

### About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 693

#### Book Summary

**Elephants** is an informational text that describes the largest land animals—their bodies, their diet, and their families. Photographs of Asian and African elephants include captions that feature additional interesting facts. The final chapter explains that both kinds of elephants are endangered and describes what is necessary to keep them alive in the future. The text is supported by photographs, captions, and a chart.

### About the Lesson

#### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

#### Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand informational text
- Identify the main idea and supporting details
- Identify vowel digraphs *ee*, *ea*, and *ie*
- Identify and use contractions
- Place words in alphabetical order

#### Materials

**Green text** indicates resources available on the website

- Book—**Elephants** (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Dictionaries
- **KWLS/ask and answer questions, main idea and details, contractions, alphabetical order worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

#### Vocabulary

\*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

- **Content words:**

Story critical: **endangered** (adj.), **herbivores** (n.), **matriarch** (n.), **minerals** (n.), **routes** (n.), **water hole** (n.)

Enrichment: **mate** (v.), **snorkel** (n.)

### Before Reading

#### Build Background

- Write the word *Elephants* on the board. Ask students to share what they know about these animals. Explain that there are many interesting facts about elephants. Ask students if they have ever seen an elephant, and ask volunteers to share their experience. Show students pictures of elephants in the wild.

- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS/ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. As various topics are discussed, fill in the first row (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Ask students what they would like to know about elephants. Have them fill in the second row (*W*) of their worksheet. Write their questions on the class chart.

## Preview the Book

### Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what kind of book it is and what it might be about.
- Ask students if they think this book is fiction or nonfiction and to explain their reasoning.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss how having prior knowledge about the topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Use it as a way to model asking questions.  
*Think-aloud: I can use the table of contents to think of questions I'd like to have answered about elephants. For example, Section 2 is titled "Elephant Bodies." I know that elephants are huge, but this section title makes me think that there are other interesting facts about elephant bodies. I'll have to read the book to find out. I'll write that question in the W column of the KWLS chart.*
- Have students look at the other section titles. Write any questions they have based on the covers and table of contents in the *W* column of the KWLS chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photographs, charts, and captions. Point out the "Do You Know?" boxes, which contain more information. Show students the glossary. Have them add any additional questions they might have about the book to their KWLS chart. Write shared questions on the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**

- Explain that every book has a main idea that is the most important idea of the book. Review or explain that the main idea is often the title of the book. Have students take another look at the book covers. Ask them to predict the main idea of the book.
- Explain that each page gives supporting details that tell the reader more about the book's main topic (elephants).
- Model using the table of contents to infer supporting details in the text.  
*Think-aloud: When I look at the table of contents on page 3, I see the word Bodies. I already know that elephants are very large, so other facts about their bodies are probably supporting details in the book. As I read, I know that I will find out more details about elephants. As I read, I will pause after a few pages to review in my mind the important details. This strategy will help me make sure I understand what I'm reading. I know that good readers do this when they read, so I am going to look for supporting details as I read this book.*

- Have students turn to the table of contents and list some of the supporting details about elephants (families, food, water, and so on).

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *herbivores*, *matriarch*, and *routes*.
- Give groups of students three pieces of blank paper. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- Review or explain that the glossary and a dictionary contain lists of vocabulary words and their definitions.
- Model how students can use a glossary and a dictionary to find a word's meaning. Ask students to locate the word *herbivores* in the glossary and in a dictionary. Explain that, in a dictionary, they will find the word *herbivore* and that suffixes (in this case, -s) are dropped for entry words. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *herbivore* in the dictionary, and ask another volunteer to read the definition in the glossary.
- Have students compare the definition with their prior knowledge of the word. Then have students follow along on page 11 as you read the sentence in which the word *herbivores* is found. Read the sentence that follows to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.

### Set the Purpose


- Have students think about what they already know about elephants as they read the book to find answers to their questions and write what they learned in the L section of their KWLS worksheet.

