

Mary's Cat



The Newton Readers Book 1 (Published by Blackie and Son Ltd. in the 1800's) was an early reader many years ago, which imparted nature knowledge to children as they learned to read. It must be one of the greatest advantages of learning to read, that the world of knowledge is opened to the young mind, which is ready to absorb all manner of fascinating facts, so taught in an interesting manner. Few copies of this book remain in existence. I can find no record of the subsequent books, other than in the Blackie /archives in the University of Glasgow.

In order to preserve the book for future generations, I have reprinted this first book in sections to make it more accessible for the early reader, and given it a more updated feel with a colour frontage while keeping the original line drawings alongside the text. I have modified the text only slightly where it was necessary, due to the age of the original publication, whilst by no means detracting from its charm. I have not added more pictures to the text as I believe that children should be taught to focus on the words for meaning, and to avoid seeing all literature as entertainment.

You will find that the stories depict the age in which they were written and as such also impart historical knowledge to the reader, which the wise parent/teacher can use profitably.

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How to help your student with harder words in the text.

There are a few words, that the early phonic reader may not yet have encountered. I explain below how to approach them. Teacher/parent - read this page first yourself so that you are equipped to help. If you know that your student cannot sound any words in the book, then simply supply them as they read, to keep the sense of the passage. Most of these harder words do belong to a phonic family, but you don't want to spoil the flow by using them as a teaching point while they are reading the text. If you feel it is appropriate, then you may use the notes below to draw the student's attention to a few at the end of the reading session.

pussy - 'u' saying 'oo' as in look.

answer - 'a' saying 'ar', silent 'w'.

tongue - 'o' saying 'u'.

rough - 'ough' saying 'uff'

covered - 'o' saying 'u'.

pieces - just supply word.

pulled - 'u' saying 'oo' as in look.

shoulder - 'ould' saying 'old'.

MARY'S CAT

1. "Come here, Pussy," said little Mary Williams, "I want to talk to you. Why do lick your nice soft fur?"

2. But Pussy could not answer, so Mary's mother told her that Puss was washing herself.

Mary then gave her some milk, and watched her lap it up with her tongue.

3. When she had drunk all the milk, she licked off some that was on Mary's hand.

"Oh how rough your tongue is!" said Mary.

4. "Yes," said her mother, "Pussy's tongue is covered with little hooks."

Mary now gave Puss a bone, and watched her as she fed.

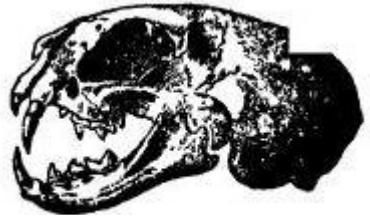
5. "Why does Puss hold her head on one side when she eats?" she asked.

6. "Come here," said her mother, "and I will show you."

“Look at Pussy’s teeth. You can see she has only very small ones in the front of her mouth.

7. “On each side she has large and sharp teeth: with these she bites and tears off pieces of meat. She cannot chew her food as we do.”

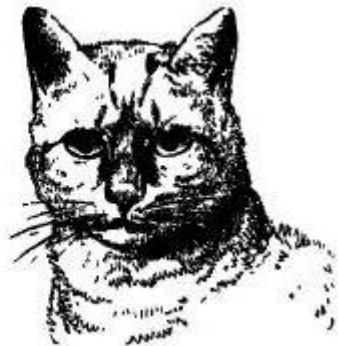
8. When Pussy had eaten all her meat, she licked the bone with her rough tongue, till it was quite clean.



Skull of a Cat.

“ Look at the large black spot in Pussy’s eye,” said Mary.

9. “Yes,” said her mother; “but we will take her over to the window where the sun is shining, and then the black spots will become much smaller and narrower.”



10. She then told Mary that the black spot was really like a little window to let the light into the cat's eye.

11. "When Pussy is in a bright light," she said, "this little window is very small. But when she goes into a dark place, the window becomes very large, and so lets in more light. That is why Puss can see in dark places better than we can."



