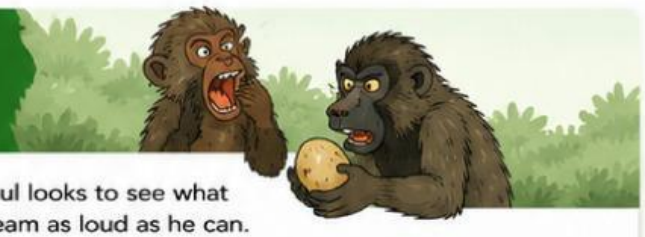
Nature's Cheats



Anna is digging in the ground for a potato, when along comes Paul. Paul looks to see what Anna's doing and then, seeing that there is no one in sight starts to scream as loud as he can. Paul's angry mother rushes over and chases Anna away. Once his mum has gone, Paul walks over and helps himself to Anna's potato.

Does this ring a bell? I'm sure it does. We've all experienced annoying tricks when we were young – the brother who stole your toys and then got you into trouble by telling your parents you had hit him. But Anna and Paul are not humans. They're African baboons, and playing tricks is as much a part of monkey behavior as it is of human behavior.

Throughout nature, tricks like this are common – they are part of daily survival. There are insects that hide from their enemies by looking like leaves or twigs, and harmless snakes that imitate poisonous ones. **2.1** _____ Some animals, however, go further and use a more deliberate kind of deception – they use normal behavior to trick other animals. In most cases, the animal probably doesn't know it is deceiving, only that certain actions give it an advantage. But in apes and some monkeys, the behavior seems much more like that of humans.

What about Paul the baboon? His scream and his mother's attack on Anna could have been a matter of chance, but Paul was later seen playing the same trick on others. **2.2** _____ Another tactic is the 'Look behind you!' trick. When one young male baboon was as attacked by several others, he stood on his back legs and looked into the distance, as if there was an enemy there. The attackers turned to look behind them and lost interest in their victim. In fact, there was no enemy.

Studying behavior like this is complicated because it is difficult to do laboratory experiments to test whether behavior is intentional It would be easy to suggest that these cases mean the baboons were deliberately tricking other animals, but they might have learned the behavior without understanding how it worked. So the psychologists talked to colleagues who studied apes and asked them if they had noticed this kind of deception. They discovered many liars and cheats, but the cleverest were apes who clearly showed that they intended to deceive and knew when they themselves had been deceived.

An amusing example of this comes from a psychologist working in Tanzania. A young chimp was annoying him, so he tricked her into going away by pretending he had seen something interesting in the distance. **2.3** _____

Another way to decide whether an animal's behavior is deliberate is to look for actions that are not normal for that animal. A zoo worker describes how a gorilla dealt with an enemy. 'He slowly crept up behind the other gorilla, walking on tiptoe. When he got close to his enemy, he pushed him violently in the back, then ran indoors.' Wild gorillas do not normally walk on tiptoe. **2.4** _____ But looking at the many cases of deliberate deception in apes, it is impossible to explain them all as simple imitation.

Taking all the evidence into account, it seems that deception does play an important part in ape societies where there are complex social rules and relationships and where problems are better solved by social pressure than by physical conflict. **2.5** _____ Studying the intelligence of our closest relatives could be the way to understand the development of human intelligence.

You are going to read an article about animal behavior. Choose the sentence (**A - G**) which fits each gap.
You do not need to use all the letters.

A. Such behavior, developed over hundreds of thousands of years, is instinctive and completely natural.

B. This use of a third individual to achieve a goal is only one of the many tricks commonly used by apes.

C. However, they've tried their best to copy.

D. When she looked and found nothing, she "walked back, hit me over the head with her hand and ignored me for the rest of the day".

E. Of course, it's possible that he could have learned from humans that such behavior works, without understanding why.

F. The ability of animals to deceive and cheat may be a better measure of their intelligence than their use of tools.

G. The psychologists who saw the incident are sure that he intended to get the potato.

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