



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large

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Apps for Apes

Orangutans Go Wild for iPads

Orangutans are sliding their fingers across iPads to play video games, fingerpaint, watch shows and enjoy computer play dates with other orangutans.

When the iPad first came out, Richard Zimmerman, the founder of Orangutan Outreach, realized that because orangutans could swipe their fingers across a screen, they could probably use the device. There was no keyboard to stop the apes from using it.

He started Apps for Apes, a program to supply iPads to zoos for their apes to use. It's now in several zoos across the country. The Mini Page talked with Zimmerman to learn more about orangutans and their great new toy.



photo by Scott Engel © Orangutan Outreach

With the help of zookeepers, orangutans can Skype orangutans in other zoos. They enjoy seeing other orangutans. If they are being sent to another zoo, they may adjust sooner if they have met the other orangutans through Skype.

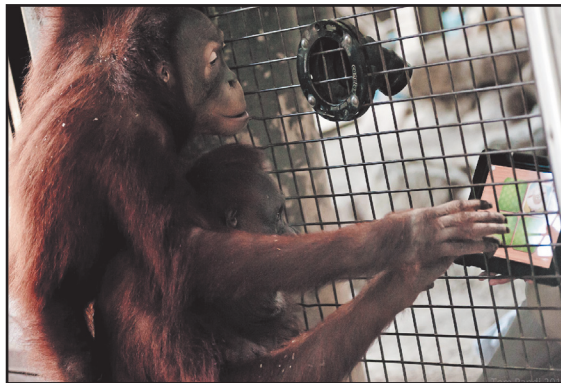


photo by Tom Pandt © Orangutan Outreach

Orangutans can play many video games designed for kids. Orangutans do well on memory games. For example, they get treats when they match cards that are flipped over on the screen, as in the game Concentration.

Animals using computers

Animals such as dolphins, dogs and apes have been using touchscreen computers for years. Dolphins can match a real object with an icon on a computer screen. Dogs earn treats by touching their noses to pictures that have dogs in them.

Chimps are awesome video gamers. Their memory skills are better than most humans'.

In one game, a computer flashes 20 numbers on the screen in about half a second. The chimps can remember where the numbers appeared and hit the spots in the order they came up. Few humans can do this.

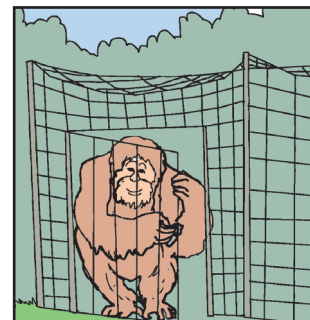
Quiet planners

Orangutans are very intelligent apes. But they aren't showy like chimps. They take their time and think things out. They wait patiently until the moment is right.

Orangutans are the ape escape artists. One of the most famous masters of escape was Fu Manchu. At the Omaha zoo in the 1960s, zookeepers coming to work in the morning kept finding Fu in the trees outside his exhibit area.

Their boss thought they were leaving the doors open. The zookeepers were in danger of losing their jobs. So they installed cameras.

They could hardly believe what they saw. Fu Manchu hid a wire in his cheeks and kept it there all day, waiting until dark. Then he climbed through the air vents to an area outside his cage.



Once there, he took the wire from his cheek and used it to pick the lock on the exhibit door, escaping to the trees outside.

Orangutan Smarty-Pants

Escape artists

Fu Manchu is not the only famous orangutan escape artist. Orangutans have a reputation for getting out of their cages.

For example, in one zoo, the keeper left a screwdriver on the floor outside an orangutan’s cage. The orangutan pretended he didn’t notice.

As soon as the zookeeper went away, the ape grabbed the screwdriver and hid it in his cage. He waited until about midnight when the zoo was dark and the keepers were gone. Then he used the screwdriver to escape from his cage.

Cheyenne, an orangutan in Houston, taught all her kids how to escape. They could use her tricks even when they went to different zoos.

Another orangutan short-circuited the electric fence around her enclosure by shoving a stick into the wires. Then she piled up anything she could find to climb over the fence.



