

Gorillas

CONTENTS

Teacher's book	2
A day in the life of a zookeeper	4
Preschool Activities	5
Primary School Activities (1st and 2nd cycle)	6
Primary School Activities (3rd cycle)	7
Secondary School Activities	9

Teacher's book



Gorilla facts

Gorillas are the largest primates on the planet, being more robust than humans. They can be up to 1.75 m tall and weigh 200 kg. Their arm span is 2 to 2.75 m.

As with most primates, they have 5 fingers and toes. Their thumb is opposable, like ours, which makes it easier for them to grasp and manipulate things. Unlike us, they also have an opposable thumb on their foot and the middle toes are joined by a membrane.

Their forelimbs are much longer than their hind limbs. They walk on all four limbs, turning the wrist inwards and resting on their knuckles.

Their nose and mouth are wide. Their lips are thick and not so mobile, more similar to those of humans than to those of other anthropomorphic primates.

Their ears are small, their neck is short, and they have no tail. Their fur is smooth, long and woolly.

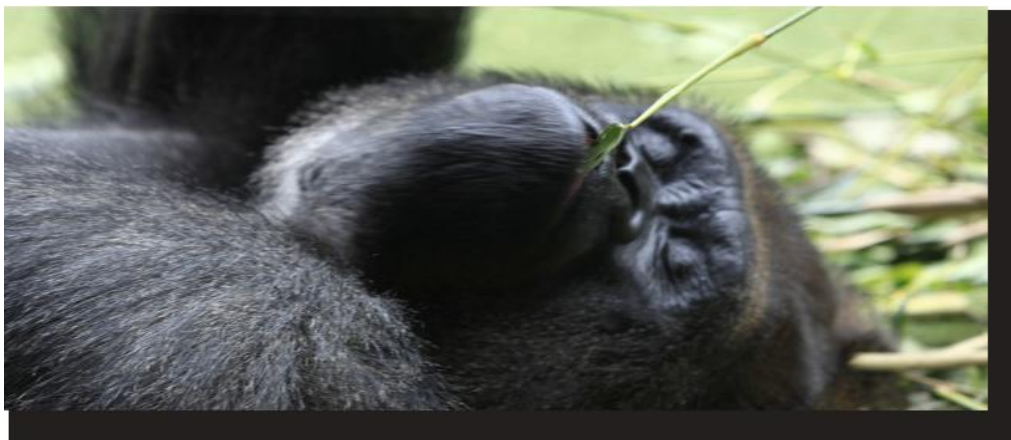
They live in the humid forests of Central Africa, where there are two species: the western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) and the eastern gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*). Each species has, in turn, two subspecies, which differ in size and in the colour and length of their fur, among other things.

Gorillas live in family groups, consisting of one or two dominant males, several females, and their offspring.

When a male reaches sexual maturity (at about 15 years of age), his back will turn greyish ("silverback"). At this time, adult males must leave the group.

Gorillas are herbivores and feed on twigs, fruits, and leaves. They spend a third of the day eating and foraging. At night, they build vegetation nests in the lower parts of trees.

They are very intelligent, being able to communicate by gestures, use tools, etc...



Captive Breeding

At Loro Parque we have 7 male gorillas of the western species. It is a bachelor group.

They are part of the European Endangered Species Programme. They come from other zoos, where they had been excluded from the family group by the dominant male and therefore had been forced to live alone.

To help them, LP created Villa Gorilla, where males from different groups retire or wait for their chance to start their own family.

When a zoo needs a male for its female group, one is chosen from here. The goal is to create in captivity a healthy and diverse population so that, eventually, when conservation problems are solved, they can be released back into the wild.

How to save the gorillas?

All gorilla species are in critical danger of extinction. For example, there are only 300-500 individuals left of the eastern subspecies of mountain gorillas.

Their main threats are habitat destruction, poaching and certain diseases (e.g., Ebola). In addition, the political situation in the countries where they inhabit makes it very difficult to protect them.

