

CHIMP FACES

ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

Content Areas: Primatology, animal behavior

Materials List: Various photos of chimpanzee or other primate expressions with a key to what they mean. Videos of primate research such as Jane Goodall or Diane Fossey and how they changed the way that we perceive primates.

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Empathy Best Practice: Assuring wellbeing, perspective taking



Conservation Connection: Support the Jane Goodall Institute and their chimpanzee conservation.



Tangible Action: Take a moment to research the body language of animals near you.



Background Info:

Anthropomorphism is the attachment of human traits to non-human entities, including non-human animals. When we see faces in cars or emotions in the weather, this is anthropomorphism. Because animals are individuals with agency, we have to interpret their emotions through our own experiences. The overlap between accurate interpretation of animal emotions and anthropomorphism can be a fine line to walk. A great example of how humans place our own experiences onto other species lies in our closest living relative, the chimpanzee.

This activity practices our ability to take the perspectives of others and encourages critical thinking when considering animal well-being.



Prep:

1. Familiarize yourself with chimpanzee expressions and what they mean, as well as the concept of anthropomorphism.
2. Print out chimp facial expression cards on stiff paper that can be held up like a sign.
3. For younger students or quick information, view videos about primate communication/behavior, like *How to Speak Chimpanzee* | **Extraordinary Animals** | BBC Earth. For older students, videos and research from primate biologists such as Jane Goodall or Diane Fossey and their contributions to our understanding of primates.

Procedure:

1. Separate students into two lines that are facing each other.
2. Stand behind Line 2, and show Line 1 a primate facial expression so that the students in Line 2 cannot see it. (DO NOT tell the students what the expression means)
3. Cue Line 1 to mimic the face that they see on the picture.
4. Cue Line 2 to guess the meaning behind the expressions being made by Line 1.
5. Reveal the picture of the expression and its meaning to all the students and briefly discuss. Points to guide your discussion include:
 - a. Does this primate expression mean the same thing as a similar human expression?
 - b. Make the expression of a human that is frightened, angry, etc. and compare to the primate expression of the same meaning.
 - c. Why is it important for animal caretakers, veterinarians, research biologists, etc. to know this information?
6. Repeat activity with the roles of the lines switched (Line 2 makes expressions and Line 1 guesses meaning)

Discussion:

Here are some prompts to guide a discussion and tie back to the main point of the activity:

Anthropomorphism, and its meaning, tie back to the idea of chimp expressions not always having the same meaning as human expressions. When we assume what an animal's expression or behavior means based on our knowledge of human expressions and behaviors, we are misinformed on the animal's behavior as it is different than ours. This can potentially lead to misinformation of how to care for them or simply be around them.

Species across the board have many differences in what they look like, their habitat, their diet etc. It is important to remember that they have differences in their behavior and characteristics as well. For example, the expression of fear in a chimpanzee can often be mistook as an angry human expression.

It is important to remember that when studying animal behavior to use caution when interpreting what certain behaviors might mean. By observing and recording the conditions around the animal and/or behavior of other animals in the group may assist with interpreting behavior of one individual animal.

Potential Questions:

1. If we can mistake expressions and emotions of even our closest relatives, what might we get wrong with animals that are more different from us?
2. How do we find out how animals communicate in the first place?
3. How can understanding animal communication lead to wildlife conservation?

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PENSIVE



THREAT



Answer Key.

