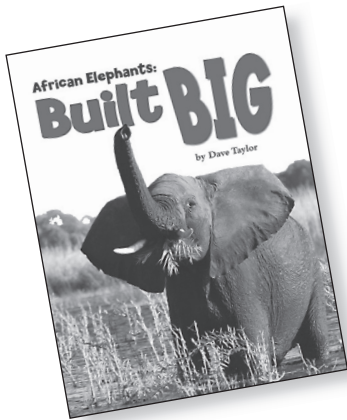


# African Elephants: Built BIG



Written by Dave Taylor

**Text Type:** Non-Fiction: Description — Report

**Guided Reading Level:** Q

**Summary:** African elephants are the largest living land animals on earth. Big ears, big nose, big body, and big teeth are all important in helping the African elephant survive in its home.

## Text Features

- ▶ chapter headings
- ▶ table of contents
- ▶ captions
- ▶ text boxes
- ▶ glossary

## Visual Literacy

- ▶ maps
- ▶ inset photographs and illustrations
- ▶ graph

## Text Supports

- ▶ photographs support the text

## Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ commas

## First Session (pages 4-11)

### Reading Strategies

#### Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ synthesizing

#### Working with Words

- ▶ use a variety of strategies such as syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge to solve unfamiliar words and determine word meanings

### Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text and photographs to find information
- ▶ synthesize new information with prior knowledge to create understanding
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words using strategies such as syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge

### Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ listening to others



## BEFORE READING

### Making connections: text to world

#### **Activating and Building Prior Knowledge**

Show students the front and back covers of the book, then read the text on the back cover. Ask, *Why is the word BIG always spelled using capital letters?* Discuss with students what they already know about elephants and then ask, *Why do you think it is important for elephants to be big?*

**ESL Note:** Prepare a KWL chart on chart paper with the headings “What I Know About Elephants,” “What I Want to Know About Elephants,” and “What I Learned About Elephants.” Ask students to fill in the chart as they read the book.

### Text features

#### **Overcoming Text Challenges**

Hand out copies of the book. Direct students to the Table of Contents on page 3 and review its purpose. Ask, *How does the Table of Contents help the reader? What information can you find in the Table of Contents?* Read the chapter headings with students and discuss what they think each chapter will be about.

### Visual literacy

Preview the layout of the book by having students look at pages 4–11. Direct students’ attention to the map, photographs, captions, text boxes, and graphs. Ask, *What do these captions tell you about elephants? Why do you think the author chose to place information in a text box and a graph?*

### Print concepts

Direct students’ attention to page 6 and read the sentence “Elephants make deep, rumbling sounds that are lower in pitch than the lowest note a piano, or even a tuba, can play!” Point out the number of commas used in the sentence. Ask, *Why did the author need to use so many commas?* Reread the sentence, pausing briefly after each comma. Encourage students to look for other sentences in the text that use several commas.

### Word solving and building/ language predictability

Point out the word *satellite* on page 6. Ask, *How would you go about reading this word? What strategies would you use?* With students’ guidance, solve the word and its meaning using context cues, syllabication, reading on, and prior knowledge. Encourage students to use these strategies when reading other unfamiliar words.

**ESL Note:** Introduce vocabulary related to elephants, using pictures with the word printed at the bottom (*tusk, trunk, weight, etc.*).

### Analyzing/text features

#### **Setting a Purpose**

Tell students that the purpose of their reading is to learn about different characteristics of African elephants and their importance. As students read to the end of page 11, remind them to use the text, photographs, and other text features to find facts about elephants.

Provide students with sticky notes or small pieces of paper to record the characteristics they find. After the reading, all characteristics of elephants will be written on a chart.



## DURING READING

Tell students to read the book independently, thinking about the purpose for their reading. Encourage students to pay attention to all visual literacy components, including captions, maps, text boxes, and the graph.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, checking to see which reading strategies they use to decode unfamiliar words. Assess fluency, especially in reading sentences containing multiple commas, to ensure students identify the different characteristics of the African elephant. Offer prompts, such as, *What part of an elephant’s body helps keep it cool? Why is this characteristic important to an elephant?*

If students finish before others have completed the reading, have students share with a partner the different characteristics of the African elephant.



## AFTER READING

### Analyzing/text features

With students’ assistance, create a chart of the African elephant’s characteristics. Use the headings from the Table of Contents or the page titles and list the body parts (body, ears, etc.) and their characteristics. When all students have finished reading the text, have them share the characteristics they found while reading and ask them to locate the information in the text to justify their responses. This chart will be expanded in the next session.

| African Elephant |   |
|------------------|---|
| Body             | —male can weigh 5000 kg                                 |
| Ears             | —largest ears of any animal<br>—flaps ears to keep cool |

### Making connections: comparing

Turn to page 5 and ask students, *What are some of the differences between African and Asian elephants? Where did you find this information?* Elicit from students the reasons that the differences between the two types of elephants was placed in a text box, and why the letters are in darker print than the rest of the text.

**ESL Note:** Create a Venn diagram on chart paper with one circle labelled “African Elephants” and one labelled “Asian Elephants.”

