

Proposal for Emoji: BLACK CAT

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Date: July 2019

1. Identification

- A. **CLDR Short name:** BLACK CAT
- B. **CLDR keywords:** CAT, BLACK, HALLOWEEN, LUCK

2. Images



Credit: Apee Messer. Free for use in conjunction with this proposal.

- 3. **Sort Order:** in the ANIMAL-MAMMAL category, as a ZWJ sequence for CAT or CAT FACE

Abstract

We are requesting the addition of a BLACK CAT emoji, as a ZWJ sequence from CAT and/or CAT FACE. It would complement the existing emoji and offer more variety and representation for other kinds of cats and cat lovers, who are numerous.

Introduction

The Internet is notoriously aflame with fights, doxxing, misinformation and insults. Luckily, there is one banner around which Internet users worldwide unite, and that is cats.

Cats are the subject of what are widely regarded as the beginning of memes, an Internet phenomenon that now has an enormous impact on media, culture and communication around the world. "I Can Haz Cheezburger" and "lolcats" are early examples of this phenomenon, so much so that they sometimes stand in for the concept of memes themselves.¹

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolcat>



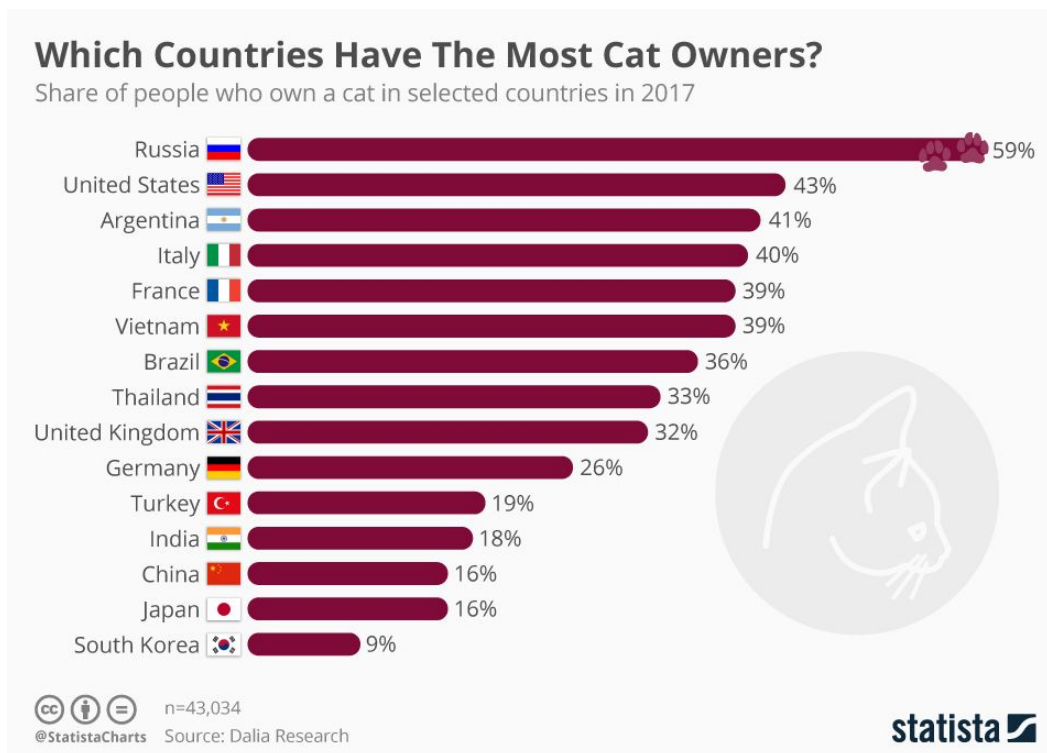
The original "I can haz cheezburger" meme, from 2007, was not the first to use the format of words pasted onto photos, but it is believed to have helped bring the concept to the mainstream.²

Cats are found in 85,000 gifs on Giphy and 50 options on Bitmoji. These indicate the popularity of cats in digital media.

And in the real world - or "IRL", you might say - cats are the second-most popular pet in the world, behind dogs.³ Almost half of all American households contain a cozy cat within them.

