

Elephant Fact Sheet

www.anansi-spider.com – www.madmomentmedia.com

Elephant appears in:

How Anansi Got to Ride Tiger – Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom – Anansi and the Tommy
Anansi and the Talking Melon – Why Anansi has Thin, Long Legs – Anansi and the Tug of War

What's in a name?

A baby elephant is called a calf, a male is called a bull, a female is a cow and they live in a herd.

Interesting Fact

Elephants are long lived and can live for 60 to 70 years.

Tusks

Both sexes of the African elephant have tusks whilst only a male Asian elephant has them. Tusks grow for all of their adult life and an elephant can be right or left tusked. Meaning they prefer to use one more than the other. You can tell which they prefer by the wear on their tusks, the one they favour shows more wear.

Caring for Their Young

A cow normally gives birth to one calf. Elephants are very good mothers and will spend time not only caring for them but also teaching them to be 'elephants.' If a calf is orphaned, it will usually be adopted by another female who has her own calf or it will be cared for by a few females in the herd. Tusks start to erupt when a calf is around 16 months old. However, they do not show until the calf is 30 months old. When the tusks are 12.5cm - 15cm (5" - 6") long it becomes too uncomfortable for the mother to continue to suckle, so she starts to wean her baby.

An Elephant's trunk

An elephant's trunk does is just as a nose, it has many other uses. It can be used as a hand that can be both strong (ripping down branches) and gentle enough to pick berries from a tree. It can be used to siphon water from a river to help it drink.

An elephant can also use it for throwing dust or water over its back. It can help an elephant reach food high in trees, extending its reach up to 7 metres (23 feet). Lastly it can be used to cuddle. The

African elephant's trunk has two finger-like sections at the end whilst the Asian only has the one.

Interesting Fact

The only real predator an elephant has is man!

Daily Life

Every day an elephant will spend around 16 hours eating, drinking, enjoying a dust bath and playing. The other 8 hours they spend resting. Because an elephant can only digest 40% of what it eats they have to eat the equivalent of 5% of their body weight in vegetation. This is washed down with 227 litres (60 US gallons) of water.

