



# Project Chimps

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**Activity Name:** Chimps in Entertainment

**Learning Objectives:** SKL1, SKL2, S1L1, S2L1, S5L1, L6-8WHST1, S7L1, S7L4, SB5.d

**Grade/Age Level:** K-12

**Estimated Time:** 3-4 hours onsite w/ tour, 60-90 min. in classroom/virtual

**Materials:** chimp expression cards, papers, envelopes, pens, pencils, colored pencils

**Methods:** discuss, observe, write, draw, think, explain

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**Goal:** Teach students about the history of chimpanzees used in entertainment and why it is not acceptable to keep chimps as pets or use them in entertainment.

## Background:

- **Detriment to Species & Wild Populations**

- Chimpanzees continue, to this day, to be taken from the wild to be people's pets and to be used in the entertainment industry. Even though chimps are endangered and protected, they are still being murdered and smuggled out of the wild into captivity. You can purchase a baby chimp (illegally) for \$12,500. Baby chimps are being captured and smuggled out of west Africa into southeast Asia and China. For each baby chimp collected, as many as 10 adult chimps have been killed. The mother, father and most likely other family members, in the process of trying to protect the baby, will be shot and killed.
- Chimps are subjected to horrible abuse while being trained for the entertainment industry. Some have their teeth knocked out and are repeatedly beaten into submission. The smile you think you see on a face of a chimpanzee in entertainment is often a "fear grimace" and does not at all exhibit a happy chimp. By going to movies or supporting companies that use chimps in commercials you are perpetuating chimps being used in entertainment.
- Many chimps that start as performers are eventually sold to research labs.

- **History of Chimps in Entertainment**

- **Movies/TV**
  - 1916- Chimpanzees Napoleon and Sally starred in over 40 television shorts
  - 1930-60s and 1966-68 - Tarzan. Movies and series. Jiggs played Cheetah the chimp and was retired to the Suncoast Primate Sanctuary in Palm Harbor Florida in the 1960s. He passed away December 24, 2011 at 80 years old. (Average life



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span in the wild for a chimpanzee is 45 years old and in captivity is up to 60 years old.) Jiggs was one of the lucky ones.

- 1932- The Chimp
- 1950s- Chimp J. Fred Muggs, born 1952, “co-hosted” NBC’s Today Show
- 1950s- Zippy the chimp roller skated on television
- 1951- Bedtime for Bonzo. Peggy the chimp played Bonzo. (Ronald Reagan)
- 1960s- Daktari. CBS series with a chimp named Judy.
- 1967- Monkeys Go Home
- 1971- Barefoot Executive
- 1978- Battlestar Galactica- Evie the chimp was dressed in a costume and played Robot Dog.
- 1981- Going Ape
- 1985- Phenomena- Tanga the chimp played in the horror movie
- 1986- Project X
  - 5 of these chimps are now in sanctuary at Primarily Primates in San Antonio, Texas.
- 1986- Max My Love
- 1987- Going Bananas
- 1990- The 5<sup>th</sup> Monkey
- 1994- Jungle Book- Carli the chimp, born 1993, was later sent to Monkey World, a sanctuary in the UK.
- 1996- Ed (chimp plays baseball)
- 1996- Dunston Checks In
- 1998- Summer of the Monkeys
- 2000s- Coca Cola and Old Navy television Commercials- Travis the chimp starred, was later shot & killed by police after attacking a 55-year-old woman.
- 2000- MVP- Most Valuable Primate (chimp playing hockey)
- 2001- MVP2- Most Vertical Primate (skateboarding chimp)
- 2004-MXP- Most Extreme Primate (snowboarding chimp)
  - Connor the Chimp appeared in this MVP/MXP series. Connor is now retired and 1 of 8 chimps in a facility in Missouri awaiting their turn for sanctuary. Unfortunately, there are no chimp sanctuaries with any room to take them in.
- 2004- Funky Monkey- Clemens the Chimp was used in this production
- 2004- Monk- a chimp named Mowgli made an appearance
- 2005- Manchurian Candidate- Mikey the chimp appeared
- 2005- SNL- Mikey appeared on SNL



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- 2005- Shaggy Dog- starred Mowgli the chimp
- 2005- My Big Fat Obnoxious Boss - Mowgli appeared here again, as well as guest starred on the Dennis Miller show, starred in CareerBuilder TV commercials before being sent to sanctuary at the Center for Great Apes in Florida
- 2006- World Series of Poker- Mikey the chimp made an appearance
- 2006- Spy Mate- Connor the Chimp was in this production
- 2007- Human Giant (music video) on MTV, Louie the chimp starred in music videos and television commercials.
- 2008- Space Chimps
- 2012- Last Superbowl commercial using a chimp.
- 2018- Zero- Eli the Chimp's last movie. Eli has since been retired by Working Wildlife and dropped off at Wildlife Waystation becoming part of their 40 chimps that need sanctuary. Project Chimps is assisting in the transport of some of these chimps from Los Angeles to their new forever home at CSNW- Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest in May 2021.
- **Circuses/Zoos**
  - While there are many zoos that provide excellent habitats and space for their chimpanzee populations, there are some that prioritize profit over the animals.
  - Up until recently, Zoological Wildlife Foundation in Miami would let you interact with a baby chimp for \$350 for 2 minutes, \$700 for 5 minutes or \$1,200 for 10 minutes.
    - Thankfully, since the changing in 2015 of ESA, listing captive chimps as endangered, most people/organizations have sent their pet chimps and chimpanzees used in the entertainment industry to sanctuary. But a few are still continuing to profit from using baby chimps for photo ops, as well as also exploiting a wide range of other baby primates and exotics. The demand for animals for these uses results in the unethical continuation of either breeding captive animals or illegally capturing baby animals from the wild
  - When visiting zoos make sure they are **American Zoological Association (AZA)** certified. Avoid roadside zoos and attractions that are uncertified.
  - Chimps have been used in circuses for decades to do unnatural things such as riding horses and bicycles. The training required can be brutal. Do not support circuses that use chimpanzees and/or other wild animals. Support Cirque du Soliel and other circuses that do not use animals in their acts.
- **Pets**



