

Elephant Evolution

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. What was the main point of the Elephant Evolution story?
- 2. What is natural selection?
- 3. What events have caused the increase in the numbers of tuskless elephants?
- **4.** What are the advantages and disadvantages of elephants being tuskless? Make a T chart.
- 5. What do you understand more clearly since watching the Elephant Evolution story?

Activity: See, think and wonder

After watching the BTN Elephant Evolution 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?
- What QUESTIONS do you have about this story?

Activity: Class Discussion

Discuss the BTN Elephant Evolution story as a class. Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- What is evolution? Come up with a class definition.
- What is natural selection?
- Why have some elephants evolved to have no tusks?
- What are the positives and negatives of elephants being tuskless?

Activity: Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of keywords that relate to elephants. Here are some words to get them started.

EVOLUTION	POACHING	AFRICAN ELEPHANT
TUSK	NATURAL SELECTION	IVORY TRADE

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KEY LEARNING

Students will learn more about why some African elephants have evolved to have no tusks. They will also create a profile of the species.

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

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

Activity: Elephant Research

After watching and discussing the BTN Elephant Evolution story, what questions do students have and what are the gaps in their knowledge? 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.
- 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 is the theory of natural selection? This <u>BTN story</u> about Charles Darwin helps to explain it.

Activity: BTN stories about Elephant Poaching

Students can watch these BTN stories to get a better understanding of the issue of elephant poaching.



BTN Ivory Trade story



BTN Elephant Poaching story

Respond to the following questions:

- What is poaching?
- About how many elephants are killed by poachers each year?
- Why are they killed?
- Ivory is used to make...
- When was a worldwide ban on ivory introduced?
- What do you understand more clearly about elephant poaching?

Activity: Profile of an African Elephant

Students will find out more about African elephants and create a profile. Use the template below to guide your research.

COMMON NAME:		
SCIENTIFIC NAME:		
APPEARANCE:		
HABITAT:		
	Illustration/photo	
ADAPTATIONS:		
THREATS:		
UNIQUE FEATURES OR INTERESTING FACTS:		

Students will be a reporter for a day and investigate the issues highlighted in the BTN Elephant Evolution story. Write an online news report for kids explaining why some African elephants are tuskless. Things for students to think about:

- Who is your target audience? Use age appropriate language and themes.
- Write a headline that is short and to the point.
- Use words and pictures in your report.
- Find information from a variety of sources.
- Present the facts and/or opinions clearly and accurately.







Useful Websites

- Elephants are rapidly evolving without tusks to escape ivory poachers, study finds ABC News
- Ivory poaching: Why many elephants in Mozambique don't have tusks Newsround
- <u>Elephant Poaching</u> BTN
- Ivory Trade BTN
- Charles Darwin Day BTN
- <u>What is evolution</u> BBC Bitesize