

Sample from Nonfiction Reading Grade 3

Elephants Live Together

Level 1

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Elephant Families

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence.

Elephant Families

African elephants live together in a herd. They all take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old female elephant. She is the matriarch. The other elephants are elephants, males, females, and young elephants. They follow the matriarch because she leads the family from danger. Adult male elephants go off to live in their own and start families.

Elephants are intelligent animals. Young elephants learn by copying other elephants. Elephants live to be 50 to 60 years old. They have long memories. A matriarch has long memories. A matriarch even in a dry spell. The herd will follow her there. She can also remember the safest place to cross a fast-moving river.

Elephants talk to each other with low rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people cannot hear them. Elephants have lots of getting in front of the herd. If danger approaches, matriarchs dig their ears to call their babies. The adult elephants circle around their babies.

Other animals do not often attack elephants. But a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the adult elephants circle around the baby elephants. The adults use loud trumpeting sounds. They also hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself in front of the herd. She flaps her ears out wide. This makes her look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

Words to Know

African

matriarch

male

intelligent

memories

dry spell

rumbling

approaches

attack

trumpeting

Level 2

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

An Elephant Herd

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence.

An Elephant Herd

African elephants live in a herd. All of the elephants in the herd take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old female elephant. She is the matriarch. The other elephants follow the matriarch because she knows how to find water when it is dry. Because the matriarch knows how to find water when it is dry, the herd stays safe from danger. Adult male elephants go off to live on their own and start families.

Elephants are intelligent animals with long memories. They learn from other elephants and from living a long life. Elephants live to be 50 to 60 years old. A matriarch can remember where to find water when it is dry. She can also remember the safest place to cross a fast-moving river. Elephants talk to each other with rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people can't hear them. If danger approaches, the matriarch flaps her ears out wide. This makes her look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

Other animals do not usually attack elephants. However, a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the adult elephants circle around the baby elephants. The adults use loud trumpeting sounds. They also hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself in front of the herd. She flaps her ears out wide to make herself look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

Words to Know

African

matriarch

approach

male

intelligent

memories

dry spell

rumbling

usually

approach

usually

attack

trumpeting

Level 3

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

How Elephants Live

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence.

How Elephants Live

Elephants are the largest land animals alive today. African elephants live in close family groups called herds. All of the elephants in the herd take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old female elephant. She is the matriarch. A herd may have as few as eight or as many as 100 elephants. The other elephants follow the matriarch because she knows how to keep them safe from approaching danger.

Elephants learn by watching and copying other elephants, and from life. Baby elephants stay with their mothers until they are fully grown at about 10 years old. Elephants live to be 50 to 60 years old.

Elephants are intelligent animals with long memories. In a dry spell, a matriarch can remember where water was found in the past. The herd will follow her there. She can also remember the safest place for baby elephants to cross a fast-moving river.

Elephants talk to each other with low rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people can't hear them. Elephants have lots of getting in front of the herd. If danger approaches, matriarchs dig their ears to call their babies to them.

Other animals do not usually attack elephants. However, a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the adult elephants circle around the baby elephants. The adults use loud trumpeting sounds. They also hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself in front of the herd. She flaps her ears out to make herself look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

Words to Know

African

matriarch

approaching

intelligent

memories

dry spell

rumbling

usually

usually

attack

trumpeting

Assemble the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student:

- Visual Literacy page: The African Elephant, page 61
- Level 1, 2, or 3 Reading Selection and Reading Comprehension page and the corresponding Words to Know list
- Graphic Organizer of your choosing, provided on pages 180–186
- Writing Form: Elephant Facts, page 62

Introduce the Topic

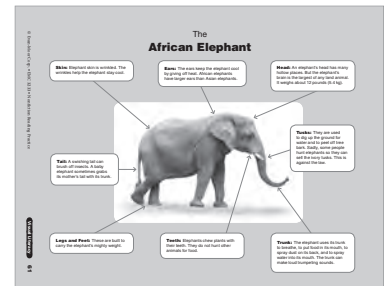
Review the labeled elephant photo with students. Explain that elephants are the largest land animals in the world. Many people are working to protect elephants because they are losing their habitats.

Read and Respond

Form leveled groups and review the Words to Know lists with each group of students. Instruct each group to read their selection individually, in pairs, or as a group. Have students complete the Reading Comprehension page for their selection.

Write About the Topic

Read aloud the leveled writing prompt for each group. Tell students to use the Graphic Organizer to plan their writing. Direct students to use their Writing Form to respond to their prompt.



