

# How to Read Lion Expressions

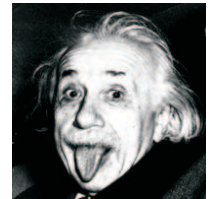
These lions, all being cuddled, display an open-mouthed response similar to saying “aww!”



These male lions display a grin. Note the lioness in the left photo is returning his gesture with an open-mouthed response.



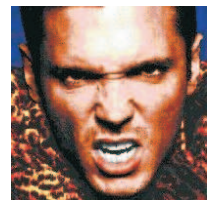
This is called “flehmen”. Not a “yuck”, it’s a reaction to strange smells allowing the jacobson’s organ in the roof of the mouth to taste smells. Humans lack this ability.



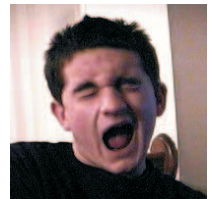
The lioness on the left is giving an intent look that could signal anything from stalking prey to preparing to play. The lioness in the middle has a calm face.



Threat faces can be offensive (left) or defensive (right) signaled by the position of the ears. Humans don’t signal with their ears, but they sometimes bare teeth.



The male to the left is yawning. The male in the center is roaring. The tongue does not stick out while roaring. Humans don’t stick out their tongue to yawn or roar...



These lions are cringing. Unlike the growl it’s done with eyes shut. It’s similar to what you might do if someone sneaked up and grabbed you from the back.

