



## Discover the Secrets Bonobos Share for a Price

### Description

Traditionally regarded as a uniquely human trait, the ability to discern when a companion could benefit from a hint has emerged as a cognitive aptitude shared with our primate relatives.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland conducted an illuminating study focusing on [bonobos \(Pan paniscus\)](#), which provided insights into the ways these apes guided human researchers towards concealed treats—an endeavor they were eager to consume.

Such findings unveil cognitive parallels among [hominins](#) that were previously unrecognized, potentially extending back millions of years to our shared ancestral lineage.

According to psychologist Chris Krupenye, "The capacity to detect gaps in others' knowledge lies at the core of our most advanced social interactions, fundamentally shaping our collaborative, communicative, and strategic engagements."

In the experimental framework, three male bonobos engaged in a turn-taking game with a researcher, wherein treats were strategically concealed beneath cups—occasionally under the researcher's scrutiny and at other times without. Successful identification of the treat enabled the ape to partake in it.

Chimp test and or type unknown

A cup game was employed to ascertain whether bonobos could differentiate between knowledge and ignorance in a human participant. (Townrow and Krupenye, *PNAS*, 2025)

The results illustrated that bonobos were notably more inclined to gesture and point towards the cup concealing the treat when the researcher exhibited ignorance regarding its location.

Though this might appear as a rudimentary behavior, it signifies a profound understanding of how our closest evolutionary relatives can cognitively evaluate the perspectives of others. [Prior studies](#) have documented instances of apes alerting their companions to possible dangers; however, these recent experiments disentangle such instincts from group dynamics, thereby exploring individual cognitive capacities.

As psychologist Luke Townrow aptly notes, "What we've demonstrated is that apes will communicate with a partner to modify their behavior, yet a pivotal question for future exploration is whether they seek to alter their partner's mental state or beliefs."

This [theory of mind](#)—the understanding that others possess distinct beliefs or perspectives—has historically been perceived as a distinguishing feature of human cognition.



Emerging evidence now suggests that this cognitive flexibility may also inhabit ape populations, as bonobos are observed to simultaneously grasp two conceptual frameworks: the location of the treat and their partner's knowledge of it. Such groundbreaking insights warrant further investigation in subsequent research endeavors.

A compelling inquiry for future study could pertain to the motivations underlying these bonobo behaviors: do they aspire to shift their partner's mental frameworks, or merely modify their conduct? Anticipation brews for more experiments centering around concealed treats.

"Ongoing debates within the field regarding primate capabilities find validation in our research, confirming that these remarkable cognitive capacities exist, contrary to scepticism from certain quarters," asserts Krupenye.

The findings of this research have been published in [PNAS](#).

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Aptitude** /'æp.tɪ.tju:d/ (noun): A natural ability to do something.
2. **Cognitive** /'kɒg.nɪ.tɪv/ (adjective): Relating to the mental processes of perception memory judgment and reasoning.
3. **Parallel** /'pær.ə.leɪ/ (noun): A similarity or comparison between two things.
4. **Devoid** /dɪ'vɔɪd/ (adjective): Completely lacking in something.
5. **Engagements** /ɪn'geɪdʒ.mənts/ (noun): Arrangements to do something at a particular time.
6. **Communicative** /kə'mjuː.nɪ.kə.tɪv/ (adjective): Ready to talk or impart information.

## Comprehension Questions

### Multiple Choice

1. What trait has emerged as a cognitive aptitude shared with our primate relatives?

Option: Hinting ability

Option: Problem-solving skills

Option: Memory retention

Option: Creativity

2. Which university conducted the study focusing on bonobos?



- Option: Harvard University
- Option: Johns Hopkins University
- Option: Stanford University
- Option: Yale University

3. What did the bonobos guide human researchers towards in the study?

- Option: Hidden documents
- Option: Concealed treasures
- Option: Secret locations
- Option: Treats

4. What did the results of the experiment show about bonobos' behavior?

- Option: They were less inclined to help
- Option: They were more inclined to gesture towards the treat with an ignorant researcher
- Option: They refused to participate
- Option: They showed no difference in behavior

5. Who noted that the capacity to detect gaps in others' knowledge is fundamental in shaping social interactions?

- Option: Chris Krupenye
- Option: Luke Townrow
- Option: Jane Goodall
- Option: John Hopkins

6. What concept do bonobos demonstrate an understanding of according to the text?

- Option: Quantum physics
- Option: Theory of Relativity
- Option: Theory of Mind
- Option: Natural selection

### True-False

- 7. Bonobos were observed guiding human researchers towards hidden locations in the study.
- 8. The study suggests that bonobos exhibit cognitive flexibility similar to humans.
- 9. The concept of Theory of Mind has only been observed in humans before this research.



