

THE WILD AND WACKY WORLD OF CAT BODY LANGUAGE

FRANKLIN, A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION...







Cat body language... it's an exciting world!

- Cats are subtle
- Shift quickly through signals
- Easy to miss smaller signals
- Big picture... from tip of nose to tip of tail, add signals up
- Easily influenced by interaction with their world

Breaking Down Behavior

- Facial Expressions: ear position, whisker position, pupils, etc.
- Body Language: tail position, the belly, head butting, arched back, crouch, etc.
- Vocalizations

Ear Position

- Ears forward:
 - Confident
 - Playful
 - Focused
 - Happy, content



Ear Position

Ears to the side:

- Threatened
- Prepared for fight
- Prepared for flight
- On alert
- Not comfortable



Ear Position

Ears swiveled downwards:

- Trying to diffuse
- Deciding between fight or flight
- Stand ground?
- Flee?



Ear Position

Ears down, flat to head:

- Last defensive pose before striking
- Folded for protection
- Fight is only option



Whiskers

Whiskers down:

- Happy and relaxed

Whiskers pointed forwards:

- Interested/ aroused
- Hunting, threatened, aggressive, very interested in something

Whiskers against cheeks:

- Fear
- Streamlined for fight or flight



The Stare

Direct stare = challenge or threat

- **Denotes confidence**
- **Intention- Play? Attack?**
- **Want to engage**



Nose touch... it's a greeting!



Blinking, the opposite of the stare

Slow blink:

- Diffusing
- Mean no harm
- Calming



Flehmen Response

Sensory input from roof of the mouth

Smell something that needs more detail....hold mouth open to reach that sensory input organ



Pupils

Slit pupil:

- Normal, relaxed state



Round pupils:

- Scared
- Hunting



Almond pupil:

- Tension
- Aggression



Tail Position

**Tail up: Interactive
greeting... Hello!!! Play
with me! Pet me!**

**Tail up and whipping:
Frustration... whipping/
switching/ flicking
quickly all = frustration**



Tail Position

Tail out and behind:

**Happy, relaxed, confident,
alert and ready to explore**



Lowered tail:

**Lowered and flicking can
mean offensive aggression**

**Lowered and loose can mean
defensive aggression**



Tail Position

**Arched tail:
Defensive aggression**



**Tail between legs or
clenched to body:
Withdrawing from social
interaction... leave me
alone!**



Belly up

Vulnerability.... Context!!

- Avoiding fight with another cat
- Avoiding “attack” from human
- Relaxed in your presence



Head Butting

Bunting:

- Scent marking
- Affection
- Indicates confidence



Arched Back

Halloween kitty!

- On high alert
- Usually performed side on
- Are you just stretching?



Low Crouch

- Defensive
- Play/ “attack”
- Shy
 - Ears, eyes and tail all important to discern meaning

Allows for forward motion if needed...



Vocalizations

Purr

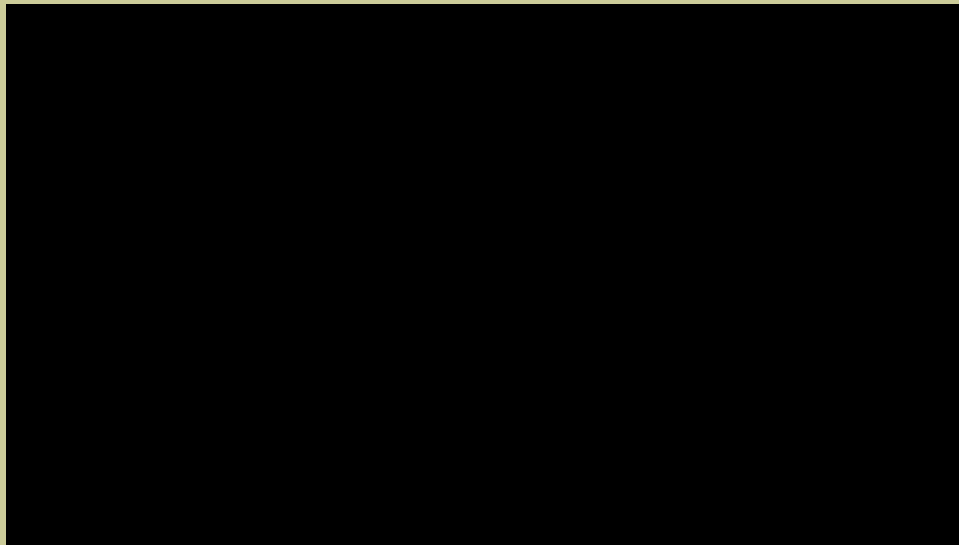
- All cats purr
- May be used to request milk from mother
- Pleasure
- Pain
- Fear/ uncertainty
- Care soliciting signal

Meow

- Cats rarely meow at one another
- Communicating with humans
- Often have different meows for different things

The Chatter

Excited frustration



Growl, hiss, yowl

- Any sound made with mouth open in a constant position
- Intended to increase distance from stressor
- Distress call
- Aggression
- Offensive or defensive
- Increase volume to increase threat



Questions?

