

Chimpanzees

(*Pan troglodytes*)

Kingdom: *Animalia*

Phylum: *Chordata*

Class: *Mammalia*

Order: *Primates*

Family: *Hominidae*



HAIR

Chimpanzees are covered with black hair on most of their body (except their fingers, palms, armpits, and bottoms of their feet). Baby chimpanzees have very pale skin in the areas that have no hair and a white tuft of hair on the rump.

HEAD

Chimpanzees have a slight brow ridge, large ears, small nostrils, and an elongated snout. They are capable of many expressions. Chimpanzees have a hairless face except for a short, white beard in both male and female adults. Some adult females become bald.

SENSES

Chimpanzees have senses very similar to ours, including hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch.

LAUGHTER

Laughter might not be confined or unique to humans, despite Aristotle's observation that "only the human animal laughs". The differences between chimpanzee and human laughter may be the result of adaptations that have evolved to enable human speech. Self-awareness of one's situation such as the monkey-mirror experiments below, or the ability to identify with another's predicament, are prerequisites for laughter, so animals may be laughing in the same way that we do.

SIZE

Male chimpanzees are larger than the females.

Chimpanzees	Height	Weight
Female	2-3.5 ft	57 -110 pounds
Male	3-4 ft	90 - 115 pounds

DIET

Chimpanzees are omnivores (eating plants and meat). They forage for food in the forests during the day, eating leaves, fruit, seeds, tree bark, plant bulbs, tender plant shoots, and flowers. They also eat termites, ants, and small animals (they have even been known to eat young monkeys). Chimpanzees drink water, often by using a chewed leaf as a sponge to sop up the water.

INTELLIGENCE AND LANGUAGE

Chimpanzees are very intelligent and can learn extremely complex tasks.

TOOLS

Chimpanzees often use tools in the wild. They have been observed using sticks to obtain ants and termites to eat and to scare away intruders.

BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL HABITS

Groups of Chimpanzees

Chimpanzees are social animals that are active during the day (they are diurnal). They live in small, stable groups (called communities or unit groups) of about 40-60 individuals. Smaller subgroups of 6-7 chimps stay together for a while, with the membership changing over time.

GROOMING

Grooming one another (cleaning the hair of another chimp) is a major occupation among chimpanzees in a group.

SLEEPING NESTS

Each evening, chimpanzees construct a fresh "sleeping nest" in the trees where they will curl up and sleep. These bowl-shaped nests are made out of leaves and other plant material. Nests are only shared by a mother and her nursing offspring.

PLAY

Young chimpanzees play a lot, learning skills they will use as an adult. They practice using tools, making sleeping nests, climbing, wrestling, etc.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is used to teach the young the many skills that they need to survive, and to convey information to other chimpanzees about food, social relationships, distress, mating, etc.

SOUNDS

Chimpanzees have a complex system of communication. They have cries that warn other chimps of danger in the area; their danger call can be heard through the forest for about 2 miles (3 km). When there is an abundance of food, chimps bark loudly to call the others in their group to a feast.

GESTURES

Chimpanzees also use many gestures to indicate needs and emotions. Chimps will beg other chimps for food by approaching them with open hands. Friends may hold hands, hug, or even kiss. A worried chimp makes a lip-puckering face. A frightened chimp will bare its teeth. A smile indicates a relaxed, friendly chimp. When the lips are tightly pressed together, the chimp is ready to attack.