## During Reading


### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Remind them to look for information about elephants that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Have students go back and reread the sections if they finish before everyone else.
- When they have finished reading, have students discuss the information in each section and share what they learned about elephants. Have them circle any questions on their KWLS chart that were answered and add any new questions that were generated.
- Model answering a question on the KWLS chart and filling in additional information.  
**Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know some other interesting facts about elephant bodies. I found out that an adult male can weigh as much as six cars. I learned that some elephants use tusks to peel the bark off trees and to dig for minerals. An elephant's trunk is its nose and upper lip joined together. It uses its trunk like a hand to pick up objects, like a hose to shower, and like a snorkel to breathe while under water. I also learned that elephants use their ears to show their feelings and that their trunks have thousands of muscles but no bones. I'll write what I learned in the L row of my KWLS chart. This information made me want to know what food elephants eat to help them grow so large. I will write this question in the W row of my KWLS chart.*
- Model identifying the main idea and details for a specific section of the book.  
**Think-aloud:** *In the section titled "Elephant Bodies," most of the sentences mentioned something about what elephants look like. I read that elephants have heavy gray bodies, thick legs, wrinkled skin, and floppy ears. I will underline this information. I also read that most elephants have a pair of tusks, which are long, pointed teeth—and every elephant has a trunk, which is its nose and upper lip joined together. There are two different kinds of elephants—African elephants live in Africa, and Asian elephants live in Asia. I will underline this information, too. Based on what I've read, I think the main idea of the section is: How elephant bodies look.*

- Write the main idea on the board. Ask students to identify details that support this main idea (use their tusks to peel the bark, use their trunk as a snorkel, and so on). Remind them to include the facts listed in the chart as well. Write these details on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 8 through 10. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* row of their KWLS worksheet and additional questions they raised in the *W* row. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Record shared responses on the class KWLS chart.

 Have students work in pairs to reread the section titled “Elephant Families,” underlining the important information. Instruct them to work with their partner to identify the main idea of the section. Have them write the main idea in the margin of their books or on a separate piece of paper. Check individual responses for understanding.

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their KWLS worksheet questions. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their worksheet as they read and to circle the important facts.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

### After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know what elephants eat to help them grow so large. I found out that elephants are herbivores, or plant eaters. They eat grass, leaves, bark, branches, fruit, flowers, and seeds. They are always on the move, looking for food and water. When they leave an area, the plants have time to grow back. They follow the same routes year after year, moving from place to place, searching for food and water.*
- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWLS worksheet while reading, and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text.
- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and remember what they have read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the final row (*S*) with information they would still like to know about elephants.


### Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Talk about how stopping to review the important details helped students remember the facts and better understand the information. Ask them to use the important details they identified to confirm or refine the main idea of the book.
- Have students reread pages 11 through 13, looking for supporting details about the main idea. Write the details about “Food and Water” on the board (herbivores, always on the move, and so on). Ask students how this information supports the main idea (the facts are all important to understanding elephants).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#). When everyone has finished working independently, review their answers aloud.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned that both African and Asian elephants are endangered because of hunting and farming practices. Keeping this information in mind, why do you think it is important for people to try to save elephants from extinction?

### Build Skills


#### Phonics: Vowel digraphs *ee*, *ea*, and *ie*

- Have students look at the photograph on page 11. Ask them to tell what they see (an elephant eating). Write the word *eat* on the board and point to the letters *ea*. Tell students that the letters *e* and *a* together stand for the long /e/ vowel sound they hear at the beginning of the word *eat*.
- Explain that the *ea* letter combination is one of the letter combinations that stand for the long /e/ vowel sound. The other combinations are *ee* and *ie*. Tell students that these combinations of letters are called *vowel digraphs*.
- Write the words *sea* and *say* on the board and read them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel sound as in *eat*. Make sure students can differentiate between the two vowel sounds. Give other examples if necessary.
- Ask students to name other words with the long /e/ vowel sound as in *eat*. Write each example on the board and invite volunteers to circle the vowel digraph in each word.
- Have students turn to page 8. Instruct them to find and circle the word *leader*. Write the word *leader* on the board. Point out the letter combination that stands for the long /e/ vowel sound and ask students if the letters *e* and *a* together make the same sound as in *eat*.

