All About Elephants

Elephants are the largest of all land mammals on Earth. With their long trunks and large ears, they are an impressive sight across Africa and areas of Asia. Elephants are known for being clever and are one of only a handful of animals that can recognise themselves in a mirror.

Elephant Herds

Elephants live in large groups that are made up of female elephants and their calves. These herds are usually led by the oldest and largest female who is called the matriarch. Incredibly, herds of over 100 African savannah elephants have been spotted.

African Elephants

African elephants are the largest species of elephant. All African elephants grow tusks which they use for lots of different tasks, including lifting objects and defending themselves. If they can't find water available nearby, elephants have also been known to dig a hole with their tusks to find water underground.

There are two different types of African elephants. They are called the savannah elephant and the forest elephant. Both can be found in different parts of Africa.

The savannah elephant is the largest type and can be found living in grassy plains and bushlands. They can also be called the bush elephant. Savannah elephants mainly eat grass but have also been known to eat other plants and fruit.

The forest elephant is smaller and can be found in wooded rainforests. Unlike savannah elephants, who can be counted easily in open areas, it is difficult to know how many forest elephants are living in a specific area. Instead, researchers often count the number of droppings to estimate how many forest elephants there are.

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Asian Elephants

Asian elephants are smaller than African elephants and can be found in different parts of Asia. Unlike African elephants, female Asian elephants don't have any tusks. These types of elephants can be identified by the shape of their ears, which are smaller than those of African elephants.

There are several different types of Asian elephant. These include the Sri Lankan elephant, the Indian elephant and the Sumatran elephant. The largest of these is the Sri Lankan elephant. Amazingly, some studies have found that Asian elephant footprints can make an excellent home for frogs and their tadpoles when they're filled with rainwater.

Over the years, elephants have faced a variety of different threats that have led to the number of wild elephants decreasing. While African elephant populations are now slowly increasing, Asian elephant populations are decreasing and they are endangered. Wanting to protect these magnificent creatures, many countries have now put laws in place to help to keep them safe.

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Questions

1. Why might an African elephant dig a hole using its tusk? Tick one.

   - ○ to help it to lift something
   - ○ to help it to defend itself
   - ○ to bury a piece of food
   - ○ to try and find water

2. Where can the savannah elephant be found? Tick one.

   - ○ on grassy plains
   - ○ in wooded rainforests
   - ○ in parts of Asia
   - ○ in mountains

3. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

Savannah elephants...	are a type of Asian elephant.
Forest elephants...	have been seen in herds of over 100 elephants.
African elephant populations...	are now slowly increasing.
Sumatran elephants...	can be found in wooded rainforests.

4. Look at the last paragraph.
   Which word tells you that the author likes elephants? Tick one.

   - ○ variety
   - ○ increasing
   - ○ magnificent
   - ○ creatures

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5. What surprising thing might you find inside an Asian elephant's footprint?

_____

6. Fill in the missing words.

The _____ elephant is the _____ type of elephant.

7. Explain the difference between African elephants and Asian elephants.

_____

_____

_____

8. Which type of elephant would you most like to see in the wild? Explain your answer.

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