

READING CHALLENGE

Why Do Cats Sleep So Much?

Your cat is not lazy — there is a reason!

Level	A1 (Beginner)
Age Group	Teens (11-16)
Topic	Animals & Nature
Duration	~12 minutes
Skill	Reading

Do you have a cat? Then you know this: cats **sleep** a LOT. Your cat sleeps on the sofa. It sleeps on your bed. It sleeps on your homework. It sleeps in a box. Cats **sleep** everywhere! Most cats **sleep** 12 to 16 hours every day. That is more than half the day. But why? Is your cat just lazy? No! There is a very good reason. Let us find out.

Cats Are Hunters

Your cat lives in your house. You give it food every day. It does not need to find food. But cats were not always pets. Thousands of years ago, all cats were **wild**. They lived outside. They had to **hunt** for their food. They caught mice, birds, and small animals.

Hunting is hard work. A cat must run very fast. It must jump very high. It must be very quiet. All of this uses a lot of **energy**. So after hunting, cats need to rest. They need to **sleep** to get their **energy** back.

Your pet cat does not **hunt** for food. But its body is still the same. Its **brain** still says: “**Sleep** now. Save **energy**.” So your cat sleeps. A lot.

When Do Cats Sleep?

Cats do not **sleep** like people. We **sleep** at night. We are **awake** during the day. Cats are different. Cats are most active at two times: early morning and evening. These are the best times to **hunt** in the **wild**. The light is low. Small animals come out. Cats can see very well in low light.

During the rest of the day, cats take many short naps. That is where the English word “catnap” comes from! A catnap is a short, light **sleep**. When a cat takes a **nap**, it can wake up very quickly. Its ears still listen for sounds. If it hears something, it opens its eyes fast. This is because in the **wild**, a sleeping cat can be in danger. So cats learn to **sleep** lightly.

Deep Sleep and Cat Dreams

But cats do not only take light naps. Sometimes they go into a deep **sleep**. You can see this. The cat is very relaxed. Its body is soft. Its eyes are closed tight. Sometimes its paws move. Sometimes its whiskers twitch. What is happening? The cat is dreaming!

Yes, cats dream. Scientists studied cat brains and found that cats have the same kind of **sleep** as humans. When we dream, a special part of our **brain** is active. Cats have this too. What do cats dream about? Nobody knows for sure. But scientists think they dream about things they did during the day — chasing a toy, watching a bird, or eating food.

Kittens Sleep Even More

If you think adult cats **sleep** a lot, look at kittens! Baby cats **sleep** about 20 hours a day. That is almost the whole day! Why? Because kittens are growing. When a **kitten** sleeps, its body makes special chemicals. These chemicals help the **kitten** grow bigger and stronger. The **kitten**'s bones grow. Its muscles grow. Its **brain** grows too.

When kittens are **awake**, they play a lot. They run, jump, and fight with their brothers and sisters. This play is very important. It teaches them how to **hunt**. But playing uses a lot of **energy**. So after playing, kittens need to **sleep** again. It is a simple cycle: play, **sleep**, play, **sleep**.

How Cats Sleep

Have you watched how your cat sleeps? Cats **sleep** in many funny positions. Some cats **sleep** in a ball. They curl up and put their tail over their nose. This keeps them warm and **safe**. Some cats **sleep** on their back with their legs in the air. This means they feel very **safe** and relaxed. Some cats **sleep** in tiny boxes or bags. Cats love small, tight spaces because they feel protected there.

Cats also love warm places. You might find your cat sleeping near a window in the sun. Or on top of your computer. Or on a warm pile of clothes from the dryer. Cats lose heat through their **fur**, so they look for warm spots to save **energy** while they **sleep**.

The Wake-Up Stretch

When a cat wakes up, what does it do first? It stretches! Every single time. Cats are the best stretchers in the animal world. They **stretch** their front legs, then their back legs, then their whole body. Why? Because stretching helps the blood move through the body. It wakes up the muscles. After a long **sleep**, a good **stretch** makes the cat ready to move and play again.

After stretching, many cats **purr**. Purring is the soft sound cats make when they are happy. Scientists are not completely sure how cats **purr**. The sound comes from the cat's throat. Cats **purr** when they are relaxed, when they eat, and sometimes even when they are sick. Some scientists think purring helps cats heal faster!

Fun Cat Facts

Here are some amazing facts about cats:

Cats can jump six times their body length. Imagine if you could jump that far! A cat can jump from the floor to the top of a tall cupboard in one jump.

Cats always land on their feet. When a cat falls, it turns its body in the air very quickly. Its **brain** works with its eyes to turn the body. This is called the "righting reflex."

Cats have 230 bones. Humans have 206. The extra bones make cats very flexible. That is why cats can fit into small spaces.

A cat's whiskers are the same width as its body. Cats use their whiskers to check if they can fit through a space. If the whiskers fit, the cat fits!

Cats spend about 30% of their **awake** time cleaning their **fur**. That is a lot of licking!

Cats and People

Cats have lived with people for about 10,000 years. The first pet cats lived in the Middle East. Farmers liked cats because cats caught mice. The mice ate the farmers' food. So cats were very useful. Over thousands of years, cats became more and more friendly with people.

Today, there are about 600 million pet cats in the world. Cats are the second most popular pet after fish. People love cats because they are soft, quiet, and independent. And yes — because they are very cute when they **sleep**!

What Can We Learn from Cats?

Maybe cats know something we do not. **Sleep** is very important for everyone — for cats and for people. When you **sleep**, your body rests. Your **brain** organises your memories. Your muscles repair. You grow. **Sleep** makes you healthier, happier, and smarter.

So the next time you see your cat sleeping on the sofa, do not think it is lazy. It is doing something very important. It is saving **energy**. It is growing. It is dreaming. And maybe — just maybe — we should all be a little more like cats. Find a warm spot, curl up, and take a nice, long **nap**.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
sleep	to close your eyes and rest your body and mind, usually at night
energy	the power your body needs to move, play, and do things
wild	living in nature, not in a house with people
hunt	to look for and catch animals for food
kitten	a baby cat
nap	a short sleep during the day
fur	the soft hair that covers an animal's body
paw	the foot of an animal like a cat or dog
awake	not sleeping, with your eyes open
muscle	a part inside your body that helps you move
safe	not in danger, protected from harm
whisker	a long, thin hair that grows on a cat's face
brain	the part inside your head that controls your body and thinking
stretch	to make your body long and straight, like after waking up
purr	the soft, low sound a happy cat makes

Comprehension Quiz

1. How many hours do cats sleep in a day?

- A) 4 to 6 hours
- B) 8 to 10 hours
- C) 12 to 16 hours
- D) 20 to 22 hours

2. Why do cats sleep so much?

- A) Because they are bored
- B) Because they are sick
- C) Because hunting uses a lot of energy
- D) Because they do not like light

3. When are cats most active?

- A) In the afternoon
- B) At midnight
- C) Early morning and evening
- D) Only on weekends

4. Do cats dream when they sleep?

- A) No, only humans dream
- B) Yes, scientists believe cats dream
- C) Only kittens dream
- D) Nobody knows

5. How far can a cat jump?

- A) Two times its body length
- B) Four times its body length
- C) Six times its body length
- D) Ten times its body length

Answer Key

#	Answer	Question
1	C	1. How many hours do cats sleep in a day?
2	C	2. Why do cats sleep so much?
3	C	3. When are cats most active?
4	B	4. Do cats dream when they sleep?
5	C	5. How far can a cat jump?