

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Elephants

Elephants are large land mammals and are the largest living land animals on Earth today.

Elephants are herbivores (plant-eaters) and possess teeth adapted for cutting and tearing off plant materials. They will graze on grass or reach up into trees to grasp leaves, fruit, or entire branches. Elephants are primarily browsers, feeding on the leaves, bark, and fruits of trees and shrubs, but they may also eat considerable grasses and herbs and spend up to 16 hours a day eating plants.



If the desired food item is too high up, the elephant will wrap its trunk around the tree or branch and shake its food loose or sometimes simply knock the tree down altogether. They always use their trunks to tear up their food and then place it in their mouths. The trunk is also used for drinking. Elephants suck water up into the trunk—up to 14 liters at a time—and then blow it into their mouths. Elephants also suck up water to spray on their bodies during bathing.

An elephant also relies on its trunk for its highly developed sense of smell. By raising the trunk up in the air and swiveling it from side to side, like a periscope, it can determine the location of friends, enemies, and food sources.

The tusks of an elephant are its second upper incisors. Tusks are used to dig for water, salt, and roots; to debark trees to eat the bark and to move trees and branches when clearing a path. In addition, they are used for marking trees to establish territory, and occasionally as weapons.

Elephants swim well, but cannot trot, jump, or gallop. They do have two gaits: a walk and a faster gait that is similar to running. They also have large flapping ears. On hot days, elephants will flap their ears constantly, creating a slight breeze.

Elephants are famous for their trumpet calls, which are made when the animal blows through its nostrils. Trumpeting is usually made during excitement. Its use varies from startlement to a cry of help to rage. Elephants also make rumbling growls when greeting each other.

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

Use the reading sheet to answer the following questions.

Answer the following:

1) What type of animal is the elephant?

2) Name three different foods that the elephant likes to eat.

3) How many hours does an elephant spend eating?

4) What does the elephant use their trunk for?

5) How does an elephant find the location of friends, enemies or food sources?

6) What are tusks used for?

7) An elephant can swim well but what can't it do?

8) On a hot day, how does an elephant cool itself?

9) What are elephants made famous for?

10) When does an elephant trumpet?