² <https://cheezburger.com/875511040/original-cat-meme-that-started-cheezburger>

³ <https://www.petfoodindustry.com/articles/5845-infographic-most-of-world-owns-pets-dogs-are-tops>



As a subsection of cats, black cats are the most popular breed in adoption shelters for several years running. "With the combined data of 65 agencies representing over 186,500 cats, we found that black cats are adopted more than any other color," the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wrote in a 2016 report.⁴

PetFinder.com hypothesized that the new surge in the popularity of black cats may be due to negative or suspicious myths slowly dying out. "These positive adoption percentages are proving that myths are being replaced by a deep appreciation of black cat cultural impact, history and their amazing, multiple all-black colors. With mystical breed names like the Bombay, Sphynx and Oriental, a black cat is attractive to feline-lovers for many reasons other than their bold, sleek coats and big, bright eyes."⁵

⁴ <https://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2016/10/19/black-still-new-white>

⁵ <https://www.petfinder.com/cat-breeds/collections/black-cat-breeds/?page=2>



For hundreds of years, black cats have been associated with Halloween and "bad luck" in several countries. In the United Kingdom, though, tradition states that *good* luck would follow someone if a black cat crossed their path.

In Japan, black cats are associated with attractiveness when dating. In ancient Egypt, people preferred black cats given their connection to the cat goddess Bastet. In Scandinavian countries, black cats supposedly blessed farmer's harvests, thanks to their connection to the goddess Freyja.⁶



⁶ <https://www.petfinder.com/cat-breeds/collections/black-cat-breeds/?page=2>

This collection of Halloween stickers includes a black cat, indicating the animal's significance to Halloween folklore.⁷

Black cats comprise 18 different breeds, including common breeds like the American Shorthair and exotic ones like the Sphynx.



The Bombay, a mix of sable Burmese and American Shorthair, is named for its resemblance to a black panther.⁸

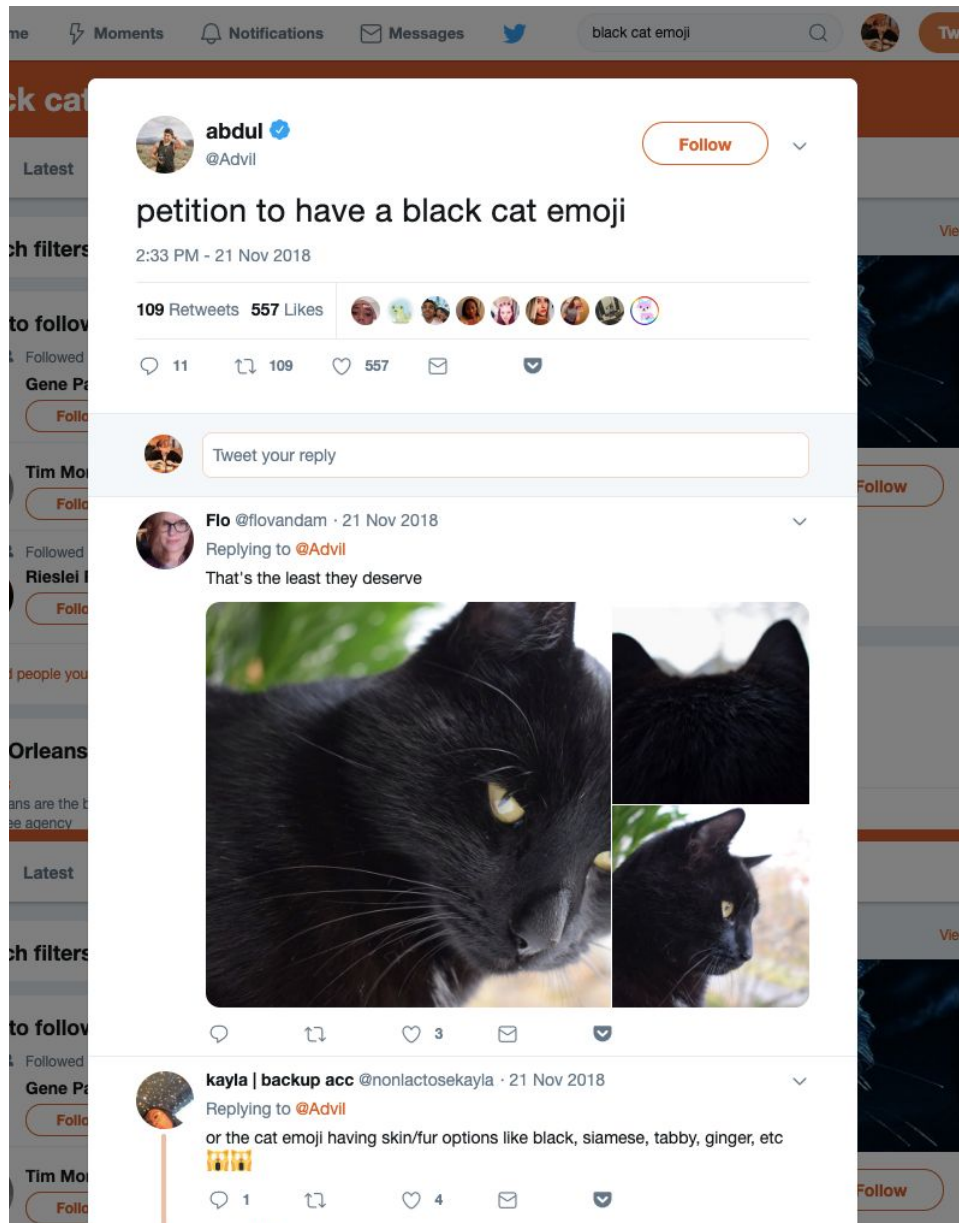
Given the popularity of cats, and especially of black cats, we are proposing a Black Cat ZWJ sequence for CAT ([U+1F408](#)+ ZWJ + [U+25FC](#)) (CAT + ZWJ + BLACK MEDIUM SQUARE) or for CAT FACE ([U+1F431](#)). Example:

Internal Representation	Intended Display	Fallback
 + ZWJ + 		 

⁷

<https://szoffer-gifts.en.made-in-china.com/product/BKXEWPODLzYs/China-Cartoon-Halloween-Pumpkin-Ghost-Little-Black-Cat-Rack-Dripping-Oil-Brooch-Badge.html>

⁸ <https://www.petfinder.com/cat-breeds/collections/black-cat-breeds/?page=2>



This informal call for a BLACK CAT emoji, or a series of color variations on CAT, garnered hundreds of likes and retweets on Twitter.⁹

We believe that this color variation will bring long-desired options for cat lovers and representation for the mascot of the Internet, cats.

⁹ <https://twitter.com/Advil/status/1065342471499063296>

Selection Factors – Inclusion

Compatibility

The Slackmoji representation of "cat" is black, as is the Slackmoji for "cool cat."



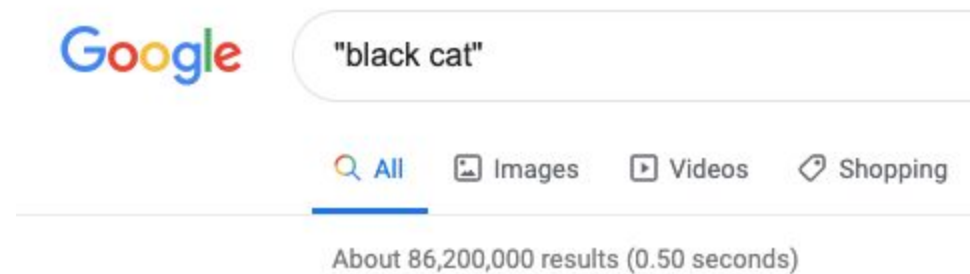
Viber released a sticker pack in 2018 with 10 stickers of black cats, noting that they mean good luck.



