



# Project Chimps

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**Activity Name:** Our Chimps!

**Learning Objectives:** SKL1, SKL2, S1L1, S2L1, S5L1, L6-8WHST1, S7L1, S7L4, VAHSDR.CR.1

**Grade/Age Level:** K-8

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

**Materials:** field journals for notes while on tour, paper, pens, pencils, colored pencils, butcher paper

**Methods:** discuss, observe, describe, identify, think, write, draw

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**Goal:** Educate students on the history of Project Chimps, where our chimps came from and the physical characteristics of chimpanzees.

## **Background Information:**

- **The History of Project Chimps**

- 2014- Future Project Chimp's leadership reached a deal with **University of Louisiana's New Iberia Research Center (NIRC)** to find a place to provide lifelong sanctuary for all the 220+ chimps in their care.
- 6/3/2014- Project Chimps was formed.
  - Project Chimps is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization under the umbrella of **Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)**.
- 11/2015- Project Chimps purchased the current property.
  - Effective 9/14/2015 **US Fish & Wildlife (USFWS)** amended the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** to end the split listing between captive (threatened) and wild (endangered) chimps. As a result, all chimps are now considered endangered and conducting medical research on chimpanzees is illegal.
  - Fact- the US was the last country to stop experimenting on chimpanzees.
  - The purchase of 236 acres in Morganton, GA was approximately \$2 million and was made possible by HSUS.
- Project Chimps is a former gorilla sanctuary. It took an additional \$2 million and about a year to convert and get the property ready to receive the first chimps.
  - Rachel Ray revamped and designed the kitchen.
  - Billie Joe and Adrienne Armstrong, Judy Greer, and Kat von D were some of the original supporters and made key initial investments. Bob Barker was also an initial key contributor.



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- 5/2016- Project Chimps launched their website, establishing a social media presence and an online fundraising platform.
- 9/8/2016- the first group of 9 chimps arrived (females)
- 11/30/2016- the second group of 7 chimps arrived (males)
- 2017- new Executive Director- Ali Crumpacker- was hired. Ali worked with the philanthropy team to create a Case of Support for long term funding needs and doubled sanctuary revenue in first year.
- 5/17/2017- our third group of 6 chimps arrived (males)
- 12/13/2017- our fourth group of 9 chimps arrived (females)
- End of 2017- 30 chimps in residence
- 1/2018- outdoor 6-acre Peachtree Habitat opened
- 3/21/2018- our fifth group of 9 chimps arrived (males)
- 5/15/2018- Sopulu passed away peacefully in a hammock from heart failure
- 8/29/2018- our sixth group of 10 chimps arrived (females)
- 11/7/2018- our seventh group of 10 chimps arrived (5 males, 5 females)
- 12/2018-
  - 54 chimps in residence
  - active volunteer program with 150 volunteers
  - Construction began on the large 40 chimp group villa
- Fall 2019-
  - Chateau/Group Building opened
- 11/5/2019- our eight group of 10 chimps arrived (females)
- 11/19/2019- our ninth group of 10 chimps arrived (males)
- End of 2019- 79 chimps in residence
- 1/2020- Construction on new habitat began
- Tibi passed from kidney failure 5/11/2020 making it 78 chimps
- Alex passed from heart failure 1/26/2021 making it 77 chimps
- **Our Chimps!**
  - Project chimp's chimps came to sanctuary from NIRC at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette. **We know that they were subject to research activities but do not know specifically what type of research they underwent.**
    - When NIRC first opened, their primary focus was “to provide private industry and the federal government with a reliable source of native born, quality-bred nonhuman primates.” In 1990, NIRC “expanded its mission by providing ..... evaluations of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology products.” Some of the things they are known to have done in their lab were:



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- Drug safety studies
- Drug efficacy studies
- Basic biology studies in Hepatitis C infected chimpanzees
- Therapeutic studies (i.e., studies for hepatitis C vaccines and therapies)
- Behavioral studies and sampling studies on control animals
- **Biomedical research** is a broad area of science that involves the investigation of the biological process and the causes of disease through careful experimentation, observation, laboratory work, analysis, and testing.
- From 1995 until they ended their breeding program in 2014 over 200 chimps were born into captivity at NIRC.
- In 2009 NIRC received a series of **Animal Welfare Act (AWA)** violations. HSUS got involved to begin the process of getting the chimps to sanctuary.
- **National Institute of Health (NIH)** began phasing out biomedical research on chimpanzees in 2013 and in 2015 ESA was amended to end the split listing of captive and wild chimps and to declare all chimpanzees as endangered animals, therefore, making it illegal to conduct medical research on them.
- There are still over 100 chimps at NIRC awaiting their turn to come to the sanctuary. While it is illegal for them to be experimented on, they are still living in the lab. The lab does have outdoor enclosures that the chimps can go in to see sunshine, but otherwise they have never been outside without caging over their heads. In addition, before coming to Project Chimps, the majority of the chimps were kept in same-sex groups and have never seen a member of the opposite sex.
- Project chimps does not know what specific research any of the chimps went through. PC is provided only with their name, sex and birthdate. Project Chimps does know that none of the chimps in sanctuary have hepatitis or AIDS.
- **Physical Characteristics of Chimpanzees**
  - Check out the [Meet the Chimps](#) page on Project Chimp's website. Go through several of the pictures and talk about some of the physical characteristics of the different chimps. What sets them apart?
    - Brow lines, pigmentation, bone structure, identification of unique characteristics, along with careful examination of the eyes, nose, mouth, and even their hair can help us differentiate the chimps.
    - When we look at hair, we can look at hair styles. Some chimps have a distinct part in the middle of their head for example, and some start to grey as they age getting a grey beard. We also look at the hair around their shoulders. Some get "whispie" tufts that can be a good distinguishing characteristic.



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- Choose a few chimps to describe as a group.

## Procedures:

1. **Discuss.** Have a discussion on:
  - a. The History of Project Chimps.
  - b. The Project Chimp's chimps!
  - c. Using Physical Characteristics to Identify individual Chimps.
2. **Tour.** If onsite- take your tour!
  - a. Take a journal and make notes of the chimp's physical characteristics observed on the chimps that you see.
    - i. Write down as many descriptive words as you can.
3. **Activities.** Complete one or more of the activities below. All lesson plans can be shared to complete more activities in the classroom post field trip.
4. **Assessment.** Discuss the assessment questions below.

## Activities:

- **Math.** (k-6) Practice early elementary math skills, chimp style! [Chimp Addition Worksheet](#)
- **Timeline.** (k-6) Explore the timeline of Project Chimps, look at the different group arrivals, and identify some important dates. [Our Chimps! Timeline](#)
- **Art.** (k-8) Take a detailed look at the unique characteristics of chimpanzees. Practice drawing these characteristics based on our chimps. [Chimpanzee Characteristics](#)
- **Math.** (6-8) Challenge your students and activate their critical thinking skills with [Chimpanzee Word Problems](#) based on Our Chimps. This activity involves graphing.
- **Identify.** (all) Project chimps has quite a few family relationships amongst their chimps. Can you tell by looking at them who is related? Use the [Meet the Chimps](#) page to examine the physical characteristics of the chimps and see if you can determine the family connections. You may split into groups or do individually. [Our Chimps- Relationships](#)
- **Describe.** (all) Come up with as many adjectives as you can to describe the physical characteristics of the chimps you saw on your tour. If doing virtually, refer to the [Meet the Chimps](#) page.
- **Write.** (all) Pick a chimp whose physical features intrigue you. Write a short story, poem, haiku (3), song or other type of creative writing based on your chimp. Use some of the adjectives you generated in your writing.
- **Draw.** (all) While focusing on the physical features of your chimp, draw their face. What really stands out to you? What sets your chimp apart from the others?

## Assessment:



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1. When was Project Chimps formed and what were a few of the key things that happened to make us necessary and allow us to become a sanctuary?
2. Where did our chimps come from? How much do we know about their pasts?
3. While we do not know what type of research was done to the chimps, what are some of the studies and research projects that were done at NIRC?
4. What were some key things that helped you to be successful in the identification activity?
5. Who is your favorite chimp and why? 😊

### Conclusion:

It took hard work and dedication on the part of many people to get Project Chimps' sanctuary up and running. Today, approximately 35 employees and 400 volunteers all come together to work on behalf of the chimps to make sure they now have the best lives possible. While we know that our chimps went through different types of medical research, we do not know what types of studies were done to them specifically. Initially one might think that all the chimps look the same and that they are hard to tell apart, but after careful study and patience you can begin to see just how unique every single one of them are.

### Notes to Instructor:

- [Our Chimps Assessment Questions](#)
- If students choose the haiku option under the "Write" activity, have them write 3 haikus.
- All Project Chimps' lesson plans are available to any teachers who would like to access them.
- Thank you for being a part of the Project Chimps 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 remaining NIRC research chimps to sanctuary.