THE DOMESTIC CAT

Most authorities believe that the shorthaired breeds of domestic cat are derived from the Caffre cat, *Felix silvestris libyca,* a species of African wildcat domesticated by the ancient Egyptians.

**The body of a domestic cat:**

Is extremely flexible

Its skeleton contains more than 230 bones

Its tail provides balance when jumping or falling

Senses

The cat’s vision is exceptionally well adapted for hunting

The cat’s hearing is extremely sensitive

The cat has a highly developed sense of smell

The cat’s sense of taste is peculiarly specialized

**Cat Breeds**

About 40 varieties, or breeds, of domestic cats are recognized internationally. Although the various cat breeds often differ dramatically in coat length and overall look, they vary less in size than do dog breeds

Maine coon

Manx

Russian blue

Siamese

From: Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia