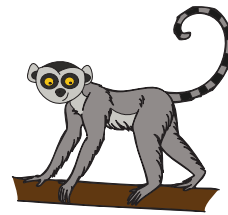


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# Is That Really a Monkey?

by Guy Belleranti

Have you ever seen a monkey at the zoo?  
If you have, are you sure it was really a monkey?  
Sometimes, people call an animal a monkey when  
it isn't a monkey at all. It may be a prosimian or an  
ape.



Prosimians, monkeys and apes all belong  
to a group of mammals called primates.

Prosimians are lower primates. Monkeys and apes are higher primates.

Both the lower and higher primates share some common characteristics.  
Forward-facing eyes with color vision is one. Five-fingered hands with opposing thumbs  
is another.

However, there are also many differences.

One difference is the time of day when the animal is most active. Most prosimians  
are nocturnal. This means they are active at night. Monkeys and apes are the opposite.  
They are diurnal, or mostly active during the day.

Prosimians have dog-like snouts and a much greater sense of smell than monkeys  
and apes. Baboons are one of the few monkeys with snouts, and no apes at all have a  
protruding snout.

What are a few examples of animals belonging to the prosimian group? Well the  
lemur is one. The bushbaby and loris are two others.

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So far we have been talking about how monkeys and apes differ from prosimians. Now let's see a few ways monkeys and apes differ from each other.

One major difference is the tail. Apes don't have a tail. Almost all monkeys do. Even baboons, the largest of the monkeys, have a tail, though it is pretty short.

Another difference is size. Most apes are larger than monkeys. Also, apes have larger brains. Apes have arms longer than their legs. Monkeys' arms are shorter or the same length as their legs.

Apes also have full shoulder rotation, which means they can swing arm over arm from branch to branch. Most monkeys cannot do this, though the spider monkey is an exception. In fact, the skeletal structure of monkeys is more like other four-footed animals, and they move the same way, running along the branches on all fours.

There are more species of monkeys than there are of apes or prosimians. A few examples of monkeys, in addition to the baboon and spider monkey, are the macaque, the howler monkey, the capuchin, the tamarin and the marmoset.

Meanwhile, gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, gibbons and siamangs are all apes.

So the next time you visit a zoo remember that an animal you call a monkey might not really be a monkey at all. It might be a prosimian or an ape.

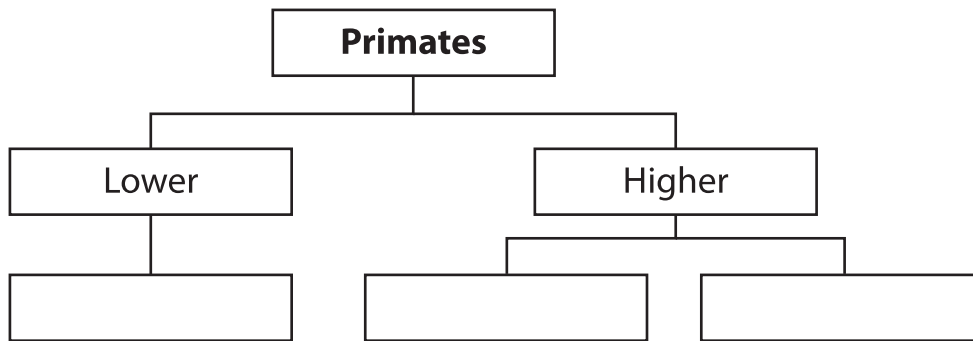
- Originally published by Wee Ones e-zine in November 2006

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# Is That Really a Monkey?

- 1) What would have been an ideal alternative title to the passage?
  - a) Monkeys and Apes
  - b) All about primates
  - c) Chimpanzees
  - d) Nocturnal prosimians

- 2) Complete the classification chart.



- 3) What are the common features of lower and higher primates?

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- 4) Name some animals which fall under each category of primates.

Prosimians -

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Monkeys -

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Apes -

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- 5) How are monkeys and apes different from each other?

Monkeys	Apes