

LEVELED BOOK • K

# Gorillas



Written by Kira Freed

[www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)



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## **Gorillas**

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Gorillas are members of the great ape family. They live in the forests of Africa. Gorillas have strong, heavy bodies. They can walk on two legs like people do. Most of the time they walk on their feet and hands.



Gorillas eat leaves, stems, bark, fruits, flowers, and wood. They also eat insects and snails. Most gorillas do not hunt.







Gorillas make faces  
to show how they feel.  
Their faces tell if they are  
happy, sad, or upset.  
Gorillas can cry, and they laugh  
when they are tickled.



## Gorilla Families

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A gorilla family is called a troop.

A troop eats, sleeps,  
and plays together.

Family members play tag,  
catch, and dress-up with leaves.





A gorilla baby nurses and stays close to its mother for a few years. It rides on her back to move around.



A baby gorilla stays near its mother until it is about 10 years old.



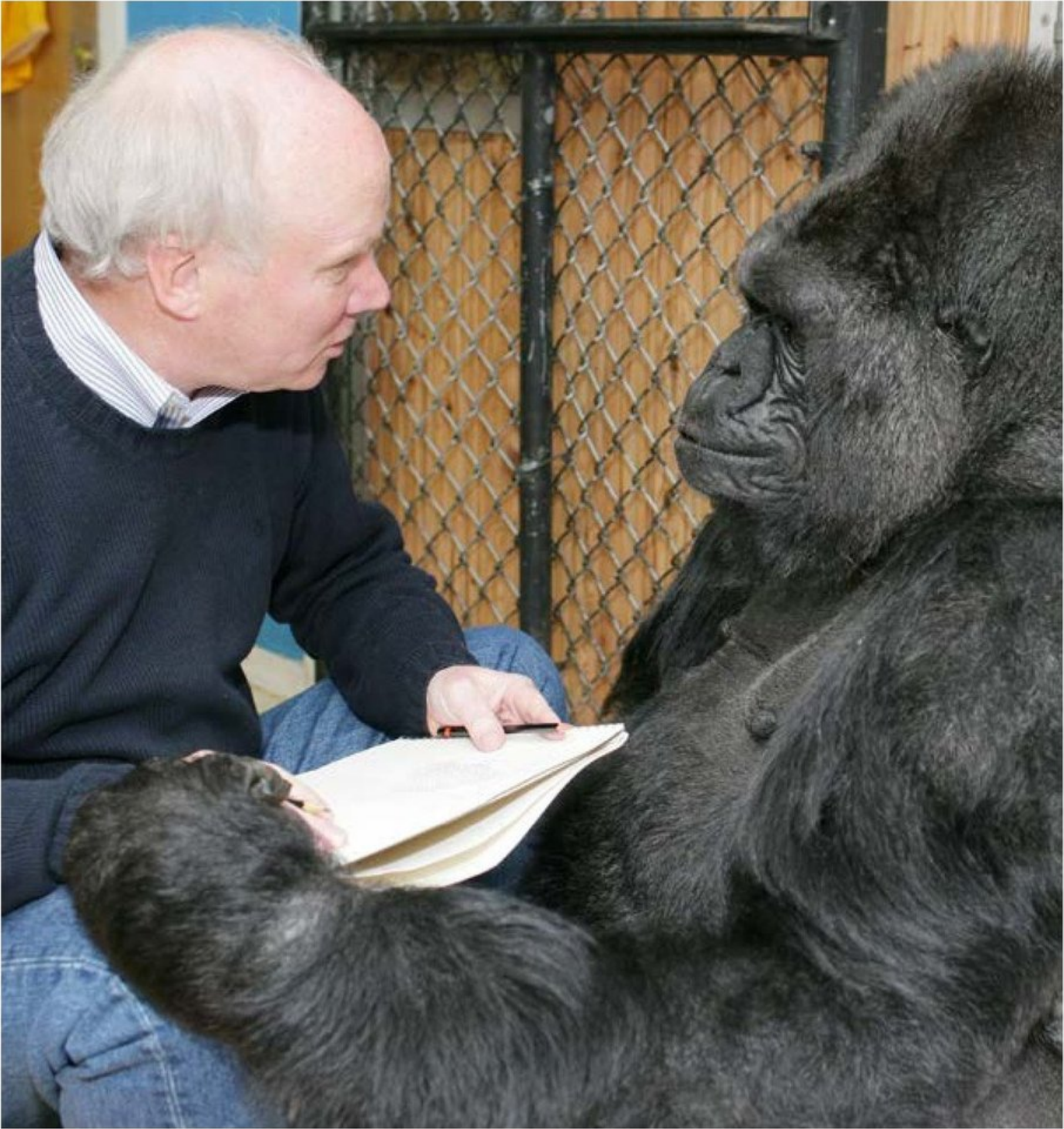


An adult female gorilla weighs 91 kg (200 lbs). A silverback gorilla weighs 181 kg (400 lbs).



When a male gorilla grows up, the fur on its back turns silver. It is called a silverback. The silverback's job is to protect the troop.





An artist draws Koko.

## **Learning to Talk**

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Gorillas are very smart.

A woman named Penny taught a gorilla to use sign language.

The gorilla's name is Koko.

Koko uses signs to tell Penny what she wants and how she feels.



# Gorillas in Danger

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Many gorillas have been killed by hunters.

Their forest homes are being cut down.

Gorillas are now endangered.

Many people are trying to save these great apes.



A scientist learns more about gorillas by spending time with them in the wild.





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Special thanks to the Gorilla Foundation ([www.koko.org](http://www.koko.org)). The Gorilla Foundation’s mission is to bring interspecies communication to the public in order to save gorillas from extinction, and to inspire children to create a better future for all the great apes.

Special thanks also to Dr. Melissa Remis of Purdue University. Dr. Remis is currently researching the decline of western lowland gorillas due to human activity in the Dzanga-Sangha National Forest Reserve in the Central African Republic.

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