

## **Gorilla Fact Sheet (Definitions)**

Ape – Primates in the Hominidae family that include gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, bonobos (also known as pygmy chimpanzees), gibbons, and humans.

Blackback – A young male gorilla who has not yet matured into a silverback.

Cameroon – A country in Africa that is home to free-living western lowland gorillas.

Congo – A country in Africa that is home to free-living western lowland gorillas.

Fingernails – Instead of claws, gorillas have fingernails like we do – a tough structure at the end of the finger made up of keratin.

Gorilla – The largest living primate living in Africa.

Hair – Instead of fur, gorillas have hair – follicles grown from the epidermis or skin.

Koko – World-renowned gorilla famous for her use of sign language to communicate within and across species.

Michael – Silverback gorilla famous for being a part of the Gorilla Foundation family. Michael grew up with Koko from the age of 3 ½ and over the years learned to use over 500 signs.

Mountain gorilla – Sub species of gorilla that lives in the Virunga Mountains (which are a chain of volcanoes along Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda). These gorillas have longer hair than their western lowland counterparts because they live in a cooler climate.

Ndume – Silverback gorilla famous for being a part of the Gorilla Foundation family. Koko selected Ndume as a mate with help from video dating.

Nose Print – An identifying marker field researchers use to identify gorillas – just like fingerprints, each gorilla nose shape is different.

Primate – An order of animals that includes prosimians, monkeys, and apes.

Purr – A rumble or low guttural sounds made when a gorilla is content, pleased, or excited (also known as a belch vocalization).

Quadrupedal – A method of locomotion involving the use of all four limbs.

Rwanda – A country in Africa that is home to free-living mountain gorillas.

Sanctuary – A place of refuge or safety for orphan gorillas. Michael's Sanctuary is a refuge for orphan gorillas in Cameroon, sponsored by the Gorilla Foundation in Michael's memory.

Sign Language – A method of communication using signs, facial expressions, and body postures – the third most used language in the US.

Silverback – A mature adult male gorilla easily recognized by the silver patch of hair on his back.

Stink – The Gorilla Sign Language (GSL) word for *flower*.

Vegetation – Plant life that gorillas (and other animals) eat.

Western lowland gorilla – Subspecies of gorilla living in Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. These gorillas have shorter hair than mountain gorilla.

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