression in cats, Stelow noted, rarely is violent. “It’s very different from dogs. Dogs show a very, very wide range from not aggressive at all to capable of killing. The overwhelming majority of cats are not the least aggressive,” and those that are usually display it in “very subtle ways,” she said.”

Think about the dogs and cats of different coloring you have met or have had as pets. What differences have you observed in the behavior between dogs and cats? What about among dogs and cats? What breed or coat coloring have you found to be the most aggressive and the friendliest among dogs and/or cats?

Discussion Questions:

Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:

“Calicoes and torties have reputations for being feisty and unpredictable, characteristics that the study appears to confirm. Calicoes are mostly white with patches of orange and black. . . .

‘They’re fiery,’ said Front Street animal shelter manager Gina Knepp. ‘They’ve got a little spirit and zip to them. If you want a cat that will keep you on your toes, a calico or tortie is the way to go.’”

Which type of cat would you most like to own? Would you want a cat that keeps you on your toes? Why or why not? Which type of cat would you most like to visit and play with? Is there a difference? What other animals with certain types of colorings have reputations or evidence of behavior patterns? What animal’s behavior would you like to learn more about? Why?

Small group discussion and activity:

“The study is believed to be the first to look at specific behaviors related to coat coloring. Although it had some limitations, including the fact that researchers relied on the observations of cat owners and never observed the felines in question, the research offers insights that warrant further investigation, said Stelow.”

Review the article to understand the behavioral differences between calico, tortoiseshell, black, gray and white cats. Make a chart which lists their differences using both adjectives from the article and your own. Write a summary paragraph describing the range of behaviors. Confirm your results with your classmates.