

# African Elephants

## Non-fiction

### Content domain focus:

**2a** give/explain the meaning of words in context

**2b** retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

**2f** identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

### Text summary

*African Elephants* is a non-fiction text that gives information in the form of a non-chronological report. This extract, following a brief introduction, focuses on the elephant and how it lives.

### Unit summary

The questions begin with relatively simple information-retrieval questions. Some of the later questions involve the children in finding several pieces of information from across the text. The children's understanding of technical vocabulary is also explored through questions that ask them to identify a definition for a word.



### Teaching prompts

- Activate children's prior knowledge of animals that can be found in Africa, particularly elephants. Discuss what they know about elephants, what they look like, how they live and explore any technical vocabulary that the children use.
- Discuss the children's knowledge and understanding of non-fiction, and non-chronological reports in particular. Ask when they read non-fiction, and why they read it. Discuss times when they have written non-fiction. What information did it include?

### Revisiting the text

Ask the children to:

- draw and label a picture of an elephant using the information in the extract
- turn the information in the extract into a table or chart
- carry out research into other animals and write their own information text
- write appropriate headings, on sticky notes, for each section in the extract and add them to the text
- highlight all of the adjectives in the text that relate to elephants, and then create posters showing pictures of elephants surrounded by the adjectives
- write more adjectives that could be used to describe elephants on sticky notes and add them to the posters
- write poems about elephants based on their posters.

 **Answers**

Links to content domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. grass and trees [2b]
2. Any two of: elephants, rhinos, hippos. Also accept lions or hyenas. [2b]
3. elephant(s) [2b]
4. calm [2a]
5. Elephants are pregnant for 60 to 70 years.  
 Male elephants can weigh 22 months.  
 An elephant's trunk has up to 6 tonnes.  
 Elephants live for 15,000 muscles. [2b]
6. Pulling down a tree. Picking up fruit. [2b]
- 7.

What are female elephants called?	cows
What are male elephants called?	bulls
Elephants live in groups. What are these groups called?	herds
What are baby elephants called?	calves

8. Animals that want to hurt elephants. [2b]
9. up to 2 square metres [2b]
- 10.

<b>Where elephants live</b>	<b>What elephants eat</b>	<b>What elephants look like</b>
<i>They live in Africa/the savannah.</i>	<i>They eat grass/leaves/fruit.</i>	<i>They have tusks/trunks/huge ears.</i>

[2f]

 **Assessment**

The children will be secure in their understanding if they can work out the meaning of words when they use clues in the rest of the sentence and make connections with what they already know about the subject of the text.

The children can find information efficiently and effectively if they use clues in the questions, e.g. looking for, and visualising, key words and phrases; looking for numbers when a question asks "How much?" or "How many?"; looking for capital letters when a question involves looking for a proper noun.

The children can demonstrate that they understand how a text is organised and how information is connected by making links between information given in different sections.

**Next steps**

Develop the children's scanning skills by giving them brief passages and challenging them to find specific words and phrases. Encourage them to visualise the overall shapes of words and to look for specific spelling patterns such as double vowels. Develop skimming skills by using images and asking the children to quickly look at a picture and to say what it is about in just one sentence.

Build up the children's ability to work out word meanings from context by demonstrating how to make links between the focus word and other information in the text. Also, use visuals to encourage the children to read as much information as they can from the image.

When reading non-fiction, draw the children's attention to the structure and organisation of the text, as well as any organisational features that help a reader to find their way around the text. This will help them to understand how information is related and contributes to an overall understanding of the text.