Underside of Cat's Foot,
showing the soft Pads.

12. Mary now looked for the cat's claws, but she could not find them. She only saw some soft pads on the bottom of her feet.



Cat's Foot, showing
the claws.

13. "These pads," said her mother, "are so soft that Pussy can walk and run without making any noise; and when she is after a mouse, the mouse cannot hear her coming."

14. Just then Pussy put out her sharp claws, and stuck them fast in Mary's dress, and so pulled herself up on to the little girl's shoulder. Then she curled herself up and began to purr.

Can you remember?

Tell me about the cat's:

Fur:

The soft fur keeps the cat warm. She licks the fur to keep it clean.

Tongue:

Her tongue is rough, so she can lick all the little bits of meat from a bone.

Teeth:

The teeth in front of the cat's mouth are very small. The teeth at the sides of the mouth are large and sharp, and with them she tears her meat.

Claws:

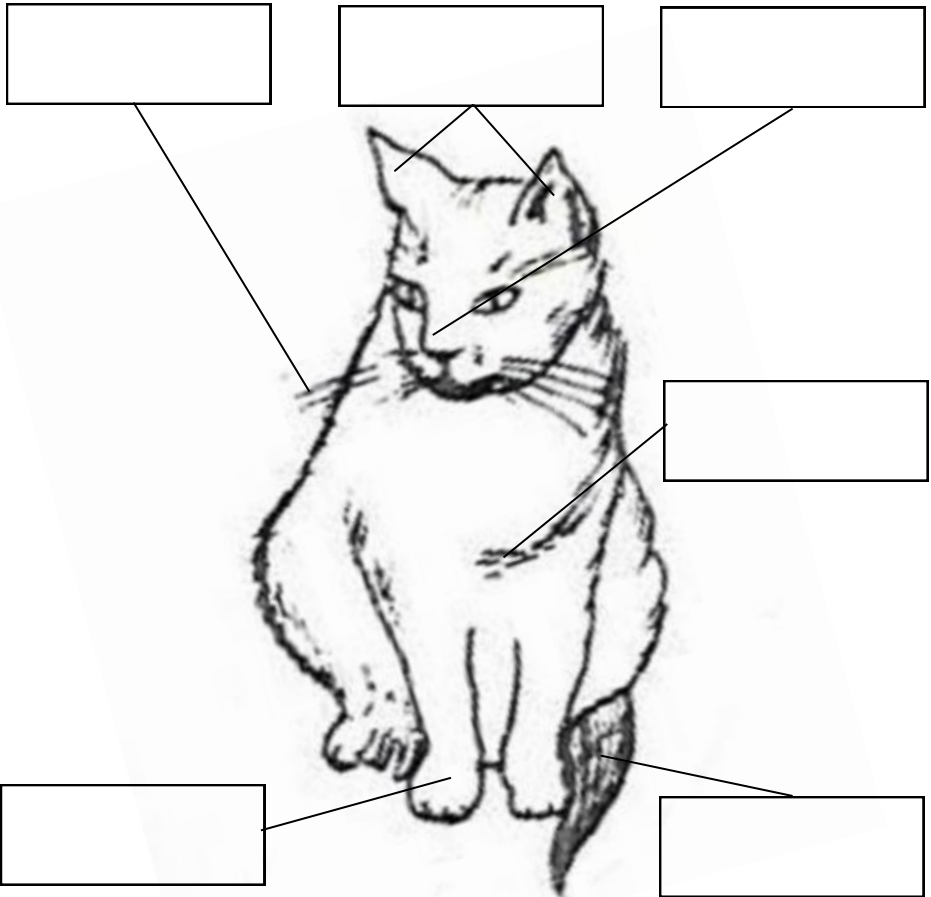
Her claws are sharp. She uses them for holding her prey, and also for climbing.

Eyes:

The cat's eyes grow large in the dark. She can see in the dark better than we can.

Use these words to label the picture of a cat.

ears tail whiskers paw eyes fur nose



Put a circle around the things that a cat eats.

carrots milk bones oats meat peas