Visual Literacy

Elephant Facts

Writing Form

The African Elephant

Skin: Elephant skin is wrinkled. The wrinkles help the elephant stay cool.

Ears: The ears keep the elephant cool by giving off heat. African elephants have larger ears than Asian elephants.

Head: An elephant's head has many hollow places. But the elephant's brain is the largest of any land animal. It weighs about 12 pounds (5.4 kg).

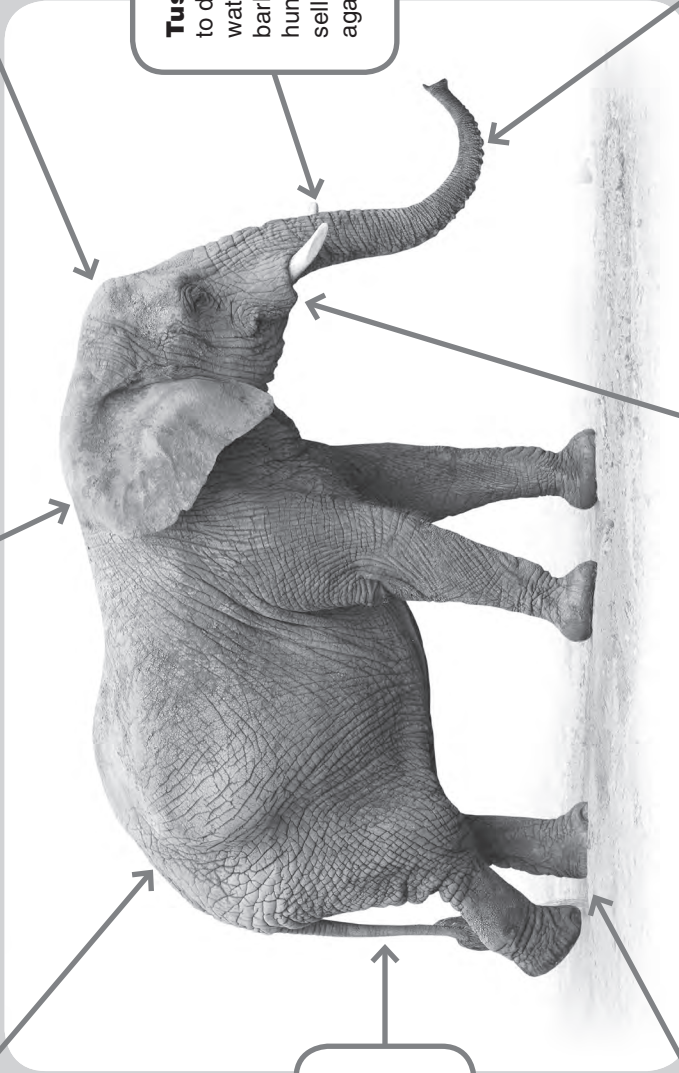
Tusks: They are used to dig up the ground for water and to peel off tree bark. Sadly, some people hunt elephants so they can sell the ivory tusks. This is against the law.

Legs and Feet: These are built to carry the elephant's mighty weight.

Tail: A swishing tail can brush off insects. A baby elephant sometimes grabs its mother's tail with its trunk.

Teeth: Elephants chew plants with their teeth. They do not hunt other animals for food.

Trunk: The elephant uses its trunk to breathe, to put food in its mouth, to spray dust on its back, and to spray water into its mouth. The trunk can make loud trumpeting sounds.



Name _____

Elephant Facts



Words to Know
Elephant Families

African
matriarch
male
intelligent
memories
dry spell
rumbling
approaches
attack
trumpeting

Elephants Live Together ■

Words to Know
An Elephant Herd

African
matriarch
appears
male
intelligent
memories
dry spell
rumbling
approaches
usually
attack
trumpeting

Elephants Live Together ■ ■

Words to Know
How Elephants Live

African
female
matriarch
approaching
intelligent
memories
dry spell
rumbling
unable
soles
usually
attack
trumpeting

Elephants Live Together ■ ■ ■



Elephant Families

African elephants live together in a herd. They all take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old mother elephant. She is the matriarch. The other elephants are daughters, sisters, cousins, and babies. They follow the matriarch because she guards the family from danger. Adult male elephants go off to live on their own and start families.



Elephants rub against each other and touch each other with their trunks.



Elephants sip water through their trunks and spray it into their mouths to drink.

Elephants are intelligent animals. Young elephants learn by copying other elephants. Elephants live to be 50 or 60 years old. They have long memories. A matriarch can remember where to find water even in a dry spell. The herd will follow her there. She can also remember the safest place to cross a fast-moving river.

