# Marmoset monkeys call each other by name

**9th September 2024**


Researchers say marmoset monkeys call each other by name, similar to how humans recognize each other. The 20-cm-long primates are native to South America. Scientists from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem studied the social interaction of 10 marmosets. The research team discovered that the animals used unique calls for other monkeys in their group. Dr David Omer, co-author of the study, said marmosets are the first non-human primates known to use names. The researchers put the marmosets in a variety of pairings. They then used artificial intelligence to analyze more than 50,000 monkey calls. This allowed the scientists to determine the animals had names for each other.

Dr Omer believes the findings could shed light on how human language evolved. He said: "Until quite recently, people thought that human language was a singular phenomenon that popped out of nothing. We're starting to see evidence that this is not the case." Omer postulated how marmosets developed a system of name calling. He said: "Marmosets live in small, monogamous family groups, and take care of their young together, much like humans do. These similarities suggest that they faced comparable evolutionary social challenges to our early pre-linguistic ancestors." Other creatures known to identify others in their group by name are dolphins and elephants.

Sources: theguardian.com / *newscientist.com* / *newsweek.com*

## Writing

We need to be able to communicate with and understand animals. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

marmosets / humans / South America / unique calls / study / artificial intelligence / human language / monogamous / similarities / evolution / challenges / dolphins

## True / False

1) Marmosets call each other by given and family names. T / F
2) Researchers studied more than 100 different marmosets. T / F
3) Marmosets are the second non-human primates known to use names. T / F
4) A.I. analyzed over 50,000 different marmoset calls. T / F
5) Marmoset speech could help us understand more about our languages. T / F
6) Marmosets have many different sexual partners. T / F
7) Marmosets and humans faced similar evolutionary challenges. T / F
8) Dolphins and elephants are known to use names. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **native** | a. | find out |
| **2.** | **interaction** | b. | assortment |
| **3.** | **unique** | c. | predecessors |
| **4.** | **variety** | d. | relationship |
| **5.** | **determine** | e. | occurrence |
| **6.** | **shed light on** | f. | suggested |
| **7.** | **phenomenon** | g. | indigenous |
| **8.** | **postulated** | h. | animals |
| **9.** | **ancestors** | i. | distinctive |
| **10.** | **creatures** | j. | explain |

## Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?
b) What do you think of monkeys?
c) How do you think human language evolved?
d) What might the first human word have been?
e) What similarities are there between monkeys and humans?
f) What would you like to ask elephants and dolphins?
g) What would animals talk to each other about?
h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

 

## Phrase Match

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The 20-cm-long primates are native | a. for other monkeys |
| 2. studied the social interaction | b. the case |
| 3. the animals used unique calls | c. of 10 marmosets |
| 4. marmosets are the first non- | d. on how |
| 5. researchers put the marmosets in a | e. linguistic ancestors |
| 6. the findings could shed light | f. human primates |
| 7. a singular phenomenon that popped | g. family groups |
| 8. see evidence that this is not | h. to South America |
| 9. small, monogamous | i. variety of pairings |
| 10. challenges to our early pre- | j. out of nothing |

## Discussion – Student B

a) What do you know about marmosets?
b) How much do you think monkeys can communicate?
c) What would it be like to be a monkey researcher?
d) What do you think monkeys might say to each other?
e) What can we learn from monkeys?
f) Will artificial intelligence allow us to talk to animals?
g) What do you think animals would ask us?
h) How good are you at remembering names?

## Spelling

1. similar to how humans rzeigceon each other
2. social ittcnoreain
3. animals used eqiuun calls
4. the first non-human resimtpa
5. put the marmosets in a variety of gpnsairi
6. ieerndmte the animals had names
7. a singular moenohnpen
8. evniceed that this is not the case
9. small, gmnouomaso family groups
10. comparable iyolenuatovr social challenges
11. our early pre-linguistic asrsecnot
12. Other rratecuse known to identify others

**Answers – Synonym Match**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. g | 2. d | 3. i | 4. b | 5. a |
| 6. j | 7. e | 8. f | 9. c | 10. h |

## Role Play

**Role A – Dogs**
You think dogs would be the most interesting creature to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): ants, plankton or pigeons.

**Role B – Ants**
You think ants would be the most interesting creature to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): dogs, plankton or pigeons.

**Role C – Plankton**
You think plankton would be the most interesting creature to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): ants, dogs or pigeons.

**Role D – Pigeons**
You think pigeons would be the most interesting creature to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): ants, plankton or dogs.

## Speaking – Conversations

Rank these with your partner. Put the best creature to have a conversation with at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Dogs
- Elephants
- Ants
- Plankton
- Tarantulas
- Rats
- Pigeons
- Lions

**Answers – True False**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | F | 2 | F | 3 | F | 4 | T | 5 | T | 6 | F | 7 | T | 8 | T |

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

 