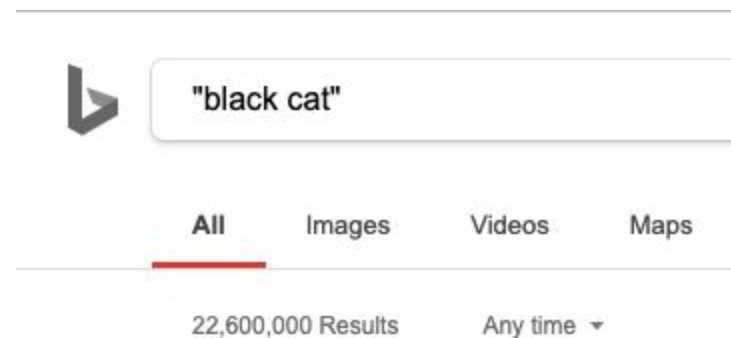
Expected Usage Level

Frequency

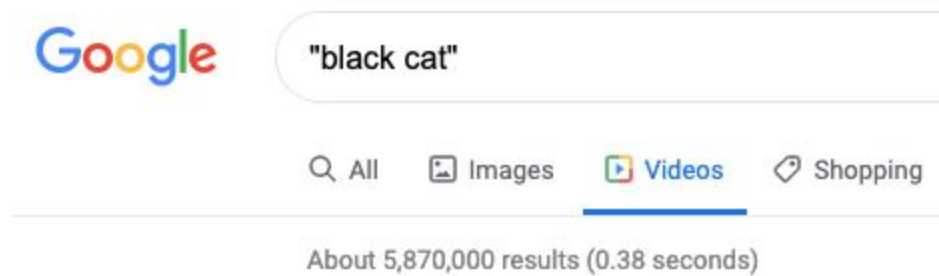
Google Search



Bing Search



Google Video Search

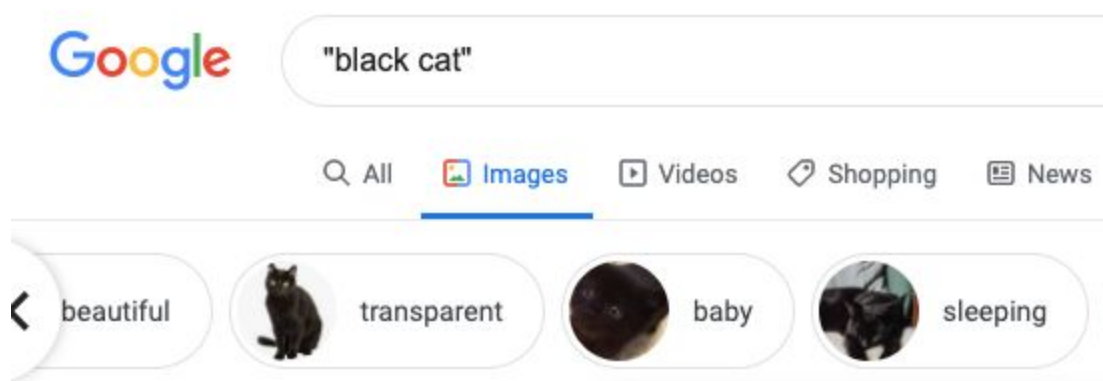


Google "black cat"

Q All Images Videos Shopping

About 5,870,000 results (0.38 seconds)

