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| **oral range: Pliocene–Present**  **ELEPHANT** | |
| [From top left to right: the African bush elephant, the Asian elephant and African forest elephant.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Elephant_Diversity.jpg) | |
| . | |
| [**Scientific classification**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_(biology))**[Edit this classification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Taxonomy/Elephantinae)** | |
| Kingdom: | [Animalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal) |
| Phylum: | [Chordata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chordate) |
| Class: | [Mammalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal) |
| Order: | [Proboscidea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proboscidea) |
| Family: | [Elephantidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephantidae) |
| Subfamily: | [Elephantinae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephantinae) |

**ELEPHANT**

**Elephants** are mammals of the [family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_(biology)) [Elephantidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephantidae" \o "Elephantidae) and the largest existing land animals. Three [species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species) are currently recognised: the [African bush elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_bush_elephant), the [African forest elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_forest_elephant), and the [Asian elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_elephant). Elephantidae is the only surviving family of the order [Proboscidea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proboscidea" \o "Proboscidea); extinct members include the [mastodons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mastodon). The family Elephantidae also contains several now-extinct groups, including the [mammoths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammoth) and [straight-tusked elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straight-tusked_elephant). [African elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_elephant) have larger ears and concave backs, whereas Asian elephants have smaller ears, and convex or level backs. Distinctive features of all elephants include a long [proboscis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proboscis) called a trunk, tusks, large ear flaps, massive legs, and tough but sensitive skin. The trunk is used for breathing, bringing food and water to the mouth, and grasping objects. Tusks, which are derived from the incisor teeth, serve both as weapons and as tools for moving objects and digging. The large ear flaps assist in maintaining a constant body temperature as well as in communication. The [pillar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Column)-like legs carry their great weight.