10. Bonobos in the study showed no difference in behavior based on the researcher's knowledge.
11. Luke Townrow is one of the researchers highlighted in the text.
12. Bonobos are unable to understand the perspectives of others according to the text.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Hinting ability 2. Johns Hopkins University 3. Treats 4. They were more inclined to gesture towards the treat with an ignorant researcher 5. Chris Krupenye 6. Theory of Mind

**True-False:** 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False

## Vocabulary quizzes

**Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )**

1. What is the meaning of "elucidated"?  
Option: a. Explained or clarified  
Option: b. Accelerated or enlarged  
Option: c. Discarded or removed  
Option: d. Composed or created
2. Which term refers to the likelihood of something happening?  
Option: a. Probabilities  
Option: b. Speculative  
Option: c. Correlations  
Option: d. Aptitude
3. What does the term "impractical" mean?  
Option: a. Very practical  
Option: b. Not feasible or sensible  
Option: c. Extremely useful  
Option: d. Unintended outcome
4. Which term is related to the mental processes of perception and understanding?  
Option: a. Cognitive  
Option: b. Aptitude  
Option: c. Engagements  
Option: d. Genesis



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5. What does "colossal" mean?
- Option: a. Tiny
  - Option: b. Magnificent
  - Option: c. Gigantic
  - Option: d. Delicate
6. Which word means remarkably or impressively great in extent size or degree?
- Option: a. Impractical
  - Option: b. Prodigious
  - Option: c. Parallel
  - Option: d. Nuanced
7. What does "efficacy" mean?
- Option: a. Strength
  - Option: b. Joy
  - Option: c. Effectiveness
  - Option: d. Depletion
8. Which term is related to the measurement of the amount of sugar in blood?
- Option: a. Glycemic
  - Option: b. Aptitude
  - Option: c. Erosion
  - Option: d. Instigated
9. What does "burgeoning" mean?
- Option: a. Shrinking
  - Option: b. Expanding or growing rapidly
  - Option: c. Limited
  - Option: d. Outgoing or friendly
10. What are "obstructions"?
- Option: a. Unpredictable
  - Option: b. Barriers or obstacles
  - Option: c. Innovations
  - Option: d. Adaptations

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

11. Good leaders are not only assertive but also \_\_\_\_\_ ensuring effective information flow within the team.



12. Over time the continuous water flow caused \_\_\_\_\_ of the ancient stone carvings.
13. The scientist discussed the \_\_\_\_\_ of the universe in his groundbreaking research.
14. Volcanic eruptions can release ash lava and other volcanic \_\_\_\_\_ into the atmosphere.
15. The new regulations have significant \_\_\_\_\_ for small businesses in the region.
16. The controversial decision \_\_\_\_\_ a heated debate among the board members.
17. A sedentary lifestyle and excessive calorie intake can lead to increased \_\_\_\_\_ or fat accumulation.
18. The laboratory studies focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ effects of various environmental pollutants.
19. The doctor specializes in treating disorders of the brain and nerves known as \_\_\_\_\_ conditions.
20. The aroma of fresh coffee began to \_\_\_\_\_ the entire house.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

21. In the artwork the artist used of light and dark colors to create a sense of balance.
22. Investing in cryptocurrencies is considered a venture due to the high volatility in the market.
23. The professor drew a between the human brain and a computer to explain complex cognitive processes.
24. The old mansion was eerie and of any signs of life or habitation.
25. The company announced new business with international partners to expand its market presence.
26. The exhibition explored the of modern art movements in the context of historical events.



27. Studies have shown that marine life ingests leading to ecological concerns about ocean pollution.
28. The researchers studied the development of infants to understand early learning processes.
29. The tech industry in the region is experiencing a growth attracting new talent and investments.
30. The political unrest was by economic disparities and social inequality.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. a. Explained or clarified 2. a. Probabilities 3. b. Not feasible or sensible 4. a. Cognitive 5. c. Gigantic 6. b. Prodigious 7. c. Effectiveness 8. a. Glycemic 9. b. Expanding or growing rapidly 10. b. Barriers or obstacles

**Gap-Fill:** 11. communicative 12. erosion 13. genesis 14. ejecta 15. implications 16. instigated 17. adiposity 18. toxicological 19. neurological 20. permeate

**Matching sentence:** 1. juxtaposition 2. speculative 3. parallel 4. devoid 5. engagements 6. genesis 7. microplastics 8. cognitive 9. burgeoning 10. instigated

## CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL6

## Date Created

2025/02/07

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