

# Animals of the World: Mammals



## THE ELEPHANT



Elephants are animals known for their large size, ivory tusks, long trunk, and huge ears. They are the largest mammals in the world, so all their parts are immense, including their brain, which is capable of memorizing large amounts of information.

Currently, there are only two species of elephants, African and Asian.



African elephants are the largest, reaching 4 meters in height and weigh 6 tons. Both females and males have larger ears, longer ivory tusks, and are concentrated in the African savannas, although they can also inhabit wooded regions.

Asian elephants are a bit smaller; the adult males can reach 3.5 meters in height and weigh 5 tons. The females are much smaller, and, unlike males, they do not develop tusks. This species inhabits the wooded areas of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh.



Elephants use some parts of their body to regulate their temperature. For example, with its trunk, mud is thrown throughout the body. With its large ears, which move like they were wings, heat is released. However, to avoid getting overheated, they need to drink a lot of water.

The trunk is used to interact with its surroundings and perform many tasks such as feeding, drinking water, fighting, bathing, sniffing, grabbing, palpating, and throwing things.



Its long ivory tusks are used to dig and lift heavy things in search of food and drinking water. Unfortunately, poachers have reduced the population of elephants looking for their tusks to sell on the black market. Currently, it is estimated that there are only

400,000 African elephants and 50,000 Asian elephants.

Elephants only eat plants; they are herbivores. Adults can consume between 100 and 200 kilograms of vegetation in a day, depending on their habitat and their age.

They are affectionate and docile mammals; they only attack when they feel threatened or cornered. They live in herds of about 20 elephants and form strong emotional ties between them, especially between parents and children. When one of its members dies, signs of anguish and sadness are noticed in the rest of the pack. Depending on their habitat conditions, they can live 50 to 70 years.



Sexual maturity is reached at 14 years of age. Females have a gestation period of 22 months. This is the longest gestation period in the entire animal kingdom. At birth, the young calf weighs more than an average adult human. Females can weigh 90 to 100 kilograms and males approximately 120 kilograms.

A last curious fact about elephant babies is that they are born blind and start walking immediately. They depend on their mothers or other female elephants in the pack to guide them by holding onto the females' tails with their trunks.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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Answer the questions.

1. What are the kinds of elephants that are in existence?

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2. What does the text talk about?

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3. What is the largest type of elephant?

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4. How do elephants control their temperature?

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5. What does regulate their temperature mean in the text?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



6. What does it mean heat is released in the text?

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7. Why have poachers reduced the population of elephants?

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8. Do elephants attack all humans they see. Explain your answer.

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9. What does the gestation period refer to?

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10. Why do baby elephants grab the tail of female elephants?

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