



Dogs Used to be Cats

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New research says climate change transformed dogs from creatures resembling cats to how they look today. Researchers in the USA believe that 40 million years ago, dogs were smaller and hunted and ambushed their prey like cats. As the changing climate reduced the amount of forests in North America, the physique and food-gathering habits of dogs changed. Grassland emerged everywhere, which meant dogs had fewer places to hide to ambush their victims. To adapt to this, dogs changed their hunting styles and slowly grew longer legs.

Scientists analysed how dogs evolved by looking at the elbows and teeth of 32 different species that lived up to 40 million years ago. The dogs' elbows, in particular, were good indicators of evolutionary change. Dogs from 40 million years ago had elbows that were like those of cats. Their front paws swivelled so they could grab and hold on to prey. Elbows changed in dogs to let them become endurance runners. This meant they could chase their prey over long distances. The teeth in dogs also became more efficient. They became harder so they could hold on to prey.

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New Words or Phrases

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