

## We need a total ban on ivory sales

Level 1 | Elementary

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Richard Leakey

Fifteen years ago, together with the ex-president of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, I set fire to 2,000 elephant tusks. Television stations around the world showed pictures of this event. The tusks were worth millions of dollars to Kenya, but it was important to show the world that the only way to save the elephants of Africa was to destroy the ivory trade.

During the 1980s, the number of elephants in Africa fell from 1.3 million to just 625,000. This was a result of the ivory trade. During this period Kenya lost 80% of its elephants. Poachers killed most of these elephants. A few months after we burnt the tusks, the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) banned the ivory trade, and the number of elephants killed fell dramatically.

Recently Cites announced an "action plan" to control the illegal ivory trade. The plan asks African countries with large elephant populations to ban unregulated domestic sales of ivory but to allow regulated sales. But conservationists say the plan does not do enough to protect elephants.

People will only stop killing elephants if they receive money for not killing them. Trade is the main reason for the destruction of animal species. Even a limited legal trade in ivory will allow the illegal market to increase.

It is not surprising that the ban on the ivory trade has ended. Cites agreed to allow countries to sell old stocks of ivory. This followed pressure from a few southern African countries with protected elephant populations, where poaching is not a problem. Since then, poaching has increased again but some countries want to increase the trade in ivory. Namibia is asking Cites for an annual ivory export quota, and also wants to sell worked ivory and elephant hair and, with South Africa, elephant leather.

These countries say they have the right to earn money from their natural resources. This may be true but you must remember that many poorer countries are against this. Kenya, supported by many other African states, is proposing a 20-year moratorium on ivory trade. The economics of the ivory trade do not make sense. Most countries where elephants live are poor, and the even a limited trade in ivory would cause problems. It is already difficult for these countries to protect their elephants and allowing the ivory trade again would bring poachers to these countries.

As the world's human population grows, people are destroying animal habitats in many countries. I am in favour of giving financial compensation to farmers if animals destroy their land. However, as Kenya now has only 20% of the elephants it had in 1970, the answer to this problem is to control the use of land and not to kill animals.

Richard Leakey was director of the Kenya Wildlife Service until 1999

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## 1 Key Vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these words:

illegal    ~~ban~~    ~~habitat~~    tusks    moratorium  
 poacher    compensation    ivory    ~~regulated~~    ~~resources~~

- The two long, pointed teeth which elephants have are called ivory.
- Tusks are made of tusks.
- A moratorium is an official agreement to stop an activity for a temporary period.
- If something is illegal, it is against the law.
- If something is regulated, it is officially controlled.
- A poacher is an illegal hunter.
- Natural resources are things such as coal, trees, oil and, in this case, animals.
- The place where an animal lives is called its habitat.
- If you ban something, you make it illegal.
- Money that someone receives because something bad has happened to them is called compensation.

## 2 Find the information

- How many elephant tusks did the author of the article burn? 2000
- How much were the tusks worth? millions of dollars
- What was the elephant population of Africa at the beginning of the 1980s? 1.3M
- What was the elephant population of Africa at the end of the 1980s? 625 000
- What percentage of its elephants did Kenya lose? 80%
- What does 'Cites' mean? Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

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### 3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings with the endings

1. The number of elephants in Africa is falling . **a**
2. Poachers killed **e**
3. Some countries want to sell **a**
4. Many poor countries are against **b**
5. Poaching is not a big problem ... **c**
6. The main reason for the destruction of animal species is ... **d**

- a.** ... other products, such as elephant hair and leather.
- b.** ... trade.
- c.** ... in countries with protected elephant populations.
- d.** ... because of the illegal ivory trade.
- e.** ... an increase in the ivory trade.
- f.** ... most of the elephants in Kenya.

### 4 Vocabulary - prepositions

Fill the gaps using a preposition:

1. The tusks were worth millions of dollars.
2. The number of elephants fell by 50% in the 1980s.
3. Kenya lost 80% of its elephants.
4. The main reason for the destruction of wildlife is trade.
5. Some countries want to increase the trade in ivory.
6. Countries want to earn money from their natural resources.
7. The author is in favour of giving compensation to farmers.
8. Controlling the use of land is the answer to this problem.



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### 5 Vocabulary - word-building

Complete the table:

	Verb	Noun
1.	destroy	<u>destruction</u>
2.	announce	<u>announcement</u>
3.	propose	<u>proposal</u>
4.	attract	<u>attraction</u>
5.	act	<u>action</u>
6.	increase	<u>increase</u>
7.	protect	<u>protection</u>
8.	ban	<u>ban</u>

### 6 Grammar focus

The infinitive

Look at this example from the text:

*The answer to this problem is to control the use of land.*

Fill the gaps using examples of infinitives from the text:

1. The answer to this problem is not to control animals.
2. Some countries want to increase the trade in ivory.
3. This is the only way to save the elephants of Africa.
4. Cites announced an action plan to control the illegal ivory trade in Africa.
5. A limited legal trade in ivory will allow the illegal market to increase.
6. Namibia wants to sell worked ivory, elephant hair and leather.