

Because and the comma and Koko

In a 'because' sentence (and in other similar two-clause sentences), a comma means that two ideas are being presented. Lack of a comma means that one idea is being presented.

If a comma precedes the 'because' clause, the first clause in the sentence is the topic (the main focus) of that sentence, new information, or a new claim. This first clause is an initiating statement, and the second clause is only added (secondary) information. If a comma doesn't precede the 'because' clause, the first clause is "old" information, accepted or assumed to be true. The topic or new information is now the 'because' clause.

She didn't get married,	because men her age didn't want to marry someone on the same level.
<i>the topic (new information or new claim)</i>	<i>information added to the topic.</i>
She didn't get married	because men her age didn't want to marry someone on the same level.
<i>old, given information; information assumed true</i>	<i>the topic (new information or new claim)</i>

Under these answers written by students, the question that the sentence seems to answer is first, and the original question (in the homework assignment) is in brackets.

Koko must have named the kitten All-ball, because the tailless kitten looked like a ball.

What did Koko name the kitten? [Original question: Why do you think Koko named the kitten All-Ball?]

Koko might have picked out the Manx, because the Manx is a rare breed with no tail.

Which kitten did Koko pick? [Original question: Why did Koko pick out the Manx?]

We can guess that animals have a soul because they can think and determine their behavior.

Why do animals have a soul? [Original question: Why did Koko pick out the Manx? Does this say anything about an animal having or not having a soul?]

Michael might have proposed the name Banana because he considered the kitten his prey.

Why did Michael propose the name Banana? [Original question: Why do you think Michael proposed the name Banana?]

Koko probably indicated that she was in mourning using sign language because she can communicate with sign language.

Why did Koko use sign language to indicate that she was in mourning? [Original question: Imagine how Koko indicated she was in mourning.]