Zookeepers must hold the iPads while orangutans use them. If they handed the computers over to the apes, the orangutans would tear them apart. Experts are hoping to design a sturdy machine to safely enclose the iPads.

Orangutan geeks

Orangutans are so smart that they get bored in zoos. The Apps for Apes program lets them play with iPads for fun. If they can’t hit the screen just right with their fingers, they touch it with their lips or tongue instead.

Video wizards

When orangutans play video games, they don’t care how many points they pile up. They care about the treats they earn. For example, they might get a piece of fruit when they touch an icon. Other players get fruit when they play the game.

Orangutans also love watching videos. Tommy, an orangutan at the Milwaukee Zoo, loves to watch videos of a show called “The Joy of Painting.” He watches the videos and then paints.

A female, M.J., at the same zoo, enjoys watching episodes of “This Old House.” After she watches the show, she pulls out objects such as sheets and towels and rearranges them.



Orangutans love finger-painting and doodling apps.

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Ready Resources

The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week’s topics.

On the Web:

- Redapes.org
- bit.ly/R5gAhR
- bit.ly/1miEdgA
- animalplanet.com/tv-shows/other/videos/orangutan-island.htm

At the library:

- “Face to Face With Orangutans” by Tim Laman and Cheryl Knott
- “Ape Escapes” by Aline Alexander Newman

An illustration of an owl sitting at a desk. The owl is brown and white, wearing a red bow tie. It is sitting in front of a laptop and several books. The desk is wooden and the background is a simple gradient.

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Basset Brown's
Try 'n' Find

ORANGUTAN

T	C	B	O	R	N	E	O	E	P	A	C	S	E	H
R	R	A	S	U	M	A	T	R	A	P	P	A	C	A
L	A	E	L	E	P	A	N	E	E	R	C	S	H	B
F	O	I	E	L	N	M	S	T	A	E	R	T	E	I
O	V	N	N	S	N	U	F	O	O	Z	P	L	E	T
R	I	I	G	D	A	P	H	C	U	O	T	L	K	A
E	D	C	L	S	R	E	T	U	P	M	O	C	A	T
S	E	O	N	N	A	T	U	G	N	A	R	O	K	Y
T	O	N	D	E	R	E	G	N	A	D	N	E	L	Y

Words that remind us of orangutans and iPads are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find: APE, APP, BORNEO, CALL, CHEEK, COMPUTERS, ENDANGERED, ESCAPE, FOREST, FUN, HABITAT, ICON, LONG, ORANGUTAN, PLAY, RAIN, SCREEN, SUMATRA, TOUCHPAD, TREATS, TREES, VIDEO, ZOO.



Mini Spy

Mini Spy and her friends are observing orangutans at the zoo. See if you can find:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> doughnut | <input type="checkbox"/> porcupine | <input type="checkbox"/> basket | <input type="checkbox"/> word MINI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dragon | <input type="checkbox"/> question mark | <input type="checkbox"/> fish | <input type="checkbox"/> teapot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> umbrella | <input type="checkbox"/> number 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> bat | <input type="checkbox"/> heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> letter L | <input type="checkbox"/> teacup | <input type="checkbox"/> sock | <input type="checkbox"/> letter A |



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Cheesy Egg Wraps With Ham

You'll need:

- 4 fajita-size flour tortillas
- 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 8 thin slices smoked or baked ham (such as deli-style ham; about 4 ounces)
- Cooking spray
- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

What to do:

1. Arrange tortillas on a flat surface. Top each with 2 tablespoons of the cheese and 2 slices of the ham. Spread the filling to within 1/2 inch of the edges.
2. Coat a large skillet with cooking spray and preheat over medium-high. Whisk together eggs, salt and pepper; add mixture to hot pan. Cook without stirring until bottom is set, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Using a spatula, flip the eggs and cook for 20 more seconds or until cooked through.
4. Divide egg "pancake" into four equal pieces. Place each piece on a prepared tortilla and roll up. Serves 4. *You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishingandrewsmcmeel.com).

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Meet Don Spencer



photo courtesy Don Spencer

Don Spencer is an actor, singer and songwriter, and a host for two Australian children's TV series. He is one of the featured performers in the Putumayo Kids' CD "Australian Playground." The album features songs from Australian children's musicians and Aboriginal groups.