### Synthesizing

Revisit the question asked earlier of the students: *Why do African elephants need to be big?* Talk about the suggested reasons and note those students who use not only the information provided in the main text but the information in the photographs, captions, and text boxes, as well.

### Language predictability/ text features

Revisit the word *tusk* on page 5 and ask students to explain the meaning of the word. Then direct students to page 20 and explain that some unfamiliar words in the text can be found in the Glossary. Ask, *Why do you think the author put these words in the Glossary? How will this help you as you read?*

## Second Session (pages 12–20)

### Reading Strategies

#### Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ synthesizing

#### Working with Words

- ▶ use a variety of strategies such as syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge to solve unfamiliar words and determine word meanings

### Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text and photographs to find information
- ▶ synthesize new information with prior knowledge to create understanding
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words using strategies such as syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge

### Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ listening to others



## BEFORE READING

### Text features/predicting

#### **Activating and Building Prior Knowledge**

Have students look at the Table of Contents on page 3. Use the first four chapter headings to lead the discussion. Ask, *What characteristics have you learned about the African elephant?* Now direct students' attention to the headings of the next five chapters and talk about what they might expect to read about.

**ESL Note:** A simple story map can be used featuring the topics in each chapter (i.e., Chapter 1—Size, Chapter 2—Ears, etc.). Record details as students provide them.

### Text features

#### **Overcoming Text Challenges**

Review pages 12–20, noting the headings, photographs, captions, and graphs. Ask students to describe what they can learn from each of these features.

### Language predictability/ text features

Locate the word *savannah* on page 17. Have students explain how they determined its meaning. Encourage suggestions, such as that other sentences on that page helped them understand the meaning of the word, or that the meaning could have been found by referring to the glossary on page 20. Read the sentences and use the context cues to explain the meaning of *savannah*.

**ESL Note:** Review challenging vocabulary (*savannah, reserve, ivory*) before the lesson to ensure comprehension. Students can practise saying the words as they are reviewed. To help produce accurate pronunciation, clap each syllable.

## Analyzing

### Setting a Purpose

Tell students that the purpose of reading today is to learn about the problems African elephants face. Remind students to read the text, photographs, captions, and graphs on pages 12–20.



## DURING READING

Tell each student to read independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *How are African elephants being protected today? Why was it necessary to provide protection?*

Encourage students who finish early to reread the entire text independently or with a partner.

**ESL Note:** Conduct a search through the book to find adjectives the author uses to describe the elephants' size. Distribute sticky notes for students to mark the number of times the adjective *big* is used. Invite students to use the adjective *big* in a sentence to describe elephants.



## AFTER READING

### Analyzing

Discuss the problems facing the elephants and write them on chart paper or on the board. Read each problem one at a time and have students share solutions. Encourage students to locate the page reference in the text as support for their responses.

### Synthesizing/analyzing

Say, *The last chapter is called "Big, Big Numbers?" Why do you think the author gave the chapter this title? Why do you think this is the only chapter title in the book that is a question?* Ask students if they think the number of African elephants will ever be as big again as the numbers in the 1800s. Ask, *Do you think elephants will ever live all throughout African again?* Encourage students to support their responses with page references from the text.

### Analyzing/text features

Have students refer to the information in the box on page 8. With students' assistance, add to the chart begun in the previous session. List the body parts of the African elephant, including trunk, eyes, teeth, and tusks, and have students provide characteristics using information from the text.

| African Elephant |   |
|------------------|---|
| Body             | —male can weigh 5000 kg                                 |
| Ears             | —largest ears of any animal<br>—flaps ears to keep cool |
| Trunk            | —about 2 m in length<br>—has no bones                   |

## Word solving and building

Ask students about any words they found difficult in their reading and have them explain how they solved them.

## Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the book independently or with a partner.

## Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

### Analyzing

#### ***African Elephant Characteristics Chart***

Provide students with the “African Elephant Characteristics Chart” BLM and have them complete the chart by writing sentences using the facts about each of the characteristics of the African elephant. Students can refer to the text and the chart made earlier in the first session.

**ESL Note:** Simplify the BLM for ESL students in the earlier stages of English acquisition by reducing the number of characteristics to 2 or 3 (e.g., *body, trunk*).

### Synthesizing

#### ***Speech***

Discuss with students whether they think enough is being done to protect African elephants. Have each student write a brief speech, explaining their position. Provide an opportunity for students to present their speeches to the class.

### Making connections: comparing

#### ***Animal Characteristics Chart***

Have students research characteristics of another animal of their choice. Students can then record five body parts of their choice on a copy of the second BLM and write two or three facts about each body part. When students have completed their research, have pairs of students compare their findings and contrast both animals as they describe them to a partner.

# African Elephant Characteristics Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

|              |
|--------------|
| <b>Body</b>  |
|              |
|              |
|              |
| <b>Head</b>  |
|              |
|              |
|              |
| <b>Trunk</b> |
|              |
|              |
|              |
| <b>Eyes</b>  |
|              |
|              |
|              |
| <b>Teeth</b> |
|              |
|              |
|              |
| <b>Tusks</b> |
|              |
|              |
|              |

# Animal Characteristics Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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