

# She Leads: The Elephant Matriarch

## Educator's Guide

### More Elephant Facts

- The African elephant is the world's largest land mammal. It can be up to fourteen feet tall and weigh more than six tons.
- At top speed, an elephant can run 25 miles per hour.
- Elephants walk on the tips of their toes.
- The bottom of their foot has a thick, spongy layer of tissue that helps them walk silently.
- Elephants are the only mammal that can't jump.
- Approximately 90 different tree species rely on the elephant for spreading their seeds. They do this by eating plants and fruits, and the seeds are left in the elephant's fertile dung piles.
- When African elephants dig water holes, many smaller creatures are given access to water. Some animals, like birds and monkeys, may follow the elephants in order to find water.
- Elephants are often hunted for their ivory tusks. These tusks are large teeth that protect the trunk and allow elephants to dig, lift objects, and gather food. Poachers (people who hunt animals illegally) kill approximately 20,000 elephants each year for their tusks.
- Wild elephants can be identified by the shape and patterns (such as tears) of their ears, their body shape, and the size and shape of their tusks.

### What Can You Do to Help Elephants?

- Never buy ivory products.
- Support conservation of wild land.
- Adopt an elephant.
- Start small:
  - Never litter
  - Conserve Water
  - Save Energy
  - Recycle

## **Discussion Questions**

Elephants, like humans, are not born knowing everything they need to know. They have to learn from others and practice using their trunks. How else are elephants similar to humans? How are they different?

African elephants help other animals by digging up watering holes during the dry season, allowing other animals to have water too. What other species helps other animals? How do they help?

Elephants live in family units with mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, cousins, and young males. How is this similar to other animal groups or families? How is it different?

Elephants use mud or dust to protect their skin from the sun and insects. How do you protect yourself from the elements?

Think like a scientist: Elephant ears are used to help identify individuals in the wild. What other physical attributes could help you identify an individual animal?

## **Learn More**

<https://elephantconservation.org/>

<https://elephantconservation.org/resources/kids-in-conservation/>

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/african-elephant/>

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/elephant>

<https://animalfactguide.com/animal-facts/african-elephant/>

<https://www.rootsandshoots.org/>

<https://www.elephanttrust.org/>

