

Books To Treasure “Lesson Starters”

- A Lesson in Perception: Elephant Feces and “Ugly” Savanna Beasties
- Book(s) the lesson starter uses:
 - *How to be an Elephant* by Katherine Roy
 - *The Ugly Five* by Julia Donaldson; illustrated by Axel Scheffler
- In a Nutshell:
 - Elephant poop is beneficial to the ecosystem, providing not only baby food for elephant young that is “full of healthy bacteria” and maintains “enough nourishment for a second pass,” but also provides fertilization to the soil and protection for the seed that pass through an elephant’s gut. What we think is gross, ugly or scary have benefits in the grander scheme of things. In this lesson students will discover an elephant’s diet, how the destructive nature of an elephant can provide benefits to the ecosystem and how perception can be misleading!
- Do This!
 - Review the “Gut Instincts” and “Making Space” sections in *How to be an Elephant*
 - Talk about what an elephant diet is like and the beneficial properties of elephant dung.
 - Burning Questions: What kind of plant life thrives in the savanna? How is it different from what we have here in Oklahoma? What are the seasons? How are they different in the savanna?
 - Review the book “The Ugly Five” by Julia Donaldson
 - Talk about the word “perception.”
 - Burning Questions: How do the animals perceive themselves in this book? Do any of their words that the animals use to describe themselves surprise you? Is the perception of the “ugly five” changed in the end? What changes?
 - Try a class or group activity where you list a group of things that are ugly, scary, gross etc. Come up with some ways they are beneficial together.
 - Ex: Spiders are scary but help keep insects from over populating an area
 - How do you feel about the ugly/scary/gross thing now that you have discussed how it is helpful? Did your perception change? (You can still be uneasy by them, but understanding often leads to change in feeling!)
 - Other ideas for further discussion: plant and animal life in the savanna, food chains, cause and effect of animal behaviors
- Use This!

If you went on safari, which animals would you like to see?

Perhaps you'd like to meet the **Big Five**?
They're very grand, but they're the most dangerous animals on the savanna:

Lion



Leopard

Rhinoceros



Buffalo

Elephant



You could try and spot the **Little Five**.
Their names are similar to the Big Five, but they're all very small:

Buffalo Weaver



Leopard Tortoise

Ant Lion



Rhinoceros Beetle

Elephant Shrew



You'd have to be very lucky to see the **Shy Five**.
They mostly only come out at night, and are very good at hiding:

Aardvark



Porcupine

Aardwolf



Meerkat

Bat-Eared Fox



Or how about the **Ugly Five**? Some people say they're the ugliest animals in Africa. Others think they're just gorgeous. What do you think?

Lappet-Faced Vulture



Spotted Hyena

Wildebeest



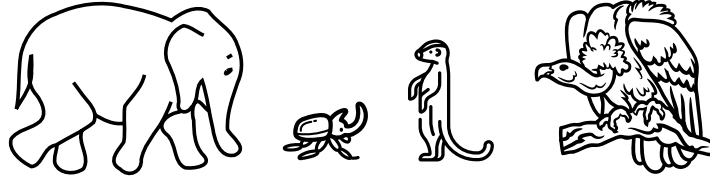
Marabou Stork

Warthog



WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ANIMALS:



**ELEPHANT, RHINOCEROS BEETLE,
MEERKAT, LAPPET-FACED VULTURE**

Answer the following questions as if you were that animal.
If none of the answers feel right, write in your own answer!

Try this: Think about how big or small you are, if you prefer night or day, if you eat mostly plants, or bugs, or meat, etc.

How would your **perspective** change if you were that animal?

1) TO ME, A FLOWER LOOKS:

- A) Flower? What flower? Did I step on a flower? I didn't notice a thing.
- B) A flower! What a nice snack!
- C) The same size as me! I can stop, stand, and sniff!
- D) Nothing like food, I'm not interested!
- E) _____

2) HEY A TREE! LET'S GO:

- A) perch on a branch and watch for leftovers!
- B) play in the shade with all our friends.
- C) scratch our back, but try not to knock it over!
- D) find a fallen log to live in.
- E) _____