Google Image Search

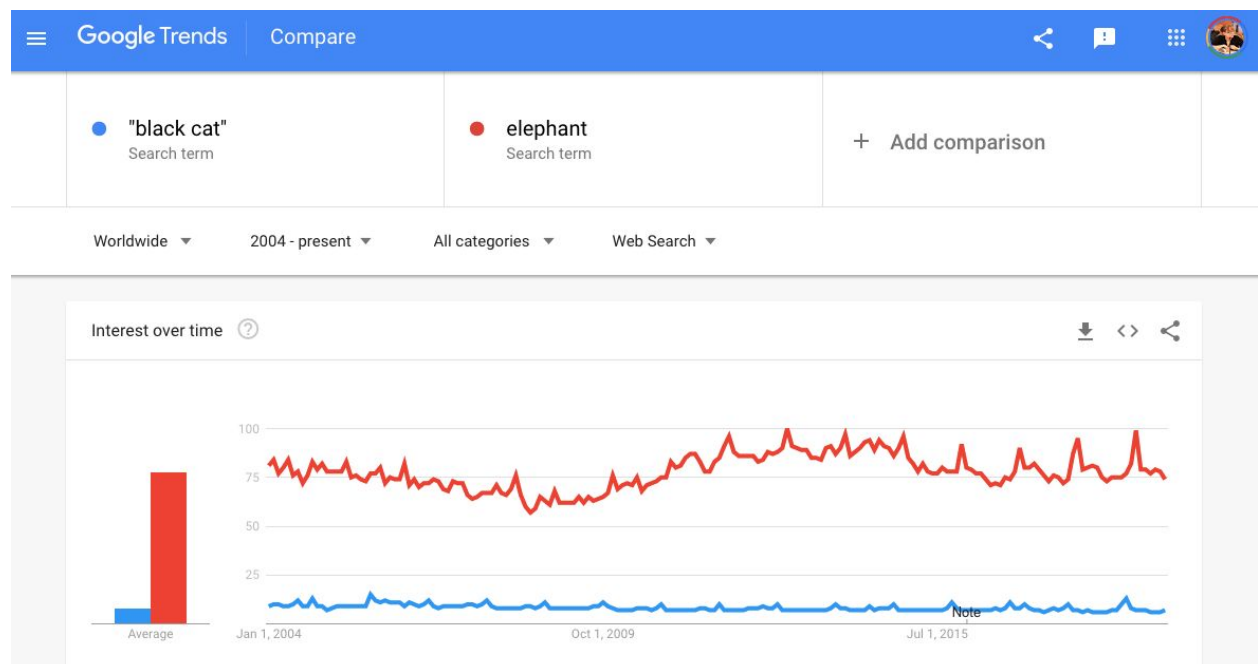


Google "black cat"

