

Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish stories and poems podcast. You'll find more information on this page:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-stories-poems.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- the poem that you can listen to in the podcast;
- a comprehension activity based on the poem;
- a vocabulary activity based on the poem

Read the poem

The Cat that Walked by Himself

by Rudyard Kipling

PUSSY can sit by the fire and sing,
Pussy can climb a tree,
Or play with a silly old cork and string
To'muse herself, not me.
But I like Binkie my dog, because
He knows how to behave;
So, Binkie's the same as the First Friend was,
And I am the Man in the Cave.

Pussy will play man-Friday till
It's time to wet her paw
And make her walk on the window-sill
(For the footprint Crusoe saw);

Then she fluffles her tail and mews,
And scratches and won't attend.
But Binkie will play whatever I choose,
And he is my true First Friend.

Pussy will rub my knees with her head
Pretending she loves me hard;
But the very minute I go to my bed
Pussy runs out in the yard,
And there she stays till the morning-light;
So I know it is only pretend;
But Binkie, he snores at my feet all night,
And he is my Firstest Friend!

After reading

Exercise 1

For each of the 8 questions choose the best answer.

1. In the first verse, it says that Pussy can 'sing'. Does this mean ...
 - a) the cat meows because she's hungry?
 - b) the cat meows because she can sit by the fire?
 - c) the cat purrs because she's happy?
2. In the first verse, the author believes that Pussy ...
 - a) is amusing because she sings and climbs and plays?
 - b) only thinks of herself?
 - c) thinks she's funny?
3. In the first verse, we learn that the First Friend ...
 - a) knows how to behave?
 - b) likes the Man in the Cave?
 - c) lives with a man and a cat?
4. In the first verse, we learn that the Man in the Cave ...
 - a) is amused by cats?
 - b) likes dogs more than cats?
 - c) wrote the story?

5. In the second verse, it says Pussy is not like man-Friday because ...
- She can fluffle her tail and mew?
 - She can walk on the window-sill?
 - She is only obedient when she is happy?
6. In the second verse, it says that Binkie is ...
- obedient?
 - playful?
 - choosy?
7. In the third verse, the author knows that pussy is only pretending to love him because ...
- she prefers the morning light?
 - she prefers to spend the night outside by herself?
 - she rubs her head on his knees too hard?
8. Which word best describes Binkie in the third verse?
- lazy
 - friendly
 - faithful

Exercise 2

Find words and phrases in the text that mean the same as the words and phrases listed below.

1. top of a bottle (first verse)	
2. not useful (first verse)	
3. purr (first verse)	
4. thin cord used for tying things (first verse)	
5. to make herself happy (first verse)	
6. be helpful (second verse)	
7. makes small movements with (second verse)	
8. makes a soft crying sound (second verse)	
9. foot (second verse)	
10. behaving as if something is true when you know it's not (third verse)	
11. press against something with repeated movements (third verse)	

Answers

Exercise 1: 1. c; 2. b; 3. a; 4. b; 5. c; 6. a; 7. b; 8. c

Exercise 2: 1. cork; 2. silly; 3. sing; 4. string; 5. to'muse herself; 6. attend; 7. fluffles; 8. mews; 9. paw; 10. pretending; 11. rub