

Lesson Starter Title: "How to Be an Elephant"

Book(s): How to Be an Elephant Growing Up in the African Wild by Katherine Roy

In a Nutshell:

Students use their background knowledge and context clues to gain insight during pre-reading picture-walk, then learn about the life, physical attribute, behaviors, and habitats of the African elephant through reading and discussion of How to Be an Elephant Growing Up in the African Wild. Students can apply their new knowledge in a crossword puzzle using facts from the book.

Do This!

1. As a group, invite students to evaluate the cover and illustrations of How to Be an Elephant by Roy with a picture-walk. Discuss the elephants' ages, habitats, and activities the observed in the illustrations.
2. Introduce students to "Words to Know" that they will encounter while reading the book.
3. As a group read How to Be an Elephant Growing Up in the African Wild, inviting students to make connections between the text and illustrations as you progress.
4. After reading, invite students to discuss the different physical adaptations, familial setup, and habitat of the African elephant. Below are some sample discussion questions.

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

1. How many months does it take for a baby elephant to grow before he/she is born?
2. How are African elephant families different from most other species?
3. What physical adaptations make it easy for a baby elephant to walk immediately after birth and for juveniles and adults to walk for many miles?
4. How are elephant bodies adapted for an extraordinary sense of smell?
5. How do elephants communicate with other elephants—near and far?
6. How does an elephant control its body temperature?
7. What do elephants eat at each life stage?
8. In what ways do elephants contribute to the African savanna ecosystem?

Use This—Printable!

How to be an Elephant Crossword Puzzle – all clues taken directly from the book's text



HOW TO BE AN ELEPHANT

by Katherine Roy



ACROSS

- Adult elephants can reach speeds of up to 2 miles per _____.
- Around age 3 elephants begin to develop these "modified teeth."
- What the eldest female in a herd is called.
- Adult elephants eat 300 or more pounds of _____ a day!
- An African elephant will fan these to keep cool.
- Newborn elephants can stand on their feet right away after birth because they can be targets for _____.
- A newborn elephant weighs around 220 _____.

DOWN

- Elephants must rely heavily on their sense of smell because they have poor _____.
- It takes 22 _____ of growing before a baby elephant is born.
- The elephant herd is made up of sisters, cousins, aunts, and this parent.
- A baby elephant is called a _____.
- Elephants often travel hundreds of _____ each year to find enough food to feed the herd.
- Elephants must do this for 12-18 hours a day to get enough to eat.
- This part of an elephant can be used as a shower, shovel, fingers, and more!
- Moisture in this wrinkly part of the elephant is another way they stay cool.