



by

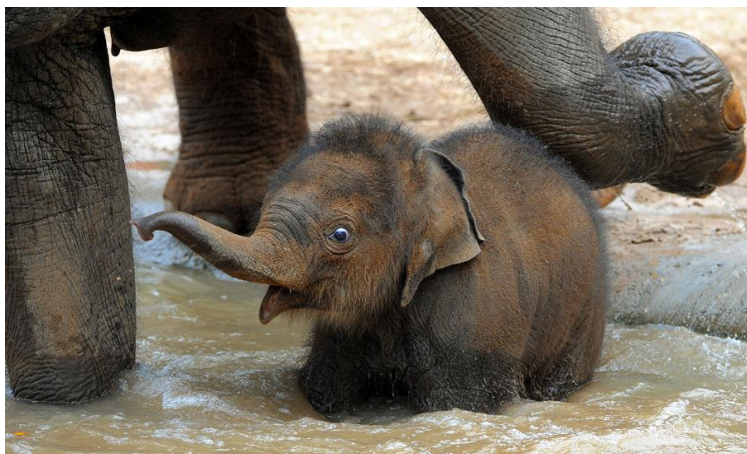




The elephant is the world's largest mammal. It can weigh between 3.5 and 6.5 tons (that's 7,000 to 13,200 pounds!) and grow up to 11 feet tall. To put that in some perspective, an average car weighs around 4,000 pounds and a 1-story building is around 10 feet tall. It is a pachyderm, which means it is very large and has very thick skin. They can also live for 60-70 years, having a very similar lifespan to humans.

Fortunately for the rest of us, elephants are generally calm, placid animals. Females are very family-oriented and live in close groups led by a matriarch—the oldest and often largest female. Herds can be anywhere from 8 to 100 strong. When a new calf is born, it is raised and protected by the entire herd. Males leave the herd when they are 12-15 years old and lead solitary lives unless they temporarily group up with other males. The matriarch uses her strong memory to guide the herd to food and water during the dry season, sometimes traveling many miles to reach the next water hole. All elephants are extremely intelligent, and they express grief, joy, anger, and other emotions.

The elephant's trunk is used for breathing, smelling, touching, grasping, and making sound. They even use it to bathe. (Just think if you could do all those things with your nose!) An elephant can lift up to 770 pounds just with his trunk. The trunk also works as a natural snorkel when the elephant takes a swim. As long as the trunk can remain above the water's surface, an elephant can cross a river while fully submerged. The trunk, by itself, contains more than 40,000 muscles. There are only 639 muscles in your entire body. The trunk is 4 times as sensitive as a bloodhound's nose, and elephants are able to smell



water from several miles away.

The tusks of an elephant perform far different functions. The tusks are actually elongated incisors—much like your front four teeth that you use for cutting and tearing your food. As large as tusks appear to us, we only see the 2/3 that are made of ivory. The other 1/3, made of tissue, blood, and nerves, is embedded deep in his head. Tusks never stop growing, so the older the elephant, the longer his tusks are likely to be. Elephants use their tusks for defense against predators such as tigers. They also use them for foraging, digging, stripping bark, and moving things out of their way. Scientists believe that elephants prefer using one tusk over the other, much as you are either right- or left-handed. The tusk that gets used the most is called the master tusk.



Scientists believe that elephants can communicate over long distances by producing a subsonic rumble that travels through the ground more quickly than sound travels through air. The receiving elephant feels the rumble through the sensitive skin on his feet. In this way, potential mates and social groups can communicate even when they are far away from each other.

Elephants use their tails as fly swatters, and they have an amazing degree of control over its movements. Their large ears not only help them hear, but the large veins running through them help to cool the elephant. Because elephants don't sweat, they flap their ears to cool the blood in those large veins and that cools their entire body.

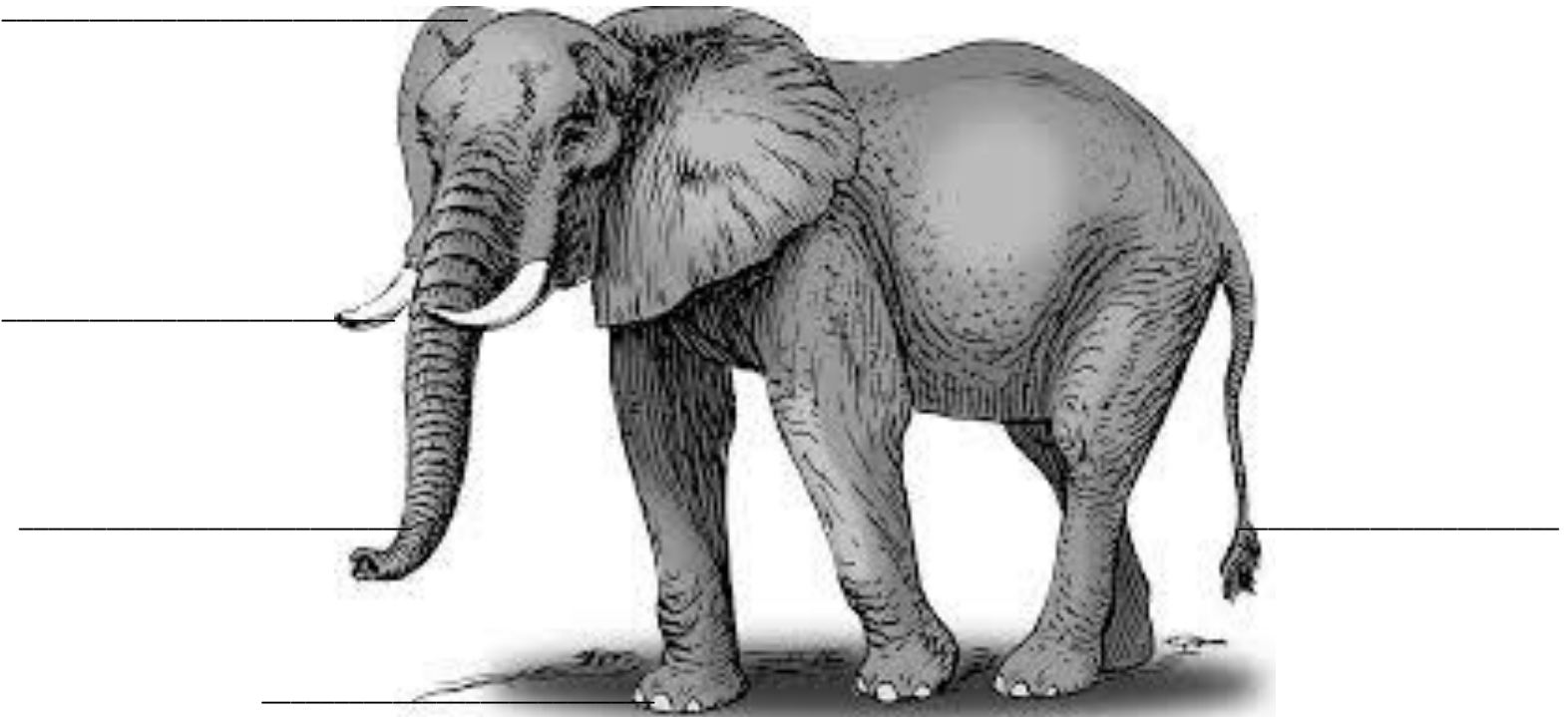
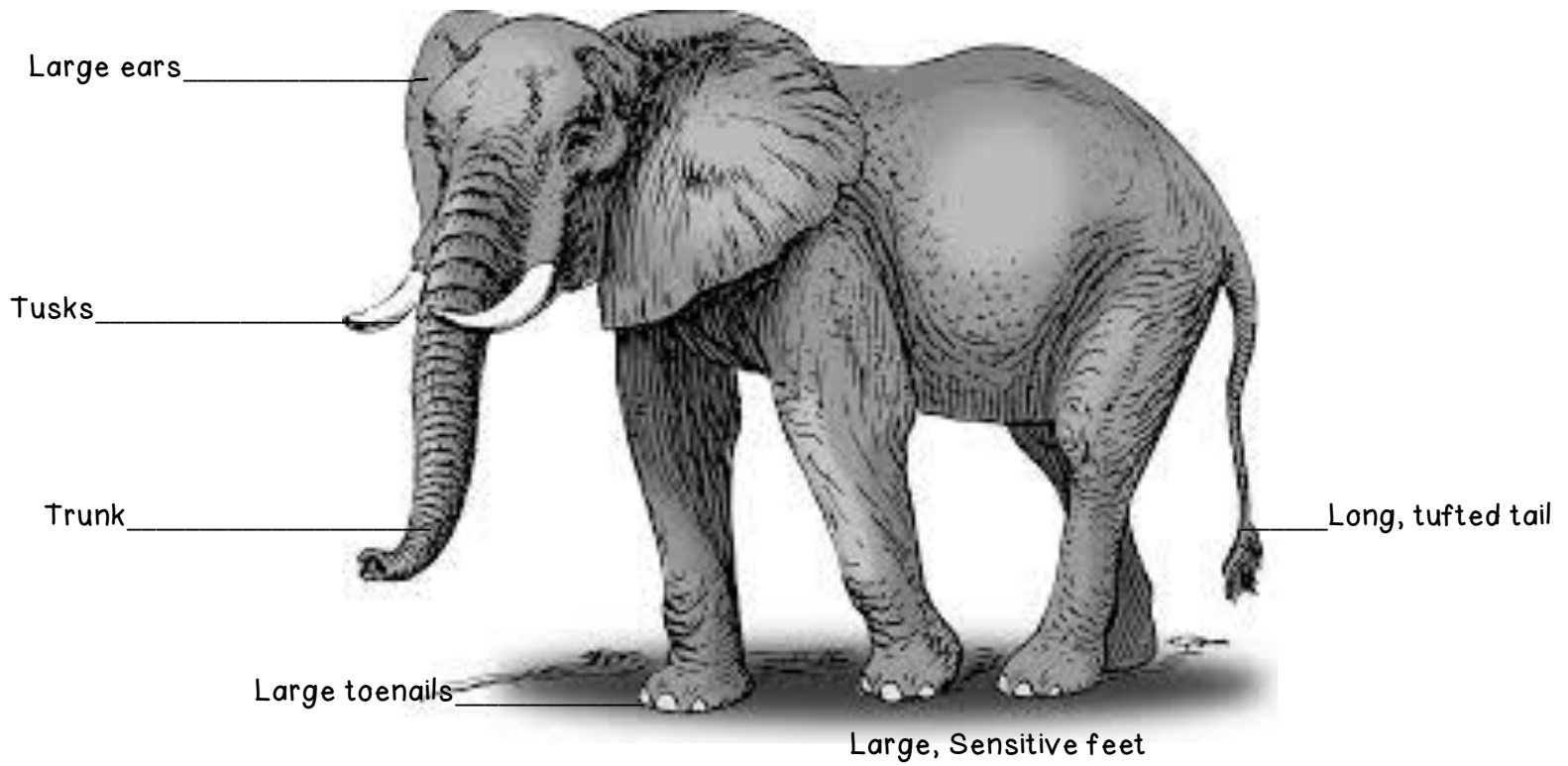


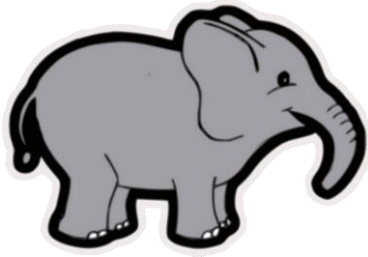
Elephants range over the savannahs and rainforests of Asia and Africa. Savannah elephants are larger and have long, curved tusks. Forest elephants are smaller and their tusks point downward. African elephants are found in 37 African countries south of the Sahara Desert. Asian elephants are found in Sri Lanka, India, China, and most of Southeast Asia. Elephants are herbivores. They eat grasses, bamboo, bark, and leaves, and are even known to eat crops such as bananas and sugarcane.

Adults can eat 300-400 pounds of food per day.

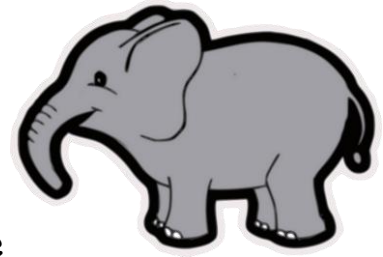
The elephant's most dangerous predator is the human. Humans covet the ivory of the elephant's tusks, and elephants are at risk of being hunted and killed just for the ivory every day. Hunting ivory is mostly illegal now due to conservation efforts, but poaching still takes place, especially in Africa. Ivory has been used to make piano keys, billiard balls, ornaments, and many other things for humans. The elephants are often killed and left to rot once the tusks have been removed. There are about 470,000 elephants remaining on the planet, and every year about 8% are poached.

