

# Using an Interactive Reading Guide to Explore How War Affects Gorillas

If you're looking to engage your students in conservation science, social studies, and language arts while helping them to tackle a science text, this activity will be perfect for your classroom.

Gorillas are integral to maintaining healthy ecosystems, but due to a number of complex issues, such as mining, poaching, and a civil war, the Grauer's gorilla population has declined by almost 80% in just one generation. This activity will help students to develop a deeper understanding of the drastic impact humans can have on species around the world. It will also shed light on the important work that WCS scientists and field staff around the world are doing to save gorillas, and empower students to take actions to save gorillas, too.

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## Objectives:

- To increase student awareness of the many threats facing Grauer's gorillas that have led to a rapid decline in population, and to show them what they can do to help.
- To utilize a literacy strategy to extract and interpret relevant information from a science text.

## Materials:

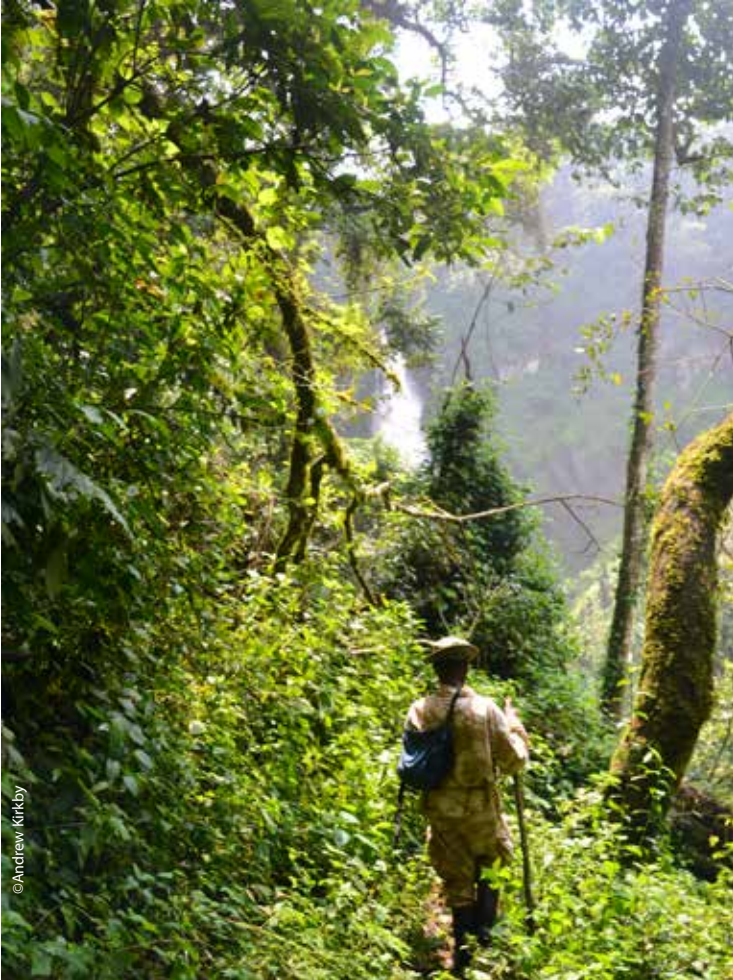
- [Article: "How does war affect gorillas?"](#)
- [Interactive Reading Guide](#)

## Process:

- 1) The teacher will introduce the article to students, noting that the reading they are about to explore was originally published by Andy Plumtre, WCS Senior Scientist of the Africa Program, and several other WCS scientists in partnership with 7 other organizations. It was titled "Catastrophic Decline of World's Largest Primate: 80% Loss of Grauer's Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*) Population Justified Critically Endangered Status." This article was modified by a wonderful organization called *Science Journal for Kids*.
- 2) The teacher will hand out the article.
- 3) Next, the teacher will introduce the Interactive Reading Guide, which will be used to help students make sense of the important information in the article. The teacher will also ask students to familiarize themselves with some of the features in the text (infographics, maps, glossary, etc.) that will aid them in interpreting the article. The teacher should inform the students that some parts of the guide will require students to talk to each other while others require them to reflect silently, and that they should pay close attention to these instructions.

- 4) Students will work in pairs to complete the Interactive Reading Guide.
- 5) Once they are finished, students will share their summaries of the article and also reflect on how using this strategy impacted their ability to understand the reading.
- 6) Finally, the teacher will share a slide which provides students with different actions they can take to help save the Grauer's gorillas.\*

\*Note: The teacher should use discretion about the depth and breadth to which to explore this section, depending on the specific group of students. For more information, visit our website: [wcs.org/education](https://wcs.org/education).



▲ Ranger patrolling in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo



▲ Wild Grauer's gorilla in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

#### Supplemental Resources:

- a. Recommended Book: [Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines by Doug Buehl](#)
- b. Original Article: ["Catastrophic Decline of the World's Largest Primate: 80% Loss of Grauer's Gorilla \(\*Gorilla beringei graueri\*\) Population Justifies Critically Endangered Status."](#)

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