For this reason, the Agreement on the Conservation of the Gorilla and its Habitat was signed in 2008, requiring African governments in the area to jointly work towards its protection.

Some of the ongoing actions are:

- Raising awareness among the local population.
- Anti-poaching patrols.
- Tourist routes to meet the gorillas and increase support for conservation projects.
- Protection of natural areas to prevent deforestation.
- Captive breeding programmes.

Interesting facts

Gorillas are very similar to humans and, together with chimpanzees, are the closest living relatives we have - we share 97.7% of our genes!

A gorilla's nose is like a "fingerprint" and is unique to each individual.

When females reach adulthood, they also must leave the family group and look for a new one with an accepting male. This reduces inbreeding and increases genetic variability between groups.

They have a young every 3-4 years, after a gestation period of 8.5 months.

They can live up to 50 years.

They are very intelligent and sensitive animals - some gorillas in captivity have even learned to communicate using sign language!



Animal factsheet (Critically endangered)

Western Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*)

Kingdom: *Animalia*

Phylum: *Chordata*

Class: *Mammalia*

Order: Primates

Family: *Hominidae*

Genus: *Gorilla*

Species: *Gorilla gorilla*

Size: adult males up to 1.75m.

Weight: adult male 140-200kg; females half this weight.

Gestation: 250 to 270 days (only one offspring with few exceptions).

Maximum age: up to 40 years, longer in captivity.

Distribution: Equatorial Africa.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ZOOKEEPER



Hi guys! I'm one of the gorilla keepers at Loro Parque.

At 7 o'clock in the morning, I arrive at their rooms and play music to wake them up. In the meantime, my colleagues and I prepare their breakfast: soy milk with *gofio* and cereal.

When they wake up, the gorillas eat their breakfast and we head outside to clean the terrace and prepare it with palm leaves and other plants, and to hide fruit and yoghurt in the tree trunks. Soon they ask us to take them outside so that they can play and look for treats.

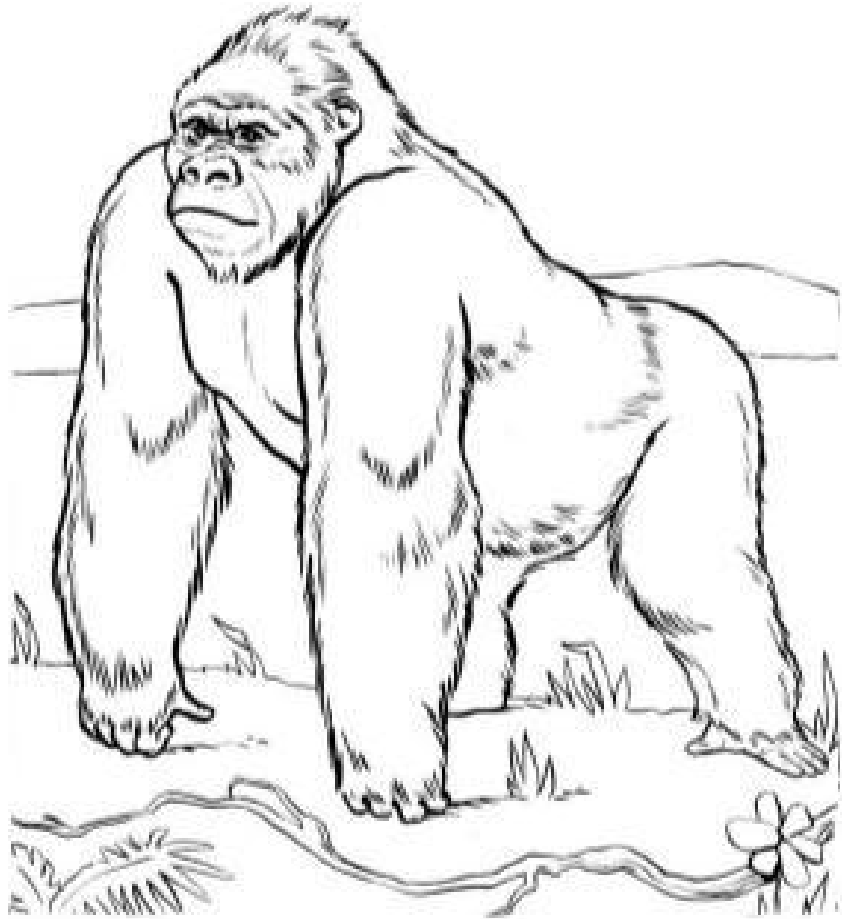
Then it's time to clean the rooms and prepare their lunch - they eat up to 8 kg of fruit and vegetables a day!

