

Name: _____

A Lemur Lesson

By Guy Belleranti

On an island off the coast of Africa lives a type of primate found nowhere else in the wild. The island is Madagascar, and the primate is the lemur.



There are more than 100 species of lemurs. They are related to monkeys



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the ground.

Most lemurs live in groups called troops. An older dominant female decides where and when the group will move. Group living provides many eyes, noses, and ears for detecting predators. Predators include the fossa, a cat-like relative of the mongoose. Large snakes and birds of prey like hawks are additional predators.

Some lemur species are herbivores. These eat fruit, leaves, flowers, seeds, and bark. Others are omnivores. They eat both plants and animals such as insects, spiders, and even small birds.

Both males and females use scent glands to communicate and mark territory. During breeding season the most successful males are those who create the largest stink!

Lemurs also communicate with sound. Small mouse lemurs chirp. Another lemur, the indri, makes a spooky wailing sound. In fact, the word "lemur" comes from a word that means "ghost."

The number of young born depends on the species. One young at a time is most common. In most species, the young cling to the mother's



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and mining have destroyed much of the lemur's habitat. People hunting them for meat and the introduction of domesticated cats and dogs are also dangers. Zoos and other conservation-minded organizations may be the last hope for these amazing animals from the island of Madagascar.

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1. According to the article, how does a lemur's tail help them?



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4. What is the difference between an herbivore and an omnivore? Use clues from the 5th paragraph to help form your answer.

5. The name of the lemur comes from a word that means which of the following?

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| a. monkey | b. ghost |
| c. primate | d. prosimian |

6. List four human activities that can harm lemurs.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



1. _____ primate

a. a wooded area with tall trees that gets a



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5. _____ deciduous

e. having to do with an early time period or stage of development

6. _____ dominant

f. no longer existing

7. _____ detecting

g. an order of mammals that includes humans, apes, monkeys, and lemurs

8. _____ glands

h. having to do with trees that lose their leaves seasonally

9. _____ extinct

i. body parts that make substances used by the body

10. _____ conservation

j. kind or sort

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In the article, "A Lemur Lesson," you learned that there are more than 100 species of lemurs.

With an adult's permission, use the internet to research some of these different species. Pick one that is not mentioned in the article and write about it below. Include facts about its size, diet, habitat, and anything else you find



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6. List four human activities that can harm lemurs. **Answers may vary.**

logging

mining

farming

hunting

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9. f. extinct

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