

## **Black Cats**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Black cats have been considered symbols of both bad luck and good luck for hundreds of years. In colonial New England, black cats were often considered "familiars" of witches, or, spiritual guides that helped witches commit evil. Others believed that black cats were witches themselves who had shape-shifted. Black cats that walked across the paths of people were thought to be omens of misfortune. In the United States, black cats are common symbols of Halloween.

Some people still consider black cats symbols of bad luck. In fact, black cats are adopted from shelters less often than other kinds of cats. To combat superstitions about black cats, the United States, England, and Ireland each have black cat appreciation or protection days built into their calendars.

Conversely, black cats that wandered into people's homes in Scotland signified prosperity. Fishermen's wives sometimes kept black cats at home because they thought that keeping such a cat might help their husbands remain safe on the high seas.

Despite the many superstitions attached to black cats, they are quite common and are really just ordinary house cats. There are 22 kinds of cats that can have black coats. Such cats may have completely black coats, or, coats that "rust," or turn slightly reddish or brownish from sun exposure. Some black cats can "gray" over time like humans! Most black cats have yellow or green eyes.

- 1. People in colonial New England...**
  - A. had positive impressions of black cats.
  - B. held negative impressions of black cats.
  - C. believed black cats were symbols of Halloween.
  - D. believed black cats kept witches as pets.
- 2. Which of the following is evidence that some people still consider black cats symbols of bad luck?**
  - A. They were kept by fishermen's wives
  - B. They are actually just normal house cats
  - C. They are adopted less often from shelters than other cats
  - D. Some people believe black cats signify prosperity
- 3. Which of the following is an example of a superstition?**
  - A. Black cats are effective in hunting mice.
  - B. Breaking a mirror will result in something bad happening
  - C. Black cat fur can turn reddish or even grayish
  - D. Black cats were once considered spiritual guides to witches

**4. Which of the following best describes the passage?**

- A. It mainly explains why black cats should be adopted
- B. It mainly explains how black cats are similar to other cats
- C. It mainly explains how black cats were viewed in colonial New England
- D. It mainly explains the different ways black cats have been viewed in history

**5. Which is NOT true about black cats?**

- A. There are more than 20 kinds of cats that can be black cats
- B. Their fur can turn reddish or even grey
- C. They usually have yellow or green eyes
- D. They are uncommon and less numerous than other cats

**6. Which of the following words in the passage means “warning” or “sign of danger?”**

- A. omen
- B. prosperity
- C. exposure
- D. superstitions

**7. To which of the following questions would “to fight superstitions about black cats” be the answer?**

- A. Why are black cats adopted less than other cats?
- B. Why did fishermen’s wives keep black cats in their homes?
- C. Why do some countries have black cat protection days?
- D. Why were black cats said to bring misfortune?