In the afternoon we must clean the rooms again and prepare them for the night. For this we bring leaves, branches, and rolls of paper so that they can build their nests, just like in the wild. We prepare their dinner and cut the fruit and vegetables for the next day.

We call them into their rooms for dinner and sleep, and we play music for them to relax after a long day's play. Finally, we turn off the lights so they can rest - they sleep for up to 13 hours!

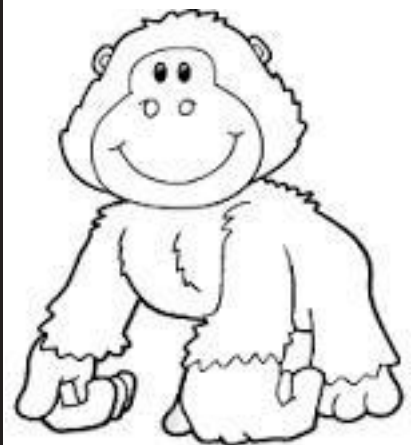
PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Colour in the gorilla drawing



How do you spell it?

GGGGG	GGGGG
OOOOO	OOOOO
RRRRR	RRRRR IIIII
IIIII	LLLLL
LLLLL	AAAAA
AAAAA	
<hr/>	



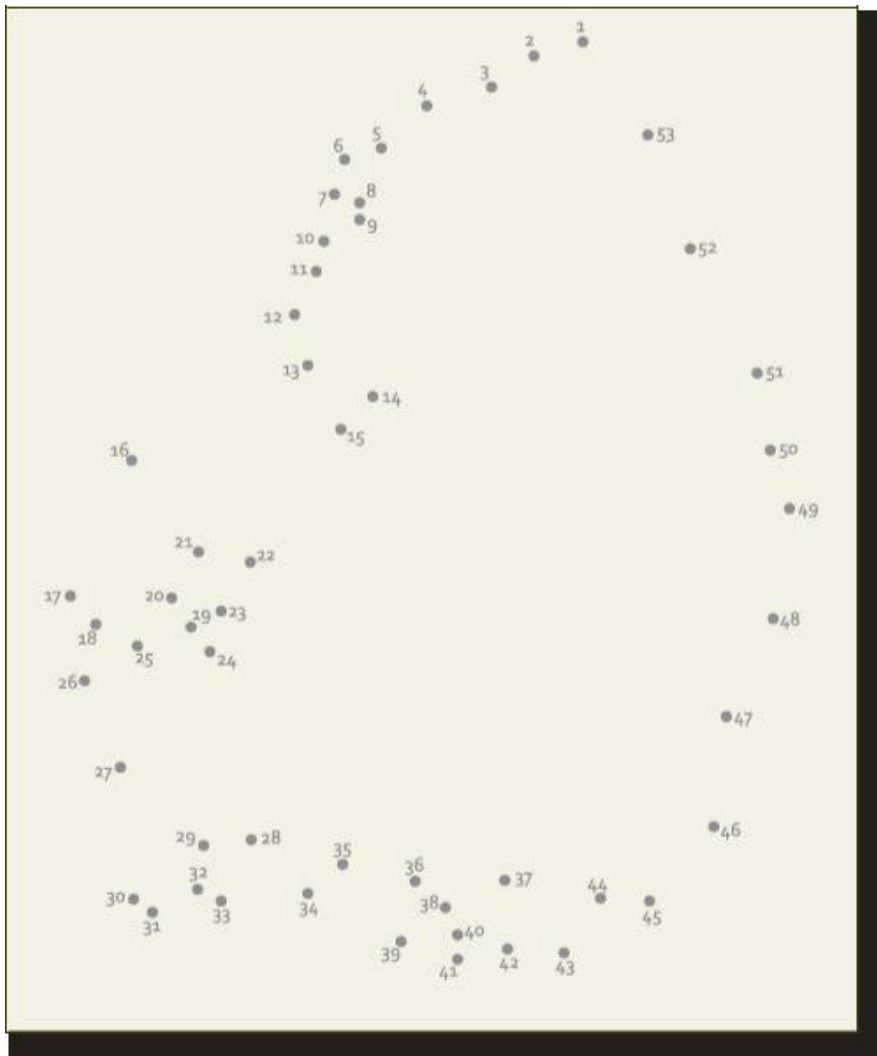
PRIMARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Word search to learn about gorillas:

