

Animals of the World: Mammals



THE CHIMPANZEE



The chimpanzee is the closest primate to the human being, genetically. Humans share almost 95 percent of their genetic code with these animals. That is why their appearance and some behaviors are similar to humans, such as opposable fingers, smiles, sadness, games, etc.

There are two species of chimpanzees: the common chimpanzee and the bonobo chimpanzee. Both species inhabit the dry areas of the savannah and the humid forests in about 21 countries of Africa, especially in central Africa.

The chimpanzee is a large anthropoid animal. Males are around 1.7 meters and females around 1.3 meters. Their weight ranges from 50 to 70 kilograms. They are extremely agile and have elongated arms, which allow them to climb trees more easily.



Chimpanzees have opposable thumbs on their four limbs that allow them to grab things with some precision. They walk on all four limbs, but they can also move on just their rear limbs.

Unlike humans, the chimpanzee's body is covered with very thick, dark hair. They have a smaller skull than humans, a short forehead, and big ears.

Their diet is mainly herbivorous and frugivorous; that is, they feed on all kinds of fruits and plants, but they also eat small insects and termites. If necessary, chimpanzees will even hunt small mammals, like antelopes and other smaller monkeys.

Chimpanzees live in large communities made up of dozens of individuals. It is a hierarchical system with a leader in charge of each community.

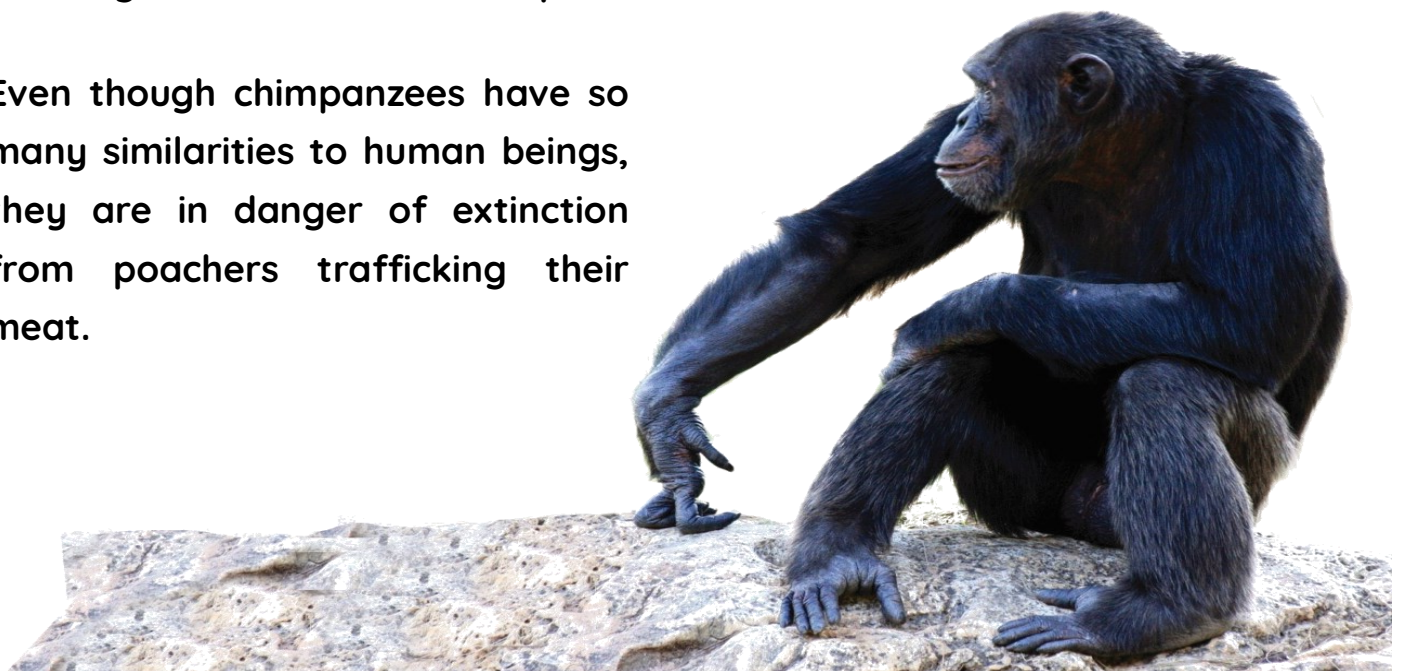
During the night, chimpanzees build nests with leaves to sleep comfortably. They seldom sleep in the same place because they are constantly on the move looking for food.

Chimpanzees are one of the most intelligent animals in the animal kingdom; they are able to learn sign language and use tools. For example, they use small branches to catch insects from their hiding places or hives, and they use different sizes of rocks to open or break fruits. They even collect drinking water with large leaves.

Female chimpanzees reach sexual maturity at age of 13, while males reach it after the age of 16. The female can give birth any time of the year with a gestation period of 8 months. Usually, they give birth to a single offspring which spends its first two years of life clinging to the back of its mother.

Chimpanzees kiss, hug, and pat each other on the back, just like humans. They even hold hands and tickle each other. When they are bored, they create games to have fun and pass the time.

Even though chimpanzees have so many similarities to human beings, they are in danger of extinction from poachers trafficking their meat.



Name _____ Date _____

THE CHIMPANZEE

Answer the questions.



1. Chimpanzees are _____

- a. primates.
- b. animals similar to humans.
- c. carnivores.
- d. unintelligent animals.
- e. affectionate animals.
- f. boring animals.

2. Chimpanzees _____

- a. resemble humans, genetically, as well as in their behavior and appearance.
- b. usually live in humid climates at high altitude.
- c. have great agility to swim in rivers.
- d. are covered with feathers and have opposable thumbs.

3. Chimpanzees walk on all four limbs, but they can move on just their front limbs.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Chimpanzees feed primarily on _____

- a. fruits and fish.
- b. meat and eggs.
- c. fruits and vegetables.
- d. fish and insects.



5. Why are chimpanzees considered intelligent animals?

- a. They can move by walking and flying.
- b. They eat fruit, plants, and even small mammals.
- c. They can learn sign language and use tools.
- d. They build nests at night.

Name _____

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6. Female chimpanzees have a pregnancy similar to that of human women.

- a. True
- b. False

7. When chimpanzees are small, _____

- a. they live in caves with their parents.
- b. they take care of themselves, without the help of adults.
- c. They cling to their mothers' backs.
- d. they eat only once a day.



8. To have fun and pass time, chimpanzees _____

- a. tickle.
- b. invent games.
- c. hold hands.
- d. All the answers are correct.

9. Are chimpanzees in danger of extinction? Why?

- a. No, because there are millions around the world.
- b. No, because they reproduce very quickly.
- c. Yes, because poachers traffic their meat.
- d. Yes, because poachers traffic their skin.

10. Compare humans to chimpanzees in the Venn Diagram. Write 3 ideas in each space.

