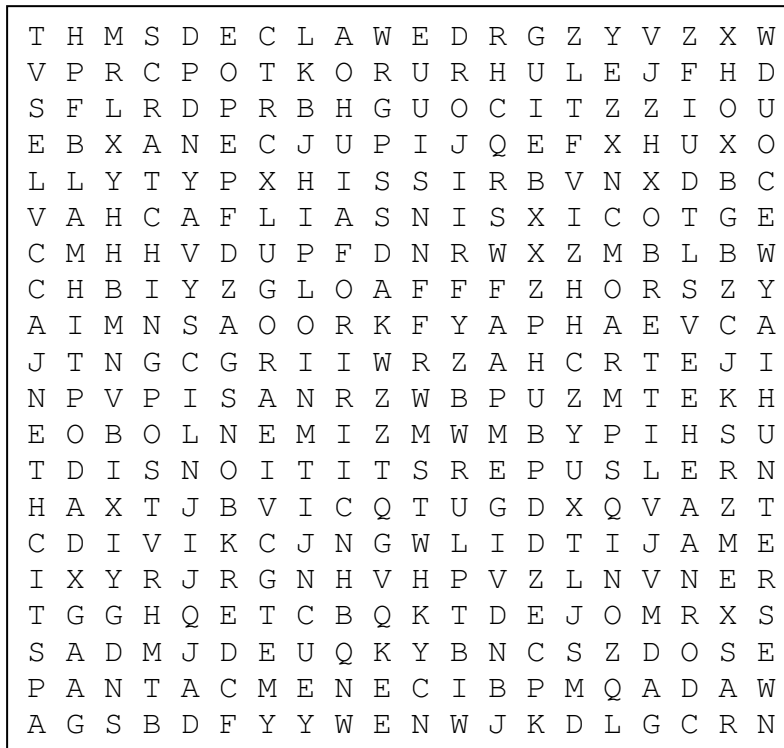


TAKING CARE OF A CAT

Read the story, learn about cat care, and then look for the **bold** words – you can find them all in the word search!



Cats are friendly and **playful**, and they make great pets; in fact, domesticated cats have been keeping people company for as long as 12,000 years! Aside from being cute and lovable, cats are great **hunters**, and they have always been helpful to people by keeping pesky critters like mice and rats away.

Taking care of a pet cat is lots of fun, but it can be hard work, too. Cats need fresh water and healthy food every day; good **nutrition** is just as important for their health as it is for ours. Unlike dogs, cats keep themselves clean and rarely need baths, but they do go to the bathroom inside - in a **litter box** - and it's your job to keep it clean! And they need training, too, especially when it comes to their claws; cats use their claws to mark territory, and they can do a lot of damage if you don't teach them how to use a **scratching post**. Some people get their cats **declawed** so that they can't scratch anymore, but that can be very bad for cats. It is much kinder to train them, instead.

There is an old saying that cats have **nine lives**, but they really just have one like the rest of us, so it's important to keep them healthy! Cats are much safer if they live **indoors** – they should only go outdoors when you can go out with them. Because cats don't tell us when they're feeling sick, it's very important to take them to see a **veterinarian** at least once a year. They need vaccinations and a check-up to make sure nothing is wrong. While you're there, ask your vet to make sure that your cat is **fixed**! There are already many more kittens in the world than there are people to take care of them, and you should never, ever let your cat have babies.

Have you ever heard that black cats are bad luck? Black cats are not bad luck: like every other cat, they **purr** when they're happy, **hiss** when they're mad, and love to curl up for a good **cat nap** in the afternoon. Don't let a silly **superstition** stop you from giving a friendly black cat a home!

Want to have a cat for a pet? We have many who need homes! Don't buy a cat at a pet store – **adopt** one instead!