T	H	A	S	R	D	W	J	V	A	U	Y
F	H	I	B	P	F	S	F	L	X	P	T
A	E	D	O	O	Z	R	I	Ñ	S	R	N
F	R	O	O	L	S	R	U	A	E	I	M
R	B	C	I	M	O	Q	Z	T	M	M	A
I	I	O	A	G	I	A	U	R	A	A	M
C	V	H	W	Z	N	N	V	E	A	T	I
A	O	O	Ç	E	A	O	A	Ñ	S	E	F
B	R	J	M	S	K	D	I	N	U	O	E
T	O	A	G	R	U	P	O	T	T	A	R
Q	E	Ç	B	W	I	P	P	R	B	E	O
U	K	Ñ	V	D	U	S	Y	Z	G	Y	J

- Words to find:
- GORILLA
 - HERBIVORE
 - FRUIT
 - LEAF
 - PRIMATE
 - MAMMAL
 - FORESTS
 - AFRICA
 - GROUP
 - HUNTER
 - THREATS

Join the dots to discover the picture.



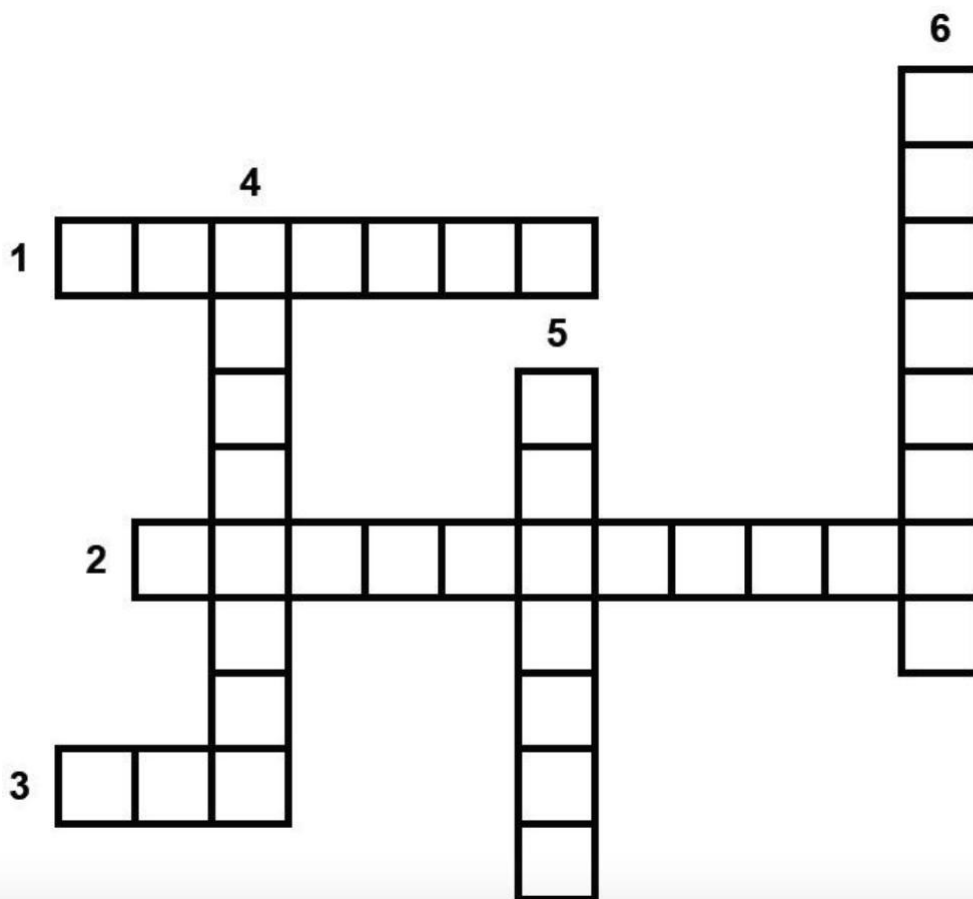
PRIMARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Read the following text and solve the crossword puzzle

