

Short Paper 3: Are Primates Special?



Images from: www.zoo.cam.ac.uk and www.scienceblogs.com

Assignment: Until now, our exploration into the minds of other animals has concentrated on comparing cognitive abilities across different groups of primates. This examination has taught us that, despite shared ancestry, primates vary in their cognitive abilities. For example, apes seem to display self-recognition and the potential for other theory of mind attributes like perspective taking, whereas the evidence for these abilities is not as robust in monkeys. Our focus is now expanding, however, to include animals outside of the primate order. Examining research on a wide array of animals provides us with a comparative basis on which to judge primate cognition. **In this assignment, you must evaluate research that examines the cognitive abilities of animals like birds, dogs, and dolphins and draw conclusions about how the minds of these animals compare to primates.** Do certain cognitive abilities set primates apart from the rest of the animal kingdom or have various animal minds evolved in similar ways to respond to similar selective pressures via convergent evolution? What, if any, cognitive abilities make primates unique? Take a stance on this issue and use empirical research to back up your argument about how different or similar primates' minds are to those of other animals.

Writing Objectives: This assignment asks you to evaluate a large body of research and draw conclusions about how certain animals compare in their cognitive abilities. **To do this, you must critically analyze a variety of different experimental studies and determine ways in which species are similar or different.** The conclusions that you draw about cognitive abilities across animals must also be supported with empirical evidence from a variety of sources. You won't be able to cover every study with every animal, so you must **select representative experiments to demonstrate your points and provide adequate contextual information so that your reader understands how and why the studies were conducted and how the research relates back to your thesis.**

Grading: This paper is worth 20% of your course grade. A successful paper will have a **clearly articulated thesis** and make good use of **empirical evidence to bolster your main points, take an analytical approach to the research, and lay out a convincing and organized argument** for the similarities and/or differences you distinguish between primates and other animals. **Your grade will also depend on your adherence to the formatting guidelines laid out in The Fine Print section of this prompt.**

Due Date: The first draft of this paper is due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, October 2nd**. You must also write **Peer Reviews** (following the peer review guidelines in Sakai Course Readings) for the three drafts we workshop in class, and these are due in class on **October 4th**

(bring 1 copy to hand in to me and 1 copy to give to each author). The final version of this paper is due on **Sakai Assignments by 5pm on Thursday, October 11th**.

Looking Ahead: Before this writing assignment is complete, it will go through 1 draft and potentially one peer review (if you are a workshop volunteer). **Everyone is also required to meet with our Undergraduate Writing Tutor (UWT) to assist you with your revisions.** Revising your work will help you deepen your investigation of the issues and improve areas of weakness in your writing. The deadline for signing up for your UWT conference is **September 25th**.

The Fine Print: This paper should be **4-5 double-spaced pages** with 1-inch margins, using a 12-point font comparable to Times New Roman. Please put your name, course section number, date, and the title of your paper at the top of the first page and number all pages. **Please paperclip your papers.** Printing double-sided is okay! Use proper **APA-style** citations within your paper and attach a **Works Cited page** at the end. If you have questions about APA-style citations or Works Cited pages, please refer to the **APA Style Guidelines** (the full guide and/or the quick reference guide in Sakai Course Readings). For this assignment, **you must also attach a cover letter to your draft and to the final paper.** For your draft, the cover letter should identify specific areas you want feedback on. For your final paper, it should explain how you revised your work based on the feedback you received. Use the sample cover letter posted in Sakai Resources as a guide for constructing your letters.

Sources: You must use **at least 7 sources** for this paper: **5 of the text sources and 1 of the media sources listed below, and 1 academic journal article or book chapter that you find on your own.** If there are other sources from earlier in the semester that are relevant to your paper, feel free to use them- they just will not count as one of the 7 required sources. All of your sources must be cited properly within your paper AND in the Works Cited page.

Text Sources:

- Emery, N.J., & Clayton, N.S. (2004). The mentality of crows: convergent evolution of intelligence in corvids and apes. *Science* 306:1903-1907.
- Griffin, D. (1992). Deception and manipulation. In *Animal minds*. (pp. 195-210). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Güzeldere, G., Nahmias, E., & Deaner, R.O. (2002). Darwin's continuum and the building blocks of deception. In M. Beckoff, C. Allen, and G. Burghardt (Eds.), *The cognitive animal: empirical and theoretical perspectives on animal cognition*. (pp. 353-362). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Hare, B., Call J., & Tomsello, M. (2001). Do chimpanzees know what conspecifics know? *Animal Behaviour* 61: 139-151.
- Herman, L. M. (2002). Exploring the cognitive world of the bottlenosed dolphin. In M. Beckoff, C. Allen, and G. Burghardt (Eds.), *The cognitive animal: empirical and theoretical perspectives on animal cognition*. (pp. 275-283). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Morell, V. (2008, March). Minds of their own. *National Geographic*. Retrieved from <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/03/animal-minds/virginia-morell-text/1>
- Péron, F., Rat-Fischer, L., Nagle, L., & Bovet, D. (2010). 'Unwilling' versus 'unable': Do grey parrots understand human intentional actions? *Interaction Studies* 11(3): 428-441.
- Premack, D., & Woodruff, G. (1978) Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind? *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 4: 515-526.
- Scarf, D., Hayne, H., & Colombo, M. (2011). Pigeons on par with primates in numerical competence. *Science* 334: 1664.

- Vauclair, J. (2002). Categorization and conceptual behavior in nonhuman primates. In M. Beckoff, C. Allen, and G. Burghardt (Eds.), *The cognitive animal: empirical and theoretical perspectives on animal cognition*. (pp. 239-245). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wade, N. (2011). Sit. Stay. Parse. Good girl! *The New York Times*, p. D1.
- Wilcox, S. & Jackson, R. (2002). Jumping spider tricksters: deceit, predation, and cognition. In M. Beckoff, C. Allen, and G. Burghardt (Eds.), *The cognitive animal: empirical and theoretical perspectives on animal cognition*. (pp. 27-33). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Media Sources:

- Cort, J. (Writer, Producer, Director). (2011a, February 9). NOVA Science Now. How smart are dogs? Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/how-smart-dogs.html>
- Cort, J. (Writer, Producer, Director). (2011b, February 9). NOVA Science Now. How smart are dolphins? Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/how-smart-dolphins.html>
- Quisling76. (2006, September 8). Tool-making crows. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtmLVPOHvDg>

Remember to take time to proofread your work, paying special attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation.