

# The elephant

Nature

front

back

age  
8-10 years

Elephants are the largest land mammals. They are well-known for their trunks. The largest elephant ever weighed as much as 150 people together.

**Fact:** Elephants are the only mammals who cannot jump.

## Herd of elephants

Elephants live in groups. The group is called a herd. A female elephant is a cow and a male elephant is a bull. A young elephant is a calf. Male elephants live outside the herd and only join in during mating season.

**Fact:** Elephants live between 50 to 70 years.

## Elephant trek

Elephants are always looking for food. Sometimes they must walk long distances to find something to eat. On their way they damage trees and bushes. The ground becomes bare ground. There is no shade left to take a rest. So the herd goes on with their search for food.

## Teeth

Elephants have 26 teeth. The tusks count for 2. They lose and regrow their teeth six times in their lives. The molars are heavy and as big as bricks!

**Fact:** A tusk grows about 17 centimeters a year. But because of eating, fighting and working hard they don't get too long.

## Trunk

A trunk has a lot of big and small muscles. Therefore, the trunk is strong and can move very smoothly. Elephants can catch a tree trunk as well as a nut. They also use the trunk for fighting. And they can smell with it.

**Fact:** Only elephants have trunks. They can smell other elephants from 5 kilometers away!

## Food

Elephants eat leaves, fruit and branches. They use their trunk to get it off trees. They also pull roots from the ground to eat. And they like grass and tree bark.

**Fact:** Elephants eat around 180 to 200 kilos of food a day. The trunk sucks up 80 liters water a day and squirts it into the mouth.



## Skin

The elephant's skin is very thick. But the skin is very sensitive and can get sunburned. To protect their skin, they throw mud on it. It also keeps insects away. With their trunk elephants blow dust over their bodies so they don't get too warm.

**Fact:** Elephants flap their big ears to cool down.



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There are two kinds of elephants: the African elephant in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asian elephant in the south and south-east part of Asia.



## African elephant

### Habitat

Lives in the jungle. Also lives on grass plains, in the desert or in the forest.

### Skin

Its skin is brown or red.

### Head and back

Has a round head and a dip in the back.

### Ears

Has big ears in the shape of Africa.

### Trunk

Weights 150 kilograms and has 2 fingers

### Tusks

Male and female have tusks.

### Length

The male has a length of 4 meters.

### Weight

6000 kilograms.



## Asian elephant

### Habitat

Lives at the edges of a forest or in the jungle. Also lives on grass plains or next to bushes.

### Skin

Its skin is grey.

### Head and back

Has a head with 2 bumps and a rounded back.

### Ears

Has smaller ears in the shape of India.

### Trunk

Weights 150 kilograms and has 1 finger.

### Tusks

Only male has tusks.

### Length

The male has a length of 3,5 meters.

### Weight

5000 kilograms.

## Danger

Poachers often kill elephants for their ivory tusks. The ivory is used to make jewellery. The poachers earn a lot of money. Poaching is illegal and should stop.

## el·e·phant

 (noun; plural: elephants)

1 A very large plant-eating mammal with a prehensile trunk, long curved ivory tusks and large ears. It is the largest living land animal.

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## trunk

 (noun; plural: trunks)

1 The elongated, prehensile nose of an elephant.

en.oxforddictionaries.com

## tusk

 (noun; plural: tusks)

1 a tooth developed to great length, usually one of a pair, as in the elephant, walrus, and wild boar, but singly in the narwhal.

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