

# China's Wandering Elephants

### **Focus Questions**

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

- 1. Retell the BTN story using your own words
- 2. How long ago did the elephants leave their jungle home?
- 3. About how far have the elephants travelled?
- 4. What damage have the elephants caused?
- 5. What are the safety concerns with the wild elephants?
- 6. How does Dr Boardman describe the behaviour of the wandering elephants?
- 7. About how many Asian elephants are in the wild in China?
- 8. What could be impacting the elephant's food supplies?
- 9. What methods are Chinese authorities using to track the elephants?
- 10. Name three facts you learnt about elephants.

# Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN China's Wandering Elephants story, students will respond to the following questions:

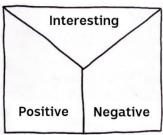
- What did you SEE in this video?
- What do you THINK about what you saw in this video?
- What did you LEARN from this story?
- What was SURPRISING about this story?

### Activity: Note taking

Students will practise their note-taking skills while watching the BTN China's Wandering Elephants story. After watching the story, ask students to reflect on and organise the information into three categories. What information in the

story was...?

- Positive
- Negative or
- Interesting



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#### **KEY LEARNING**

Students will learn about elephants' physical adaptations and create a fact file of the species. Students will develop a deeper understanding of the issues facing elephant populations in Asia.

#### CURRICULUM

Science – Year 4 Living things have life cycles. Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive.

#### Science – Year 5

Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment.

#### Science – Year 6

The growth and survival of living things are affected by physical conditions of their environment.

#### Science – Year 7

Classification helps organise the diverse group of organisms.

Interactions between organisms, including the effects of human activities can be represented by food chains and food webs.

### Activity: Vocabulary

Students will brainstorm a list of keywords that relate to elephants. Here are some words to get them started. Students will create their own class glossary of keywords and terms. Students can use illustrations and diagrams to help explain each keyword.

ECOSYSTEM	SUBSPECIES	AFRICAN ELEPHANT	
SPECIES	CONSERVATION	HABITAT	
BIODIVERSITY	ASIAN ELEPHANT	MAMMAL	

#### Further investigation: Tricky words

Students will choose an additional keyword to add to their class glossary that is tricky. Students will find a definition and explain to their classmates what the keyword means.

KEYSTONE SPECIES	MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY	CATHEMERAL
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### Activity: Inquiry Questions

After watching and discussing the BTN China's Wandering Elephants story, what questions do students have and what are the gaps in their knowledge? The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic and consider what they would like to know and learn.

What do I	What do I <u>w</u> ant	What have I	<u>H</u> ow will I
<u>k</u> now?	to know?	<u>l</u> earnt?	find out?

Students will develop their own question/s for inquiry, collecting and recording information from a wide variety of sources. Students may develop their own question for inquiry or select one of the questions below.

- Where do elephants live in the wild? Explore their habitat and mark where they live on a world map.
- Is there just one species of elephant? Explore the physical features of elephants and how these vary depending on their environmental conditions.
- What is the difference between an Asian elephant and an African elephant? List some of the main characteristics of both species and then compare and contrast. Explore the taxonomy of each species and categorise the information you find using the classification system.
- Where are elephants in the food chain? Draw a diagram showing what animal feeds on what. Use illustrations or photos to demonstrate this food chain. On your diagram use words like predator, consumer, producer, decomposer, carnivore, herbivore, transfer of energy.

- Why do elephants have thick and wrinkly skin? Explore the physical adaptations that help elephants survive in the wild.
- Why do elephants have a matriarchy? What does this mean? Explore the behaviours of Asian elephants in more detail.
- What is causing species loss of elephants? Explore issues such as habitat loss, pollution and disease. Which of these factors are caused by humans?
- What makes elephants unique? Why are they called a keystone species?
- What can be done to protect elephants? Identify some of the threats to Asian or African elephants and then suggest some ways that people can help protect their habitat.
- How can individuals make a difference and help protect elephants?
- What might happen if we don't look after elephants? What would elephant populations look like in 30 years' time? Make some predictions. Imagine that elephants have tragically become extinct and then write a news article telling people why they have become extinct.

# Activity: Species profile

Students will create a profile about elephants! Students will research the following and then share their research findings with the class or create a display in the classroom.

- Biological illustration or photo
- Name (common and scientific name)
- Classification (class, family, genus)
- Description
- Habitat
- Conservation status
- Threats

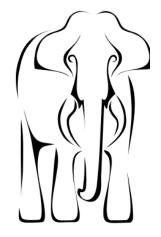
Students will then choose one of the following activities to complete:

- Model Create a 3D model of an elephant using recycled materials. Display your model in the classroom. Can you spot which are Asian elephants and which are African elephants? Find a sound recording online to illustrate the sounds that elephants make.
- **Campaign** Design a public education campaign to raise awareness about elephants and their loss of habitat. Think about your campaign's aim, your target audience, and the value of raising awareness. Create a poster using <u>Canva</u>.
- Haiku Write a haiku poem which focuses on one or more of the themes explored in the BTN China's Wandering Elephants story.
- **Children's book or comic** Write and illustrate either a children's book or comic which tells the story of China's wandering elephants.
- **Reporter for a day** Investigate the issues highlighted in the BTN China's Wandering Elephants story. Write a newspaper article or online news report for kids explaining how loss of habitat affects Asian elephants.

## Activity – Elephant habitat

This literacy activity demonstrates students active listening and interpreting skills. Students will listen to a description of an Asian elephant's habitat and create a simple black and white artwork illustrating its habitat. Teachers will use the following as a guide for this activity.

- Find a description of an <u>Asian elephant's</u> habitat to read aloud to your
- students.
- Read the description of the Asian elephant habitat aloud to your class as a whole, reading the description 2 or 3 times.
- Students will take notes and write down key words as they listen.
- Students will illustrate the habitat using only a black felt—tip pen (0.4 or 0.6) on a piece of A4 art paper. Students will include as much detail as they can. Label the animal.
- Display the student's artwork in a school exhibition.
- Challenge students by asking them to recreate the habitat as a diorama or a virtual reality experience using Minecraft.



### Activity - Choose a project

Individually or in small groups, students will choose one of the following projects to work on and then present their findings to the class.

Reporter for a day Investigate some of the threats to elephants. Write a newspaper article or online news report for kids.

#### Haiku poetry

Write a haiku poem about elephants! Use this <u>graphic</u> <u>organiser</u> to help brainstorm a list of words about the topic.

#### Myths and Facts Find some interesting facts about elephants. Create your own myths and facts quiz to test the knowledge of students in your class.

### Campaign

Design a public education campaign to raise awareness about elephants. Think about your campaign's aim, your target audience, and the value of raising awareness. Create a poster using <u>Canva</u>.

# **Useful Websites**

- <u>Threatened and Endangered Species</u> BTN
- <u>Asian Elephants</u> WWF
- <u>Top 10 Facts about Elephants</u> WWF
- <u>Elephant Poaching</u> BTN
- <u>Ivory Trade</u> BTN