Label the Elephant



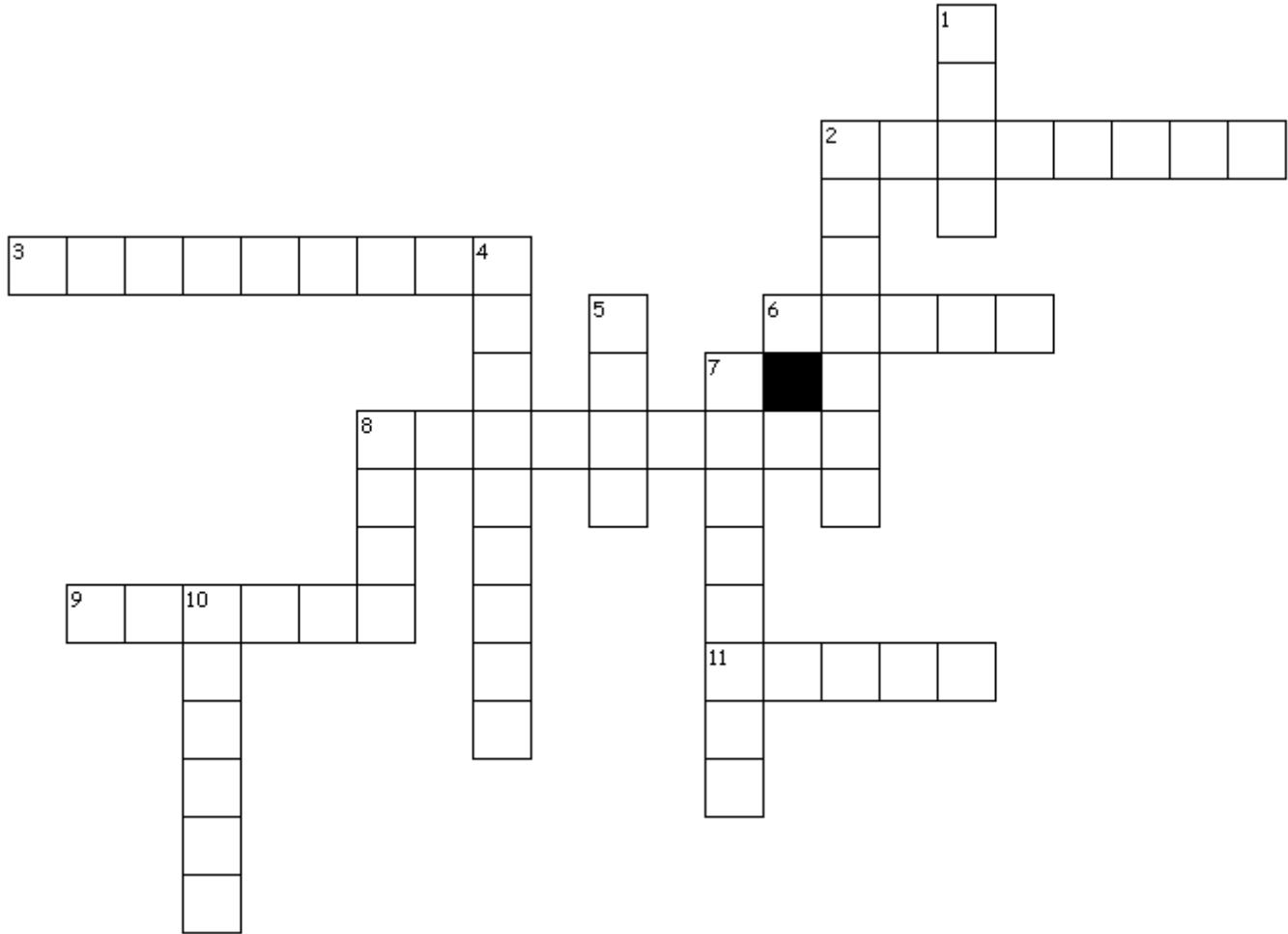


Elephant True or False



1. Elephants are the second largest mammals in the world. _____
2. Elephants don't use their tails for anything. . _____
3. Elephants are very intelligent animals. . _____
4. The herd is led by a matriarch. _____
5. Herds are usually quite small, with only 2-5 elephants in them. _____
6. Calves are raised and protected by the entire herd. _____
7. An elephant's trunk has 4,000 muscles. _____
8. Elephants are found in prairies and mountains. _____
9. Elephant trunks are natural snorkels. _____
10. Ivory has been used to make piano keys and billiard balls. _____

Elephant Crossword



Across

- 2. by oneself
 - 3. large mammal with very thick skin
 - 6. appendage elephant uses for breathing, grasping, and making sound
 - 8. animal that eats only plants
 - 9. calm and peaceful
 - 11. what an elephant's tusks are made of
- Down**
- 1. baby elephant
 - 2. short tube used for breathing underwater
 - 4. female leader of the herd
 - 5. continent where elephants are found in rainforests
 - 7. illegal hunting
 - 8. family of elephants
 - 10. continent where elephants are found on savannas

Word Bank		
matriarch	ivory	solitary
Asia	herbivore	placid
pachyderm	herd	snorkel
poaching	trunk	calf
	Africa	

Elephant Word Search

Y X L J N H P C F L A C L A X
K R A R A B D X Q R G E E Q Q
P W A E E M B J I D D O K Z Z
N A W T X I R D B H V Z R W G
E M C S I S V S U V S T O T X
W A D H S L A O Y L A J N L T
T T A R Y U O C R H C D S D R
A R H Z E D F S E Y V N N G U
I I B D E H E R F Y L P E D N
S A I V D T B R K L X S I Y K
A R X T T I W N M E D C H D D
F C N U V G N I H C A O P B S
O H S O K X Z Q W L W A T D N
E K R L Z I O T P A F R I C A
P E B A A H U U V P U C E X D

AFRICA
HERBIVORE
MATRIARCH
POACHING
TRUNK

ASIA
HERD
PACHYDERM
SNORKEL
TUSK

CALF
IVORY
PLACID
SOLITARY