

PRIMATES

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Primates are a group of *Eutherian* mammals in the last evolved order, Primates. The name 'Primate' was given by Linnaeus, a Swedish naturalist in 1758.

Definition (Mivart, 1873) : *“Primates are unguiculate, clavicate, placental mammals with orbit encircled by bone; three kinds of teeth, at least one time of life; brain always with a posterior lobe and calcarine fissure, the innermost digits of at least one pair of extremities opposable; hallux with a flat nail on none, a well developed caecum; penis pendulous, testis scrotal, always two pectoral mammae.”*

Distribution : Excepting man the other members of the order primates are confined in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of both New World and Old World roughly between 40° S to 40° N latitudes. Their main concentrated zones are Brazil, Peru, Panama in America; the whole of Africa excepting Sahara, Madagascar and in South East Asia including India. Only man is distributed all over the world.

Physical features :

- Presence of prehensile limbs adapted for arboreal life-this was probably one of the earliest primate characteristics.
- Digits of both hands and feet are provided with flat nails instead of sharp claws.
- The thumb (polex) and the great toe (hallux) both or at least one pair are more or less opposable.
- Mammary glands are generally two in number and they are always pectoral in position.
- The testis descend into the scrotal sac.
- The clavicle is well developed
- The femur does not possess the third trochantor.
- Brain always possesses calcarine fissure and posterior lobe.
- Smell sense diminished.
- Grooming is a unique character of primate behaviour.
- Tendency to live in social groups.
- Infant care is lengthened.

Classification (Simpson, 1945)

Order	Sub order	Infra order	Super family	Family	
P R I M A T E S	Prosimii	Tupaiformes	Tupaioidea	Tupaidae	
		Lemuriformes	Lemuroidea	Lemuridae	
				Indridae	
				Duertonoidae	
		Lorisiformes	Lorosoidea	Lorisidae	
			Galagidae		
	Tarsiformes	Tarsiodea	Tarsidae		
	Anthropoidea	Platyrrhini		Ceoidea	Callithricidae
					Cebidae
		Catarrhini		Cercopithecoidea	Cercopithecidae
					Hylobatidae
				Hominoidea	Pongidae
Hominidae					

PRIMATE CLASSIFICATION : NEW SYSTEM

