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Anthropology short notes

Characteristics of Primates

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination · Anthropology Paper 1 · Anthropology GS 1 (Paper I)

1.5 Characteristics of Primates; Evolutionary Trend and Primate Taxonomy; Primate Adaptations; (Arboreal and Terrestrial) Primate Taxonomy; Primate Behaviour; Tertiary and Quaternary fossil primates; Living Major Primates; Comparative Anatomy of Man and Apes; Skeletal changes due to erect posture and its implications.

Short notes by official syllabus heading.

Revision notes for the Anthropology optional. Confirm thinkers and examples against standard texts and recent papers.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/archives/anthropology-notes/paper-1/characteristics-of-primates/>

Characteristics Of Primates

Definition

Primates are "unguiculate, clavicate, placental mammals with orbits encircled by bone, three kinds of teeth at one time of life, a well-developed brain with a posterior lobe and calcarine fissure, at least one pair of extremities with an opposable digit, hallux with a flat nail or none, a well-developed caecum, pendulous penis, testes in scrotum, two pectoral mammae."

Evolutionary Trend And Primate Taxonomy

Definition

Bipedalism refers to the habitual use of two legs for locomotion.

Example / case study

Lemurs in Madagascar diversified into over 100 species, each adapted to unique environments. Old World monkeys and apes diversified into multiple species - baboons, gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and humans. Refers to the development of similar traits in unrelated species due to similar environmental pressures, not common ancestry. Such species remain distinct overall but show functional similarity in specific traits.

Primate Adaptations

Definition

Tactile pads → sensitive fingertips.

Primate Taxonomy

Definition

7. Taxonomical Classification of Primates

Arboreal

Definition

1) Vertical clinging & leaping(4 limbs- hindlimb)

Terrestrial

Definition

Non-opposable means a thumb, toe, or digit that cannot move inward to touch or face the other fingers or toes on that hand or foot. It cannot form a tight grip against the rest of the digits.

Primate Behaviour

Definition

Playback studies (Cheney, Zuberbühler).

Example / case study

Orangutans (studied by Biruté Galdikas).

Tertiary And Quaternary Fossil Primates

Definition

Suspensory locomotion is an arboreal movement strategy where an animal hangs or supports its body weight beneath tree branches rather than walking or balancing on top of them.

Living Major Primates

Definition

Studies human-primate interactions.

Example / case study

Free-ranging temple monkeys in Bali → behaviour shaped by humans & religious protection. Focuses on multi species ethnography not anthropocentric. LEAKEY'S ANGELS (Three great primate researchers)- Trimates Studied chimpanzees in Tanzania (Gombe).