

Research Says, Dogs Once Resembled Cats

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. prey /preɪ/ an animal that is hunted and killed for food by another animal
Example: A hawk hovered in the air before swooping on its prey.
2. physique /fɪ'zi:k/ the shape and size of a human body
Example: He has a very powerful, muscular physique.
3. emergence /ɪ'mɜː.dʒəns/ the fact of something becoming known or starting to exist
Example: The emergence of a pandemic flu virus is not only inevitable, but overdue.
4. swivel /'swɪv.əl/ to (cause to) turn around a central point in order to face in another direction
Example: The ostrich swiveled its head in our direction.
5. hardwearing /,hɑːrd'wer.ɪŋ/ If something, especially clothing or material, is hard-wearing it lasts for a long time and looks good even if it is used a lot.
Example: Cotton canvas is the most hard-wearing fabric.



New research suggests that climate change helped dogs develop from creatures that are like cats to the way they are today. Researchers from Brown University in the USA believe that 40 million years ago, dogs were smaller and hunted like cats. They hid, hunted and attacked their **prey**.

As climate change transformed Earth's landscape, the **physique** and food-gathering habits of dogs changed. Thick forests that once covered the North American continent started to become less compact as the planet became cooler. The **emergence** of grassland meant dogs had fewer places to hide to ambush their victims. To adjust, they changed their hunting styles and slowly grew longer legs.

The scientists analyzed how dogs have evolved by looking at the elbows and teeth of 32 different species that lived between two million to 40 million years ago. The

researchers said that the dogs' elbows, in particular, were good signs of developmental change.

Dogs from 40 million years ago had elbows that were more similar to those of cats. Their function was to allow the front paws to **swivel** so they could grab and hold on to prey. Those elbows changed in dogs to allow them to become strong runners and thus be able to go after their prey over long distances. Teeth in dogs are also improved to be more efficient. They became more **hard-wearing** to be able to hold on to prey.

DISCUSSION

1. How has climate change transformed other animals?
2. What effect has climate change had on humans?
3. Why do many people keep dogs as pets?
4. How did humans use to hunt?
5. People say dogs are a man's best friend. Why?