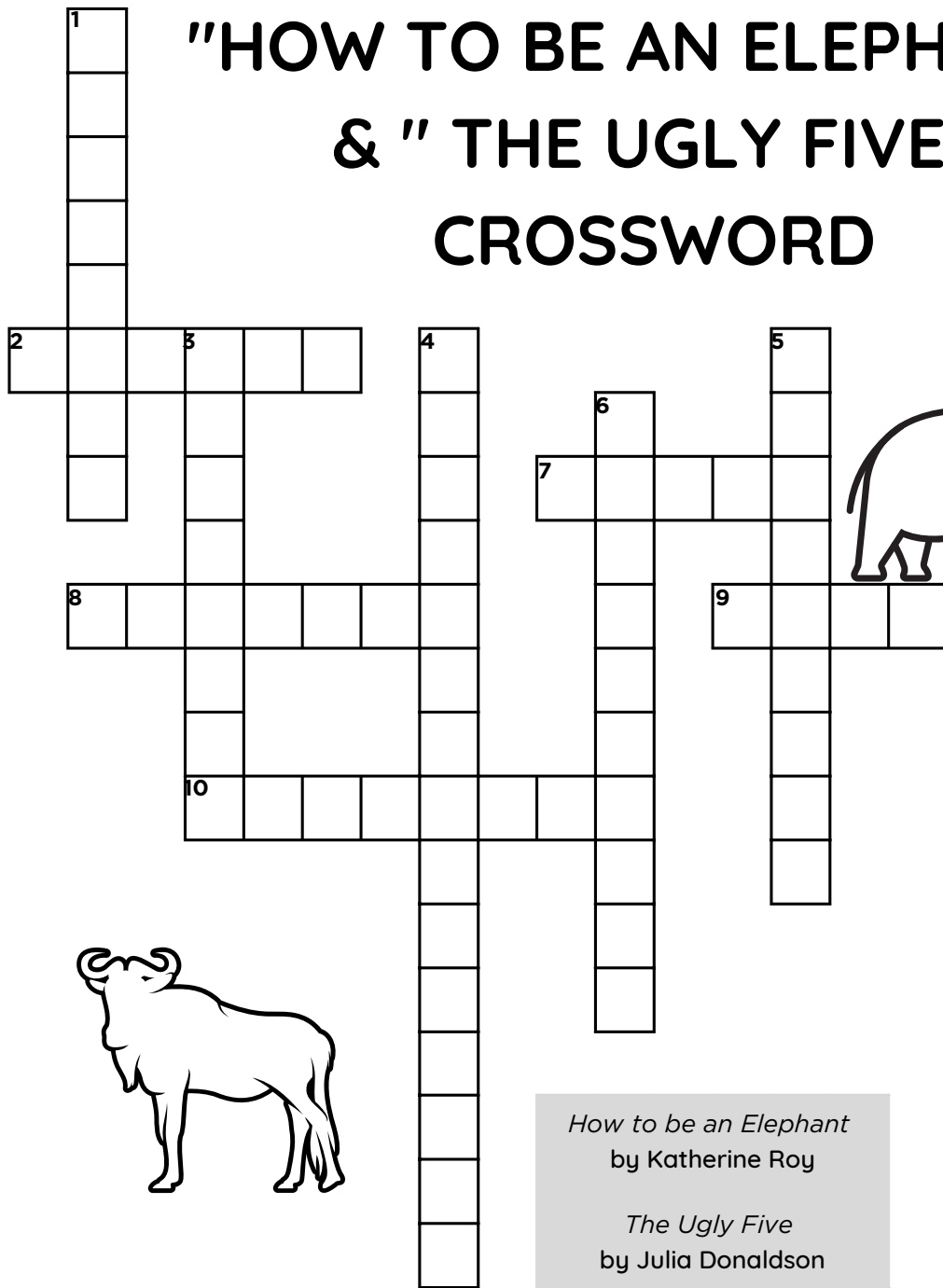
3) HERE COMES A LION! WHAT DO I DO?

- A) I'm too small for the lion to notice, but I'll hide over here...just in case.
- B) Now you see me, now you don't! I dive underground!
- C) I'll fly up high, but I'll be nearby in case the lion catches something else!
- D) I'm bigger than you! I will stand with me herd and chase YOU away!
- E) _____

4) I'M HUNGRY! WHEN I LOOK FOR FOOD I:

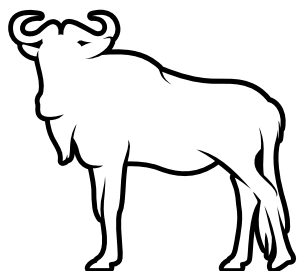
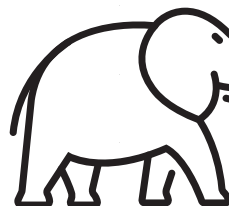
- A) sniff out bugs and insects and other small creatures to eat.
- B) stomp and trample ALL DAY! I strip trees, dig for roots, eat grass, and leaves and bark of all kinds!
- C) find mostly yummy plants and fruit!
- D) wait for someone else to finish their meal first, then I'll have what is left.
- E) _____

"HOW TO BE AN ELEPHANT" & "THE UGLY FIVE" CROSSWORD



WORD BANK:

LEOPARD TORTOISE
AARDWOLF
KEYSTONE
FIBER
PORCUPINE
SAVANNA
DUNG
FORAGE
AARDVARK
WILDEBEEST



How to be an Elephant
by Katherine Roy

The Ugly Five
by Julia Donaldson

Use the "Gut Instincts" and "Making Space" sections in How to be an Elephant to answer the following questions:

ACROSS

- 2 Elephants _____ for their food.
- 7 Elephants eat a high _____ diet.
- 8 Elephants live in the _____.
- 9 Elephant _____ has many nutritional benefits for their young and other animals.
- 10 Elephant is a _____ species, meaning that they impact the living spaces of many other animal communities.

Use the BIG FIVE, LITTLE FIVE, SHY FIVE and UGLY FIVE pages to help answer the following questions:

DOWN

- 1 Two "shy" animals share the same first half of their name but have a different second half. In 1 down and 3 down what are the two animals?
- 3 See question one.
- 4 I am spotted but I am not a mammal, I am a reptile!
- 5 What animal in the "Shy Five" has sharp spines or quills that protect them from predators?
- 6 Which animal has a "gingery beard?"