

The Chimpanzee Book: Apes Like Us

By Dr Carla Litchfield

Did you know that chimpanzees are genetically closer to humans than they are to other apes?

And did you know that an estimated 4000 chimps are killed every year for bushmeat, an illegal delicacy for wealthy urban Africans and others around the world?

About the book

This is a beautiful book, well laid out, fact-filled and with simple text, making it very accessible to students. It is also filled with photographs that reveal chimpanzees to be utterly irresistible and engaging creatures.

What should absorb and astonish readers most of all is how like us they are. And what will shock and sadden them is how at risk they are. An excellent resource.

Learning Activities

The learning activities below have applications for Literacy, Science, Art and the Environment. What is applicable to one Key Learning Area may overlap with another.

Other suggestions:

An excursion to the zoo

Consider getting the class involved in Jane Goodall's worldwide Roots and Shoots program

<http://www.janegoodall.org/> <http://www.rootsandshoots.org/>

INTRODUCING THE BOOK

What is the book's full title?

What clever artistic device on the title on the front cover is used to reinforce what the book is about?

What is the sub-title? What does it mean?

Who is the author? (refer class to photo and blurb about the author opposite the Contents page)

Book features

The Chimpanzee Book has features that are important in a factual text.

Genre: Written and visual information

Readership: Grade Two Plus

Themes include:

Chimp behaviour

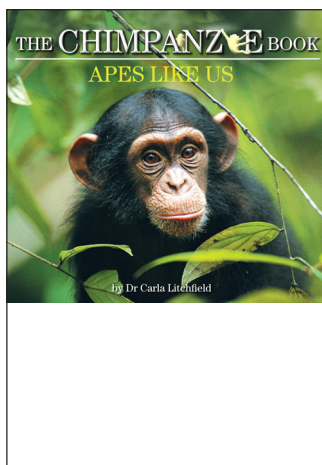
Shared human/chimp traits

Chimp communities in Africa

Endangered species

Conservation

Wildlife tourism



Locate all the features below:

- Contents page. Note the engaging headings and factual sub-headings
- Break-out boxes (information inside a box)
- Sidebars (refer to Key in break-out box on page opposite contents)
- Glossary (Point out that if a word is highlighted, for example **savannah** on p. 4, it means the word can be found in the glossary)
- Index
- Further Resources, Websites

SCIENCE

Seeing and hearing chimps in the wild

Go to <http://www.discoverchimpanzes.org/activities/activities.php> to see and hear chimps in the wild. Choose a video clip and then tell the rest of the class:

1. what film clip you watched
2. what you learned about chimp behaviour
3. if anything you saw and heard really surprised you?

(Teachers: This is a brilliant website – reality TV at its very best. Kids will love it)

Just like us

Genetically, chimps are more closely related to humans than they are to gorillas. (p. 2)

Based on your reading of the book, in pairs, make a list of the many characteristics that chimps share with humans. Compare notes with others.

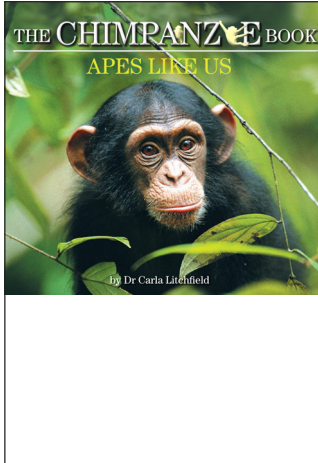
Your favourite chimps

Which chimps or bonobos did you enjoy reading and learning about most? Choose one community from pp. 11-23. In groups, explain your choice to each other.

Quiz on interesting facts.

Write down three things that surprised and/or really interested you that you learned about chimps from reading the book.

Turn this information into three questions for a game of trivia. Write the questions on three separate pieces of paper with the answers on the back.



THE ENVIRONMENT

The threat of extinction

1. Based on your reading of the book, discuss why chimps and other apes have become endangered species?
2. Find out about coltan: (pp. 26 & 28)
 - What is it?
 - How is it obtained?
 - What is it used for?
 - How does it threaten chimp habitats?
 - What can be done to help reduce the threat to chimps from coltan?

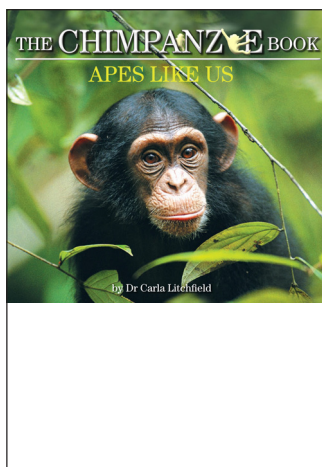
Conservation:

1. PASA (Pan African Sanctuaries Alliance)
 - How does PASA help wildlife?
 - What is their current project?
 - <http://www.save-the-primates.org.au/pasa-sanctuaries.htm>
2. Who is Dr Jane Goodall?
 - Write an short essay about Dr Goodall.
 - Who is she and what has been her life's work?
 - Begin by re-reading pp. 14-15 & 28 then use a library book resource from or go to the website <http://www.janegoodall.org> to find out additional interesting information about her and her work.

Wildlife Tourism

The author, Dr Carla Litchfield, is an adviser on wildlife tourism in Africa.

Based on your reading of the book and/or with reference to website sources - what would you do, or not do, in order to be a responsible tourist with regards to chimps, if traveling in Africa?



ENGLISH

Letter writing: Dr Carla Litchfield

Write a letter to the author, Dr Carla Litchfield, telling her that you have read her book and, most importantly, what you learned from it and what you enjoyed most about it.

Captions:

Choose a photograph in the book and write a humorous caption for it.

Public speaking: being a “wildlife warrior”

Imagine that, like the late Steve Irwin, you are a wildlife warrior. You feel very strongly about saving chimps from extinction.

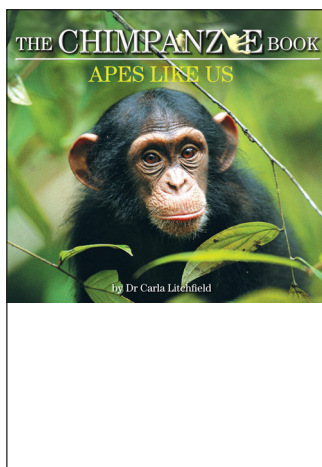
Prepare and present a short passionate speech to your classmates about a terrible thing that is happening in Africa which is endangering chimps. Urge the others to help you raise awareness of the plight of the chimps.

(Remember Steve Irwin’s passion for wildlife - you must display the same passion and convey the same sense of urgency. The other students must believe you mean every word you say).

Visual literacy

In pairs, go through the book again, looking at all the photographs.

Talk about what lasting impressions about chimpanzees the photos leave you with.



ART

Wildlife tourism travel poster

Make a hand-drawn or computer graphics travel poster about a tourist site in Africa where you can see chimps in the wild.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Carla Litchfield is passionate about animal behaviour. An expert in chimpanzees and gorillas, she lived in Uganda for a year observing a community of chimps. She is also a board member of the United Nations' "Great Ape Survival Project".

An expert in wildlife tourism, she has acted as a tourism adviser in Uganda and has written a book for tourists wanting to see Great Apes in the wild in Africa.

Also included in Dr Litchfield's impressive CV: She is a university lecturer in South Australia, works at zoos on enrichment programs and talks to people about conservation. She is also an avid photographer, film-maker – and drummer!

She has, moreover, been named "the unsung hero of Australian science" by The Australian Science Communicators