Don, 72, started his career when he met the musician Roger Whittaker in Kenya, Africa, and they began writing songs together. Don was 20 years old and traveling through Africa at the time. He has composed music for film, TV, orchestras and other performers. Don wrote a book/CD combination, "Please Don't Call Me a Koala Bear."

Don grew up in Tamworth, Australia. He founded the Australian Children's Music Foundation, which is a charity that helps disadvantaged and Aboriginal kids get a music education.

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The Mini Page® Book of States

The Mini Page's popular series of issues about each state is collected here in a 156-page softcover book. Conveniently spiral-bound for ease of use, this invaluable resource contains A-to-Z facts about each state, along with the District of Columbia. Illustrated with colorful photographs and art, and complete with updated information, The Mini Page Book of States will be a favorite in classrooms and homes for years to come.



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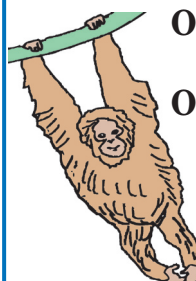
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Mighty Funny's Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?



Otis: What do you call a monkey that likes to answer the phone?

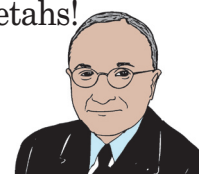
Oscar: A who-rang-utan!

Olivia: Why did the orangutan stop playing cards in the jungle?

Oprah: There were too many cheetahs!

Oliver: Who is the favorite president of the orangutans?

Ora: Hairry Truman!



Orangutans Need Protection

Saving the habitat

Orangutan Outreach uses all the money it raises to save orangutans and their habitats. The organization doesn't buy the iPads. It relies on people and businesses to donate old ones. National Geographic, for example, donates its used iPads to Apps for Apes.

Orangutans in danger

Orangutans are critically endangered. They live in the wild on only two islands, Borneo and Sumatra. Their rain forest habitats are being destroyed at a rapid rate.

Palm oil and timber companies are cutting down and burning forests

super fast. About six football field-sized forest areas are being wiped out every minute, according to the United Nations.

Sun bears, Sumatran rhinos, tigers and elephants are also losing habitat.



Elo is learning to climb trees in forest school.

photo © Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation

Animals being threatened

When businesses cut down or burn the forests, they shoot or capture the animals that had been living there. Many orangutan and other animal babies are orphaned.

Corporations are burning these rain forests to make room for palm oil plantations. Palm oil is used to lengthen the shelf life of products, including milk, cookies and shampoo. Experts say it is now in about half of the products on our grocery shelves.

Burning these rain forests is releasing huge amounts of carbon into the atmosphere.

Working to save orangutans

Many environmental groups are banding together to save this rain forest habitat and the animals that live there. Many zoos have breeding programs to make sure animals don't become extinct.

Orangutan Outreach supports several groups that are rescuing orphaned orangutans. They care for the young apes in forest schools, teaching them how to survive in the wild. When the orangutans are ready, experts release them into safe forest areas.

Life in the forest

"Orangutan" means "person of the forest" in Malay and Indonesian.

Orangutan mothers and their kids have some of the strongest bonds of any animals. Mothers have only one baby at a time, and that young ape stays with its mom for seven or eight years, until she has another baby.

A baby clings to its mom as she swings through the trees. Orangutans spend little time on the ground.



photo © Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation

The most dominant, or powerful, male has big cheeks. Males call out through the forest each night before bedtime. This is known as the "long call." The males' giant cheeks and throat sacs allow the long call to reach orangutans throughout the forest.

The Mini Page thanks Richard Zimmerman, executive director, Orangutan Outreach, for help with this issue.

Look through your newspaper for stories about animals acting smart.

Next week, The Mini Page is about the 100th anniversary of World War I.

The Mini Page Staff

Betty Debnam - Founding Editor and Editor at Large Lisa Tarry - Managing Editor Lucy Lien - Associate Editor Wendy Daley - Artist

(Note to Editor: Above is the Standards for Issue 24.)

(Note to Editor: Above is copy block for Page 3, Issue 24, to be used in place of ad if desired.)