

Name: _____ Group name: _____ Date: _____

Island Biodiversity & Ecology: Lemurs

Location: Lemur Boardwalk

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Mammalia
Order	Primate
Family	Lemuridae
Genus	Lemur
Species	<i>Sp.</i>

What is a Primate?

Primates are a diverse order of animals that include Monkeys, Apes, and Prosimians, just like you and me!

There are many similarities and differences between primates, which can make it tricky to tell them apart. A few common characteristics shared by all primates are:

1. Large brains in comparison to body size
2. Opposable thumbs
3. Binocular vision (eyes on the front of their heads)
4. Vision is more important than sense of smell.
5. Long life spans and slow growth rates
6. Few offspring
7. Complex social groups

When we classify primates into their groups (Prosimian, Monkey, or Ape) we will categorize them based on the characteristics they have in common. Common characteristics of these groups are:

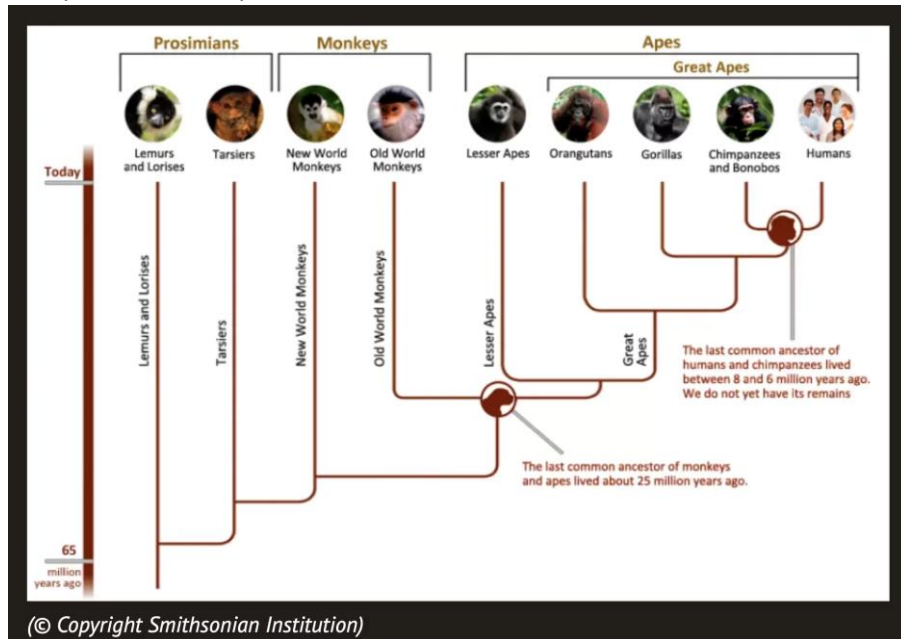
Prosimians	Monkey	Apes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smallest in size Arms shorter than legs Strong hind legs for leaping. Some are nocturnal. Tooth comb Some visible nails Grooming claws Wet nose Strong sense of smell Light-reflecting eyes Dog-like snout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small to medium in size. Arms equal in length or shorter than legs. Limited shoulder rotation Diurnal (active during the day) Visible tail Nails on all digits Dry nose Weak sense of smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largest size Arms longer than legs Full shoulder rotation (brachiation) Diurnal Broad chested No tails Nails on all digits Dry nose Flat face Lack of hair on face Weak sense of smell.

Phylogenetic Trees

We can further classify species groups by looking at their phylogenetic tree, a diagram that depicts the common ancestry and change of characteristics over time of a species.

Primates can be sorted into two suborders: Prosimians and Anthropoids (shown in the figure below).

- **Lemurs**, galagoes (bushbabies), lorises and tarsiers are Prosimians.
- Monkeys and apes are Anthropoids.



All about Lemurs! We have three species of lemurs at the Alligator Farm. They are all boys!

Did you know? Madagascar is the only place in the world where you can find lemurs.

There are over 100 different species of lemur, in all shapes and sizes. But why are they only found on Madagascar?

- Lemurs originated in mainland Africa. Before the anthropoids arrived, you could find lemurs all over the world!
- Lemurs and other diurnal prosimians were outcompeted for space and food, and slowly disappeared from mainland Africa.
 - Only nocturnal prosimians live outside of Madagascar!
- It is thought that Lemur ancestors floated to the island of Madagascar on clumps of vegetation.



- Lemurs had no predators when they arrived on the island and were able to adapt and spread rapidly. This led to the creation of new species.
- Madagascar's ecosystem is incredibly diverse and can support different types of animals, as well as allow adaptation (change over time) of animals. This creates new species!
 - Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world.

Test your knowledge!

1. Based on what you know about the characteristics of primates, label each picture as either a prosimian, ape, or monkey.



2. Using the figure found in Phylogenetic Trees, which of the following are more closely related to the ancestor of Primates? (Circle one)
 - a. Prosimian
 - b. Monkey
 - c. Ape
3. True or False: Lemurs and other diurnal prosimians were outcompeted for space and food, and slowly disappeared from mainland Africa. _____
4. How do scientists think lemurs got to Madagascar? (Circle one)
 - a. They swam.
 - b. They walked across a section of land that connected the island to the mainland.
 - c. They floated on rafts of vegetation.
5. Why are there so many types of Lemurs on Madagascar? (Circle one)
 - a. They had no natural predators, so they adapted and new species formed.
 - b. The island is large and was able to support many new species of lemur.
 - c. Animals who are nocturnal can't live on Madagascar.
 - d. Both A and B
6. BONUS: Humans are primates. Are we considered apes, monkeys, or prosimians?
 - a. Apes
 - b. Monkeys
 - c. Prosimians

Learn more:

- Lemur Conservation Network: <https://www.lemurconservationnetwork.org/>