

BENCHMARK • K

Gorillas



Written by Kira Freed

Gorillas



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Gorillas

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

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.



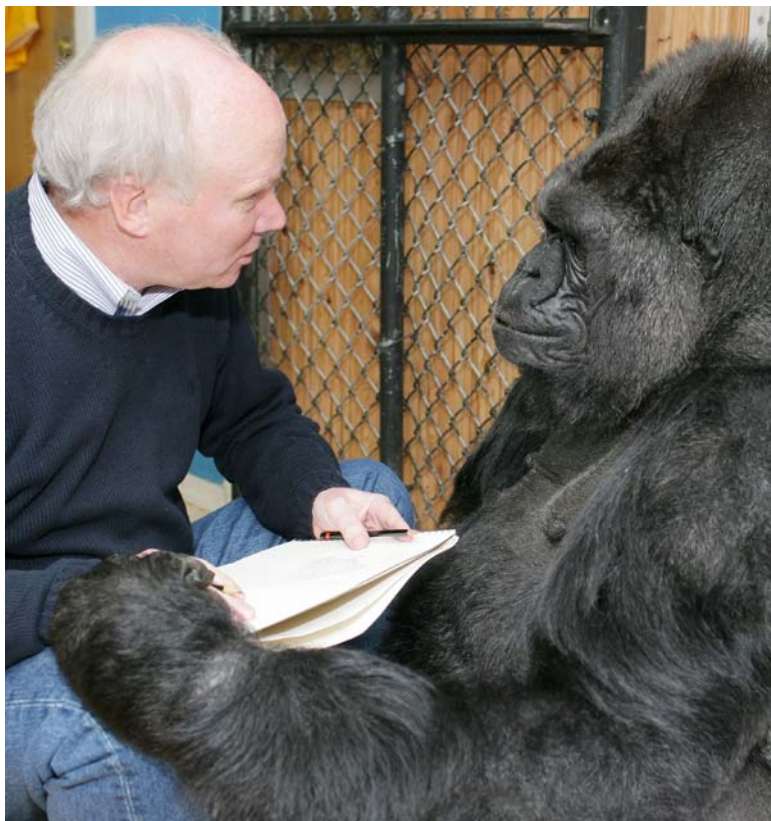
A baby gorilla stays near its mother until it is about 10 years old.



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

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

Many gorillas have been
killed by hunters.

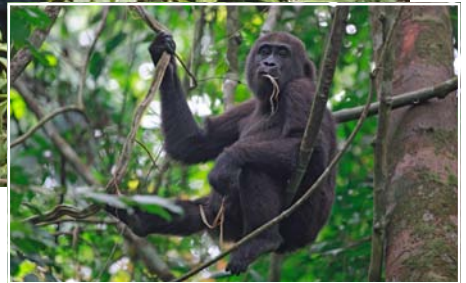
Their forest homes
are being cut down.

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). 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.

Gorillas
Level K Benchmark Book
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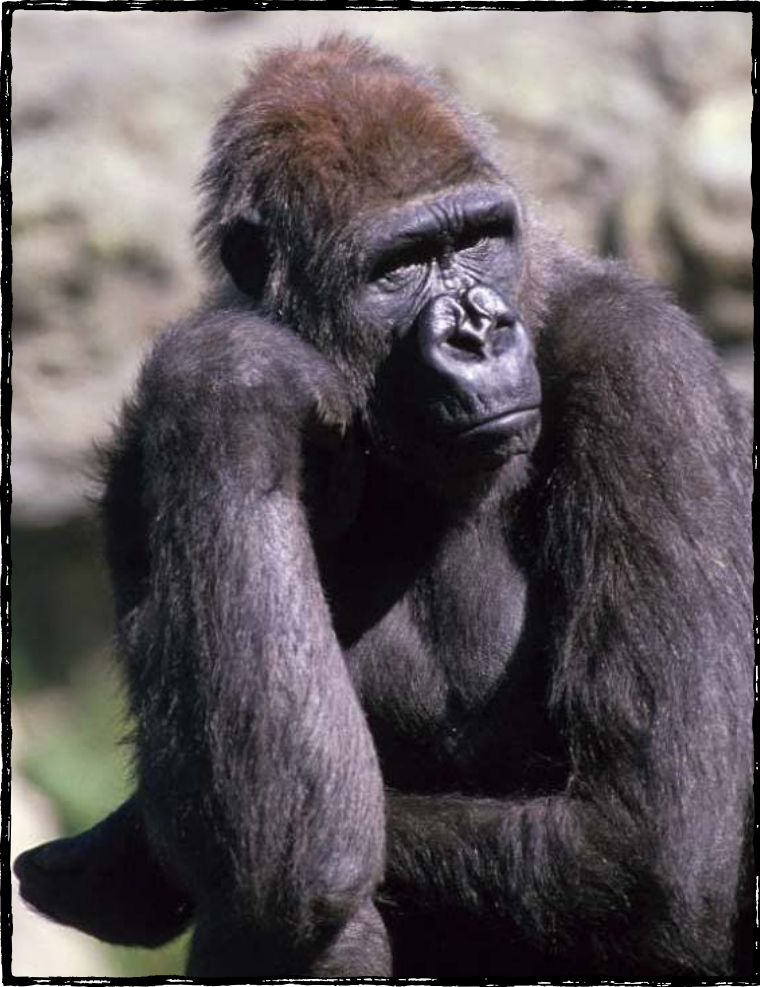
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