

Gorilla Paint-ionary



Households will compete in a game of Gorilla Paint-ionary to see who is the ultimate foot-painting champion!

Age: Families with children ages 5-12

Gather your Gear

- Paper
- Washable paint
- Paint brushes
- Paint-friendly material (i.e.: tarp) for underneath the paintings chair(s)
- Prompt cards
- Jar/hat/bowl
- Timer

Sample Item Cards: you can print and use these, or create your own as a group!

Pizza	Chocolate Chip Cookie	Pineapple	Cow	Mountain
Tent	Gorilla	Elephant	Squirrel	Bananas
Roller Blades	Parrot	Bamboo	Sunflower	Box of Tissues
Cheese	Birthday Cake	Donuts	Lightning Storm	Icicles
Telephone/Cell Phone	Radio	Scissors	Band-aid	Lake or Pond
Soda Can	Cockroach	Sunglasses	Flamingo	T-rex
Create-your-own:	Create-your-own:	Create-your-own:	Create-your-own:	Create-your-own:

Get Ready

You can help your child make connections by thinking about concepts before the activity.

Gorillas and humans are genetically quite similar. Beyond our genes, or because of them, we share certain features. One of these shared features is opposable thumbs. This appendage enables the high dexterity of our hands. We can use them to pick-up, hold, and

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otherwise manipulate items of various sizes, shapes, and weights. Gorillas not only benefit from opposable thumbs on their hands, but they also boast this same appendage on their feet! In gorillas, this aids in foraging, nest building, and climbing. As humans, we lack this dexterous addition to our feet, but just how much can we accomplish with our feet and toes?

Ivan was a gorilla who lived at Zoo Atlanta for the last 18 years of his life, from 1994 -2012. Prior to his time at Zoo Atlanta, Ivan was raised by a family as an infant and then spent most of his years indoors at a shopping mall in Tacoma, Washington. Zoo Atlanta was chosen as a home for Ivan because we were able to offer him not only a large, naturalistic habitat where he could explore the outdoors, but also an opportunity to meet other gorillas – living as a gorilla, as closely as possible to the way a gorilla would live in the wild.

One of the activities that Ivan liked to participate in was painting as a favorite form of enrichment. At Zoo Atlanta, his care team would provide him with a paint brush, paint and canvas and Ivan would take his time to spread the colors across the canvas. While this activity focuses on using our feet, Ivan often used other means to hold his brush, such as holding it in his mouth.

Like Ivan, many other animals at the Zoo also paint as a form of enrichment. Enrichment includes activities, objects, foods, experiences, and more that stimulate natural behaviors. Just like we participate in activities that make us happy and challenge us to use our brains and abilities, painting also challenges the animals in a rewarding way. Do you like to paint? What activities do you find rewarding?

Do the Activity

1. Cut out the prompt cards, and place them into a jar, hat, or bowl.
2. Place a chair on top of paint-friendly material, and put down paper, paint, and a paintbrush.
3. Set the timer for 1 minute, and select one person to be the painter; the other members of the household will be guessers.
4. Start the timer. Once the timer starts, the painter chooses an item card at-random from the hat/jar/bowl.
5. Using their feet only, the painter begins to paint the item. They continue painting until someone in the group has correctly guessed the item.
6. The painter then draws another item card, and begins painting the next item.
7. This continues until the timer is up. Once the timer runs out, record the painter's number of correct guesses, and select a new painter.
8. After each player has painted, compare the scores. The painter with the highest number of correctly-guessed paintings wins!

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**This could also be done as teams or pairs with two pairs competing against one another, depending on the size of the household.

Recap

Have a conversation about what you saw/did and questions your child may have.

Was it easy or a challenge to paint clear pictures with your feet? Do you think you would have been more successful with your hands? Why or why not? Did you find this activity fun and engaging? Were you challenged to use your feet in a new way?

Relate

Create connections to the idea through activities.

Gorillas are not painters in the wild, and foot painting is not an activity that they would participate in as a natural behavior. Their foot-based opposable thumbs are crucial adaptations for survival as they assist in everyday behaviors that help them find food and shelter. It is, however, an interesting way for us as humans to explore the possibilities of what we could do with our feet if only they had thumbs! Additionally, painting allows gorillas and humans to express themselves in a different medium. Through painting, humans as well as gorillas and other animals in zoological settings can participate in a form of enrichment.

It takes a team.... join ours

Help us save species by joining the “Zoo Conservation Corps” and raise awareness about wild animals, their habitats and why conserving both is so important.

Gorillas and humans are genetically very similar, but our relationship doesn’t stop there. A critical component of cell phones and other small electronics is a substance called coltan. One of the few places in the world where coltan is found is the forests of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo—right in the middle of gorilla habitat. As a result of mining for coltan, critical habitat has been destroyed and gorillas have been displaced or even killed by poachers. Recycling old cell phones helps reduce the demand for coltan and protects gorilla habitat in Africa. Gorillas are on the line. Join us to answer the call to help save gorillas in the wild! Get involved: <https://zooatlanta.org/conservation-action/gorillas-on-the-line/>

If your family members are on social media, post to show what you have learned, and use the hashtag #OnlyZooATL so that we can see all your great work!

Want to know more....

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To learn more about gorillas, visit: <https://zooatlanta.org/animal/western-lowland-gorilla/>

To learn more about Ivan and other individual gorillas who once called Zoo Atlanta home, visit: <https://zooatlanta.org/animal-legend/ivan/> & <https://zooatlanta.org/animal-legend/willie-b/>