There are two types of gorillas in Africa: the western gorilla and the eastern gorilla. Gorillas are herbivores, feeding on leaves, stems, and fruits. They live in family groups, where there is a dominant male, several females, and their offspring.

When a male gorilla becomes an adult, his back changes colour, turning grey and is known as "silverback". He then must be separated from his parents until he is strong enough to raise a family of his own. Gorillas are in danger of extinction.

Their main threats are poaching, destruction of the forests they inhabit and disease.



HORIZONTAL

2. Part of the male's body of a different colour.
5. Male leading the gorilla group.
6. Colour to which a part of a male's body changes as an adult.

VERTICAL

1. One of the main threats to the gorilla.
2. When an endangered animal disappears.
3. Continent where gorillas live.
4. An animal that only eats vegetables.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Did you know that a gorilla's nose is like a fingerprint? No two are the same! Connect with arrows and identify the gorillas of Loro Parque by their nose.

Schorsch



Noël



Pole Pole



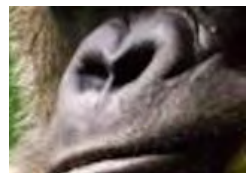
Rafiki



Aladdin



Ubongo



Kiburi



SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Read the following text and, after watching the video, suggest another environmental enrichment technique that ensures the welfare of our animals.

Environmental enrichment involves modifying the environment and care practices of animals living outside their natural habitat to encourage behaviours as similar as possible to those they would develop in the wild.

Outside their habitat, the animals may become sedentary, as their basic needs are provided by their caretakers, and they develop different behaviours to those in the wild. If this situation is not adequately addressed, some animals may find themselves under stressful conditions, which may even lead to abnormal behaviour and affect their health and reproduction.

By following this link, you can watch a video on how we prepare the food for our gorillas at Loro Parque. You will notice that the food is specially prepared to be hidden in their enclosure for them to have fun and explore around to find it.

After watching the video, can you think of any other enrichment technique for our gorillas?

All gorilla species are in danger of extinction. After reading the following text, what measures do you think should be taken to protect them?

According to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species, both gorilla species are endangered. The Eastern Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*) is endangered, and its populations are declining every year. The Western Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) is critically endangered, because its populations continue to decline due to the gorilla meat trade and disease. Their population has declined by more than 60% in the last 25 years and about a third of the total population living within protected areas has been wiped out by the Ebola virus in the last 15 years.

Gorillas are an endangered genus. Their main threats are poaching, habitat loss, epidemics, as well as armed conflicts in their home countries, which hinder their protection.

SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Who was Dian Fossey? Find out what she did for gorillas. Then write a short piece about her life.

ANIMAL EMBASSY

THE JOURNAL OF LORO PARQUE



Dian Fossey, a friend of the gorillas

Two columns of horizontal lines for writing.