Can include the
answers on the back
of each larger image

FEAR



HAPPY

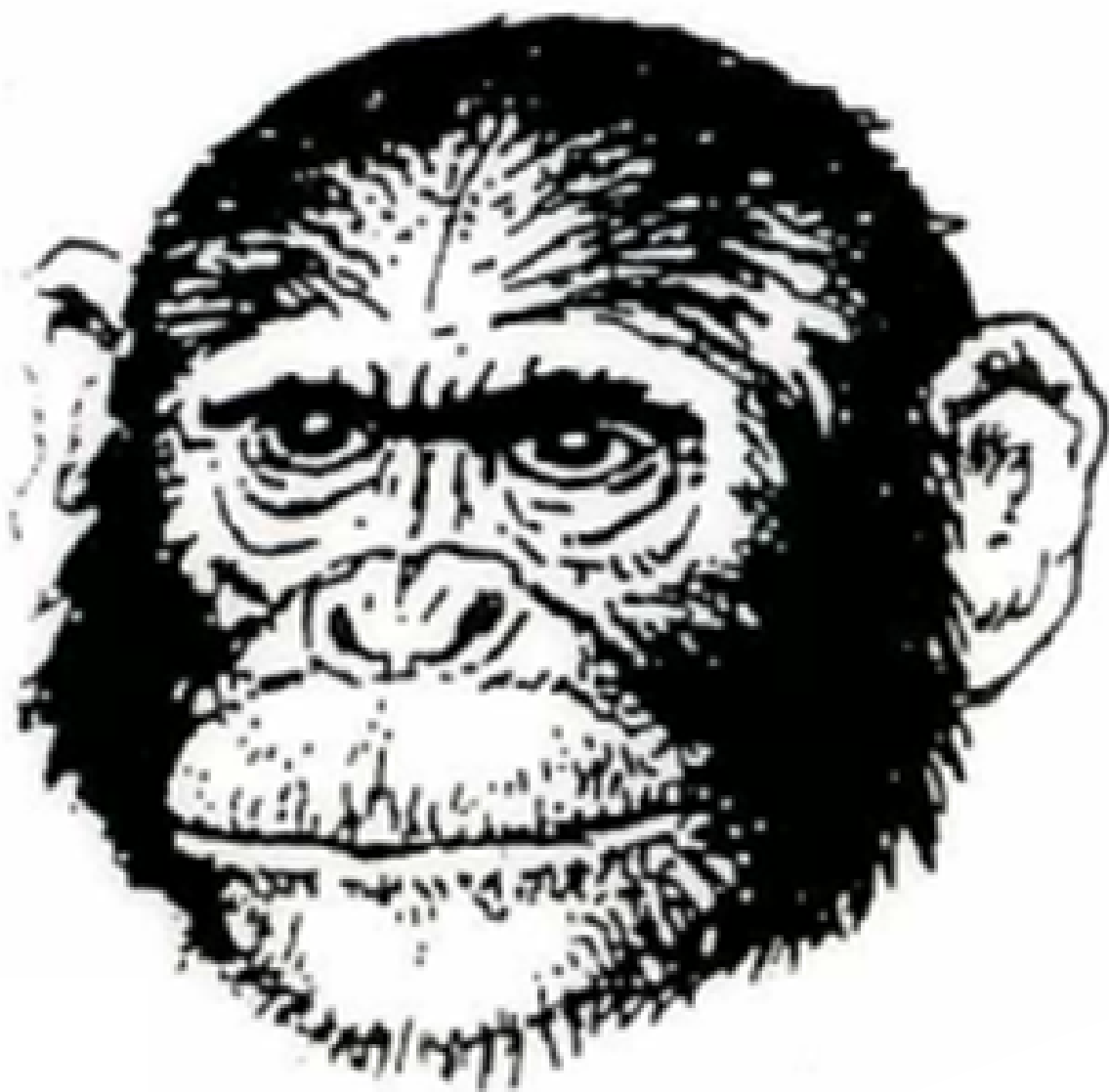


GREETING
POUT















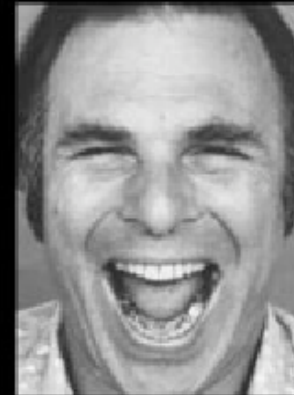
**AU 10+12+
16+25**



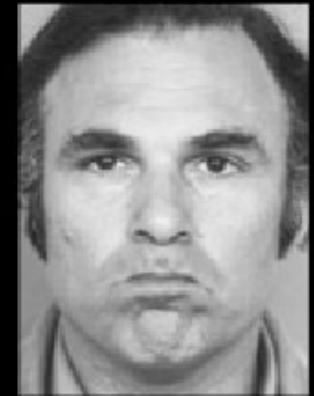
AU 22+25+26



AU 12+25+26



**AU 6+10+
12+16+25+27**



AU 17+24



Bared-teeth



Pant-hoot



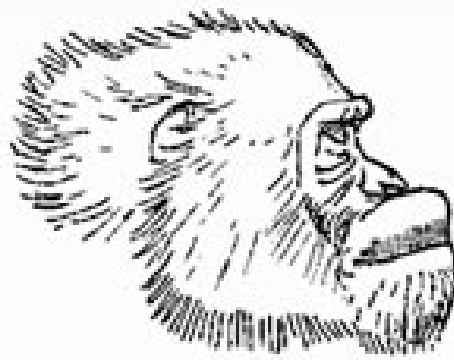
Play face



Scream



Bulging-lip face



Compressed Lip

Used in mild attacks



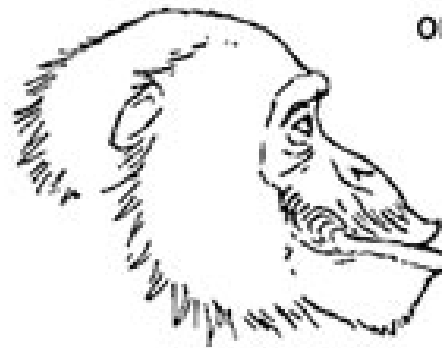
Lip Flip

When relaxed or also
seen in courtship



Grin Face

Shows intense fear
or other excitement



Pout Face

A sign of interest and
used for begging food