 Invite students to work with a partner to circle the other words in the book that contain vowel digraphs. Remind them to look for the combinations that stand for the long /e/ vowel sound: *ea*, *ee*, and *ie*.

#### Grammar and Mechanics: Contractions

- Review or explain that a *contraction* is a word formed by joining two words, and that an *apostrophe* shows where one or more letters have been left out.
- Direct students to page 5 and point to the word *don't*. Review or explain that this word stands for two words. Ask students to use context clues to identify which two words were joined together to make the new word (*do* and *not*). Write both the contraction and the two words on the board. Point out that the letter *o* in *not* is dropped to make the contraction.
- Ask a volunteer to read aloud the third sentence on page 5, substituting *do not* for *don't* to check if these words make sense. (*I definitely do not want an elephant to sit on me!*)
- Ask students to turn to page 7 and identify the contraction (*Here's*). Ask them to identify which two words were joined together to make the new word (*Here* and *is*). Ask students to identify which letter was dropped to make the contraction *Here's* (the *i* in *is*). Ask a volunteer to read page 7, substituting *Here is* for *Here's*.
- Have students turn to page 6. Point to the word *elephant's* in the second sentence. Have a volunteer read the sentence aloud, substituting *is* for *'s*. (*An elephant is trunk...*) Ask students to tell whether the sentence makes sense. Review or explain that an *'s* that shows possession is not a contraction. In this sentence, the *'s* shows possession: the *elephant's* trunk. Point out that using context clues helps readers determine whether a word is a *possessive* or a *contraction*.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students circle all of the contractions in the book and write the two words that each contraction stands for next to the word. Remind them not to circle any words with an *'s* that shows possession. If time allows, discuss their responses.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [contractions worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

#### Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Tell students that they must look at the first letter of each of the two words and then decide which word begins with the letter that comes first in the alphabet.

- Write the alphabet on the board. Underneath it, write the words *elephant* and *matriarch*. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*elephant*) and why (because *e* comes before *m* in the alphabet). Circle the *e* and the *m* on the board and compare their location in the alphabet. Erase the circles when the discussion is finished.
- Tell students that if the first letter of two words is the same, they must compare the next two letters instead. Write the words *African* and *Asian* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*African*) and why (because in looking at the second letters, *f* comes before *s* in the alphabet). Circle the *f* and the *s* on the board and compare their location in the alphabet. Erase the circles when the discussion is finished.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *endangered* and *elephants* on the board. Have students write the words in alphabetical order and explain their thinking on a separate piece of paper. Discuss their answers aloud.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

## Build Fluency

### Independent Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students share their KWLS worksheet with someone at home, explaining how it works and what they learned.

## Extend the Reading

### Informational Writing and Art Connection

Review the chart on page 7 that compares African elephants and Asian elephants. Remind students what a Venn diagram looks like and how it is used. Have them draw their own Venn diagram and then add all of the information from the chart to it. Next, have them review the book and include some shared traits in the center area of their diagram. Have students write a paper in which they compare and contrast African and Asian elephants using their completed Venn diagram as a reference. Mount their work on construction paper, placing the Venn diagram on the left and their paper on the right. Hang their writing projects in the hallway or on a bulletin board.

Visit [Writing A–Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

### Social Studies Connection

Provide print and Internet sources for students to work in small groups to research the endangered status of elephants. Have them find out what else is being done to save these animals, including which countries are taking an active role in the process. Provide index cards for students to take notes, and have them use these notes during a class discussion of their findings. Encourage them to share their opinions as well as any facts they uncovered.

### Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.



Lesson Plan *(continued)***Elephants**

- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

**Assessment****Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- consistently ask relevant questions about the topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions in text during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify the main idea and supporting details to better understand the text through discussion and on a worksheet
- read the common spelling patterns for the long /e/ vowel sound
- recognize contractions in text and identify the two words that are joined together to form each contraction during discussion and on a worksheet
- understand the process of arranging words in alphabetical order during discussion and on a worksheet

**Comprehension Checks**

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)