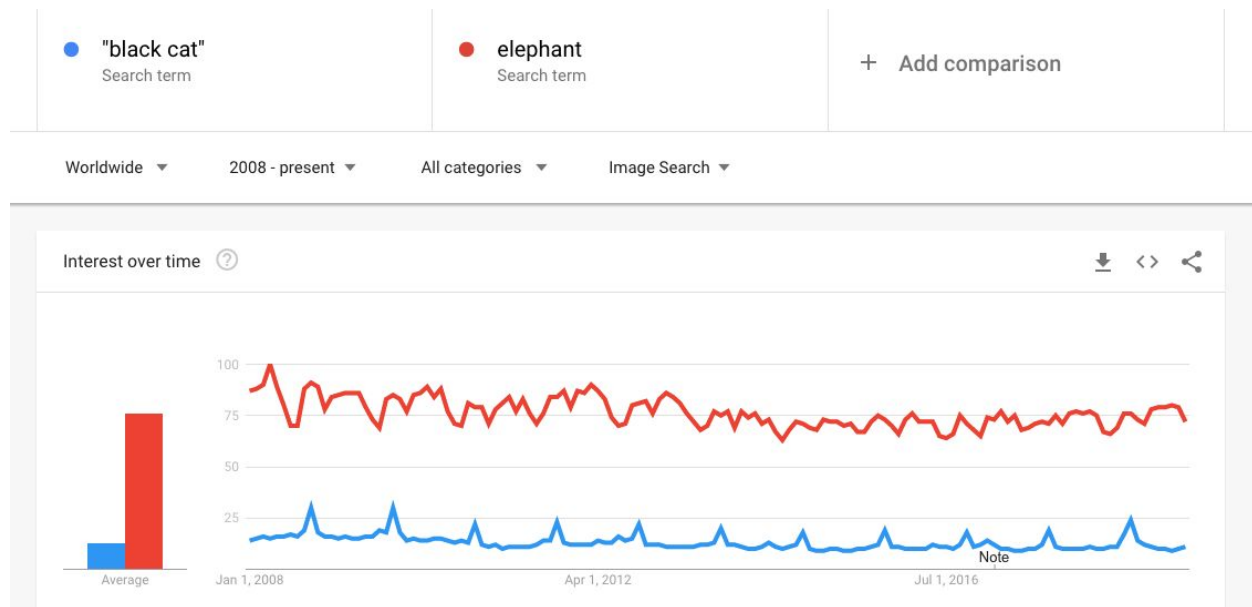
Q All Images Videos Shopping News

beautiful transparent baby sleeping

Google Trends: Web Search

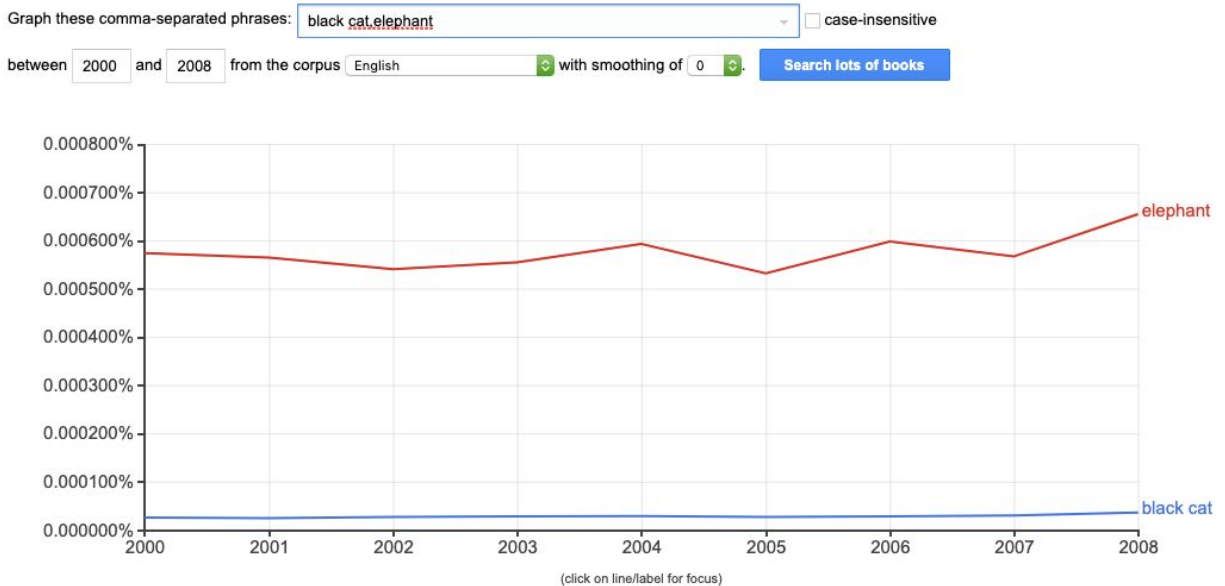


Google Trends: Image Search



NGram Viewer

Google Books Ngram Viewer



Multiple Usages

As noted in the Introduction, there are several connotations to black cats including good or bad luck, deities, witches and Halloween. We believe the BLACK CAT emoji will be used for these various contexts.

Use in sequences

BLACK CAT combined with Halloween-related emoji would help convey the concept of the holiday.

For example: BLACK CAT + JACK-O-LANTERN 🎃 + GHOST 👻

Breaking new ground

BLACK CAT would break new ground by being the first color variation in the ANIMAL category.

Image Distinctiveness

Completeness

N/A

Frequently Requested

The BLACK CAT has been requested 20,908 times on EmojiRequest.com.¹⁰ It has also been requested from Apple Support and in social media.¹¹

Selection Factors – Exclusion

Overly Specific

The BLACK CAT is not overly specific because there are only a few different colors of cats, and black is the most popular one.

Open Ended

The BLACK CAT is not open ended, because there are only a few colors of cats.

¹⁰ <https://www.emojirequest.com/r/BlackCatEmoji>

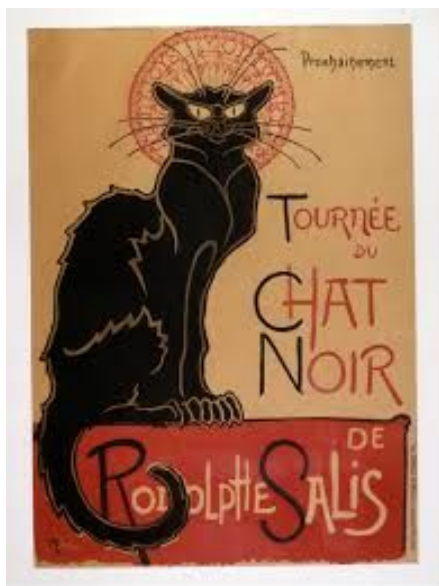
¹¹ <https://discussions.apple.com/thread/8636642>

Already Representable

BLACK CAT is not already represented, because the current CAT, CAT FACE and CAT-FACE emotion emoji are all yellow.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

Black cats are often found in brands and other images, as representatives of good or bad luck, or Halloween, or simply cats.



Transient

Cats have maintained the same form for thousands of years, as indicated by their appearance in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. They will probably not change at all in the next few hundred years.



A painting of a cat from 1500 BCE.¹²

Faulty Comparison

We are proposing BLACK CAT as a complement to CAT or CAT FACE, and not as a replacement for it.

Exact Images

Black cats are easily recognizable around the world, and do not need to stay within one depiction.

Other Character Properties

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type:

Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored:

N Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

¹²

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/06/ancient-egyptians-may-have-given-cats-personality-conquer-world>

Simple Uppercase Mapping:

Simple Lowercase Mapping:

Simple Titlecase Mapping:

Author Biographies

Samantha Sunne (samanthasunne@gmail.com) is an emoji enthusiast who would like to let cat lovers embrace their cat-loving selves. She is honorary aunt to two lovely friends' cats.