Elephants talk to each other with low rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people cannot hear them. Elephants have lots of feeling in their skin. So they greet each other by touch. They use their trunks and feet. If danger approaches, mothers flap their ears to call their babies. The adult elephants circle around the babies.

Other animals do not often attack elephants. But a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the elephants make loud trumpeting sounds. They also hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself in front of the herd. She flaps her ears out wide. This makes her look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

Elephant Families

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. A matriarch _____.
Ⓐ is the youngest adult male
Ⓑ lives on her own
Ⓒ keeps the herd from harm
2. The fact that elephants have long memories shows that they _____.
Ⓐ take care of each other
Ⓑ are intelligent
Ⓒ are a family
3. Give an example of an adaptation, or feature, that helps elephants stay alive.

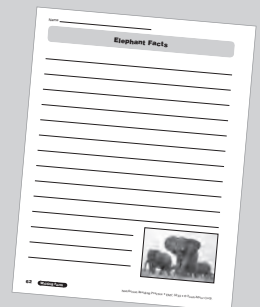
4. From which paragraph can you infer that elephants need a water supply? Write a sentence from the paragraph to support your answer.

5. If you were a scientist, which feature of elephants would you like to study?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Imagine you are a baby elephant. Write about one day in your life. Give details that tell about life in a herd.



An Elephant Herd

African elephants travel in a herd. All of the elephants in the herd take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old mother elephant. She is the matriarch. The other elephants follow the matriarch because she knows how to guard the family if danger appears. Adult male elephants go off to live on their own and start families.



The herd follows its matriarch.

Elephants are intelligent animals with long memories. They learn from other elephants and from living a long life. Elephants live to be 50 or 60 years old. A matriarch can remember where to find water even in a dry spell. The herd will follow her there. She can also remember the safest place to cross a fast-moving river.

Elephants talk to each other with rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people's ears cannot hear them. If danger approaches, the rumbling stops. Everyone is on guard. Mothers flap their ears to call their babies to them. The adult elephants circle around the baby elephants to keep them safe. Baby elephants stay with their mothers until they are fully grown at ten years old.

Other animals do not usually attack elephants. However, a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the elephants make trumpeting sounds and hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself between the lion and the herd. She flaps her ears out to make herself look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

An Elephant Herd

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. Being part of a group helps elephants _____.
Ⓐ travel a long distance
Ⓑ defend themselves
Ⓒ live on their own
2. Two of the sounds made by elephants are _____.
Ⓐ trumpeting and rumbling
Ⓑ remembering and guarding
Ⓒ charging and flapping
3. Explain how memory is an adaptation, or feature, that helps elephants stay alive.

4. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

5. Write a sentence or two about what you think is most interesting about elephants.

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Imagine you are a matriarch. Write about one day in your life. Give details that tell about life in a herd.



How Elephants Live

Elephants are the largest land animals alive today. African elephants live in tight family groups called herds. All of the elephants in the herd take care of each other. The leader of the herd is an old female elephant. She is the matriarch. A herd may have as few as eight or as many as 100 elephants. The other elephants follow the matriarch because she knows how to keep them safe from approaching danger.

Elephants learn by watching and copying other elephants, and from life. Baby elephants stay with their mothers until they are fully grown at about ten years old. Elephants live to be 50 or 60 years old. Elephants are intelligent animals with long memories. In a dry spell, a matriarch can remember where water was found in the past. The herd will follow her there. She can also remember the safest place for baby elephants to cross a fast-moving river.



The herd has followed its matriarch across a river.

Elephants talk to each other with low rumbling sounds. Some rumbling sounds are so deep that people are unable to hear them. Elephants hear sounds with their ears, the soles of their feet, and even their trunks. They also greet each other by touching with their trunks and feet. If danger approaches, mothers flap their ears to call their babies to them.

Other animals do not usually attack elephants. However, a lion might try to attack a sick elephant or a baby. If this happens, the adult elephants circle around the baby elephants. The adults make loud trumpeting sounds and hit the ground with their trunks. The matriarch puts herself between the lion and the herd. She flaps her ears out to make herself look even larger. Then she lowers her head and charges the enemy in a big cloud of dust.

How Elephants Live

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. The matriarch of a herd is _____.
Ⓐ forgetful
Ⓑ young
Ⓒ wise
2. Because of the elephant's great size, it can _____.
Ⓐ frighten its enemy
Ⓑ move quickly
Ⓒ learn from life
3. What is the importance of the herd's matriarch?

4. How does an elephant's memory help it to live a long life?

5. What do you think was the most interesting part of this text?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Compare an elephant herd with a human family.
Write about some of the things they have in common.