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- Many chimps that started as pets end up in the biomedical research industry because their owners sold them after they became unmanageable.
- During the collection of baby chimps to be sold as pets, poachers end up killing the entire baby's family. **Chimps DO NOT make good pets.**
- **Under no circumstances should a chimpanzee ever be kept as a pet!**
- Famous chimp pets:
  - Michael Jackson and Bubbles the chimp, born 1983. Bubbles now lives at the Center for Great Apes in Wauchula, Florida.
  - Elvis and Scatter the chimp.
- **Chimps as Pets and the Human Perception of Chimpanzees**
  - Chimps do not make good pets and should never be kept as pets. Regardless of this fact, people have been keeping chimpanzees as pets for decades to many unfortunate outcomes.
    - Baby chimps ultimately grow large, become unmanageable, and cannot live in a "home" setting.
    - When chimps are stressed and confined it increases the chances of them attacking humans and other animals.
  - Studies show that using chimps in television and commercials increases the desire for people to have a chimp as a pet.
  - The amendment to the Endangered Species Act in 2015, which made it illegal to trade chimps across state lines, resulted in a drastic decrease in the purchase and sale of captive chimps for pets. While chimps are still used in entertainment, it is not often; however, it is still legal to privately own a chimp and use them in entertainment in 20 states. That being said, the last time a chimp was used in a movie was 2018.
  - Studies have shown that repeated exposure to chimps in entertainment fosters the misperception that they are not endangered, which damages conservation efforts made on their behalf.

## Procedures:

1. **Discuss.** Have a discussion on:
  - a. The History of Chimps in Entertainment
  - b. Human Perception of Chimpanzees
  - c. Why it is NEVER ok to have a Chimpanzee as a Pet
2. **Tour.** If onsite- take your tour!
3. **Activities.** Complete 1 or more of the activities below. All lesson plans can be shared to complete more activities back in the classroom post field trip.



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4. **Assessment.** Discuss the assessment questions below.

## Activities:

- **Get creative! The One and Only Ivan.** (K-6) Draw Ivan in each of the 3 habitats he has had in his life and explain how he felt in each one. Answer the questions included. [Ivan- Habitat Activity](#)
- **Write.** (k-8) Pick one. Or both! [Chimps in Entertainment Letter Activity](#)
  - Write a letter to Ivan about your plans to help other animals going through a similar experience that he went through.
  - Write a letter to your local zoo or government telling them ways they can help make animals in captivity more comfortable.
- **Language Arts.** (k-8) Take a deeper dive into *The One and Only Ivan* in this [Activity Booklet](#). Explore vocabulary and learn about characters, plot, and setting while practicing reading comprehension.
- **Checklist.** (k-8) Check your knowledge by going through this [Chimp Checklist!](#)
- **Examine.** (all) Take an in depth look at chimpanzee communication by examining the facial features and expressions of chimpanzees. What are some of the main types of expressions that chimps make with their faces? What are they communicating by their expressions? How does the perception of the expressions differ from their actual meaning? Print, cut out and examine the [Expression Cards](#) of the chimpanzees and determine what they are expressing by their facial features.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> picture- Maverick's fear grimace
    - This expression is often seen on chimps being used in entertainment, this is a sign of fear and a very unnatural expression for a chimp. If you see this expression, that chimp is scared!
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> picture- Kareem's pant hoot
    - The pant hoot is an expression of excitement letting others know something is going on.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> picture- Hercules' happy droopy lip expression
    - This is a relaxed and happy chimp! When a chimp is relaxed and smiles you should only see a little of their bottom teeth.
- **Speak Up!!-** (all) If your local theater plays movies using live animals, speak up and tell them you will not support these movies! Make a list of movies with animals that used alternatives to live animals. (Call of the Wild used a CGI, computer generated image, dog). What alternatives are available? Tell your local theater you want to see movies like these, not movies that abuse live animals.

## Assessment:

1. Is it ok to use chimps in entertainment or to have a chimpanzee as a pet? Why/why not?



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2. What does it usually mean when a chimp appears to be smiling?
3. How does the pet trade and entertainment industry hurt wild chimpanzee populations?
4. How have the changes in ESA affected chimps in entertainment and the pet trade?
5. How does seeing chimps in entertainment relate to the overall conservation efforts for chimps?
6. What happens to the chimps after they can no longer be used in entertainment or can't live in a "home" anymore?

### **Conclusion:**

We can all make a difference in this issue by not going to see movies that use chimps or other wild animals in them. Do not support companies that use chimpanzees in television shows and commercials. Do not go to circuses that use dangerous wild animals such as chimps in their acts. Do not support organizations that allow pictures with baby exotic animals. Most importantly, no matter how cute they are, it is never ok to have a chimp as a pet.

### **Notes to Instructor:**

- [Chimps in Entertainment Assessment Questions](#)
- [Laws concerning owning chimps- state by state](#)
- Please use your judgement to adapt this lesson to different age groups.
- All lesson plans are available to any teachers who would like to access them.
- Thank you for being a part of our community! By visiting us on field trips, participating in our lessons virtually, and spreading the word about the need for Project Chimps, you and your students are helping in the process to get all research chimps to sanctuary.