

# How to Use This Book

Welcome to *Cross-Curricular Building Blocks*, a series of books full of educationally-based activities that can be used in a wide variety of teaching situations.

A unique selection of articles and non-fiction stories appropriate for specific grade levels have been compiled here that can serve as a starting point for cross-curricular studies. Through writing, researching web sites, and answering geographic and math questions, it's possible to use the articles as either a quick break during the day or as complete, comprehensive units. They can also easily be added to existing classroom studies because of the wealth of subjects covered and the fact that each of them supports multiple National Education Standards.

At the end of each article is a *Branching Out* section, which is written specifically for the teacher. This section contains ideas and suggestions for additional class discussion based on the original article content. Also provided are many opportunities for you to challenge those students who finish quickly or for the class who wishes to explore the subject in more depth.

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Most articles in the *Cross-Curricular Building Blocks* series address the following National Standards:

- Language Arts: NL-ENG.K-12.1, NL-ENG.K-12.4
- Mathematics: NM-PROB.PK-12.2, NM-PROB.CONN.PK-12.3
- Technology: NT.K-12.3, NT.K-12.5



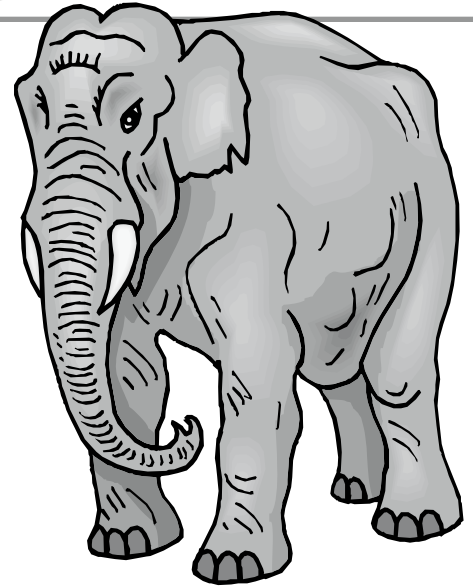
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## Asian or African?

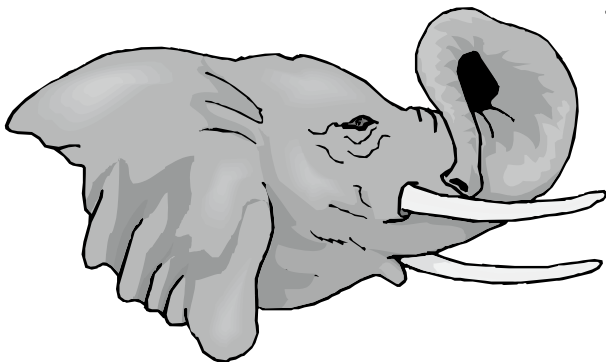
The elephant is the world's largest mammal. The heart of a grown elephant weighs nearly 50 pounds. A male elephant's tusks can weigh up to 132 pounds. That same male elephant weighs about 11,000 pounds. A giraffe is the only animal that's taller than an elephant.

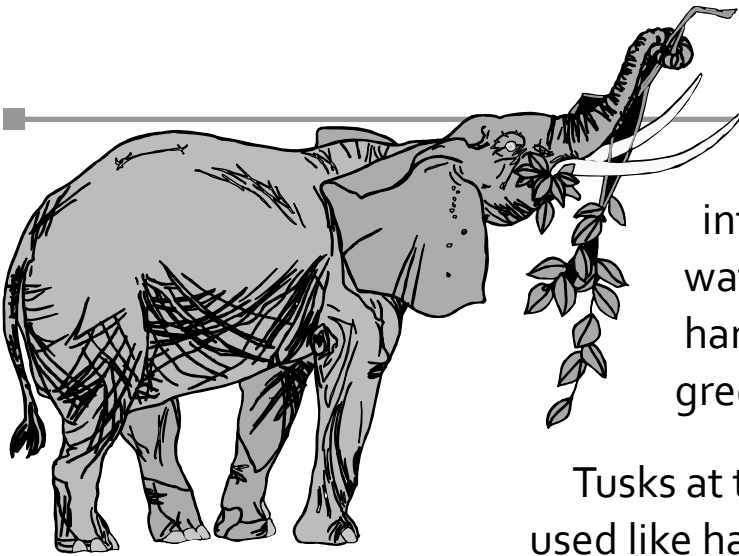


Elephants live on two continents, Asia and Africa. These two kinds of elephants differ in many ways. Female Asian elephants have no tusks. Male Asian elephants have shorter and lighter tusks than African males. African elephants have larger ears and longer legs than Asian ones. Asian elephants have arched backs. African elephants have a dip in their backs.

One of the most interesting features of an elephant is its trunk. Elephants use their trunks as humans use their hands, arms, noses, and lips. The trunk of an Asian elephant has only one finger at the tip, just above the nostrils. African elephants have two fingers, one above and one below the nostrils. These fingers can pick up something as little as a coin or a leaf. The trunk is very strong. It has no bones, but it does have more than 100,000 muscles. An elephant can lift a whole tree with its trunk.

The trunk is also a hose and a shower. Because elephants can't lower their heads to drink water, they suck water up with their trunks and spray it into their mouths. They can spray water or dust with their trunk, which cools them and gets rid of bugs. Elephants can also push their trunks between rocks or





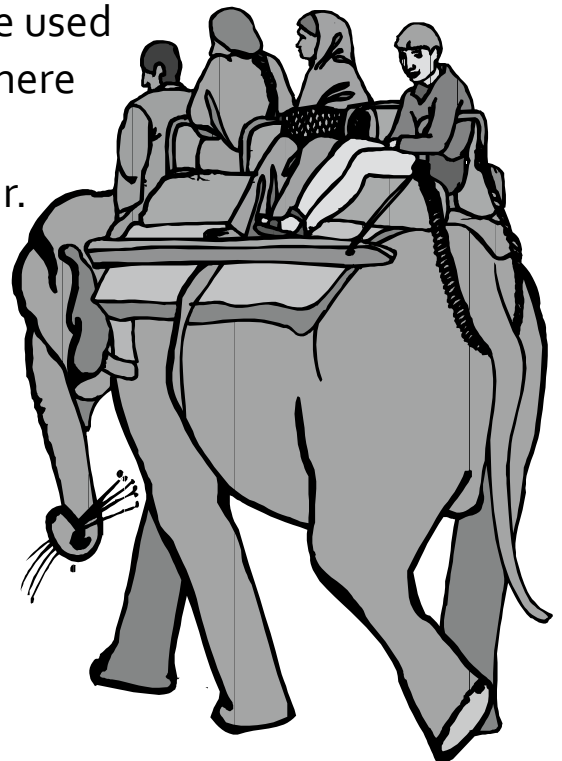
into small holes to find hidden pools of water. The trunk serves as the elephant's hand when they touch their babies or greet each other.

Tusks at the side of the elephant's trunk are used like hands. Tusks help the elephants strip bark from trees and dig roots to eat. The tusks may curve a little or stick out at an angle.

Like many animals, elephants migrate, or go from place to place, to find food and water. They follow regular paths year after year. These migration routes often follow a river. Elephants usually drink just once or twice daily, but they need plenty of water. One elephant can drink about 30 gallons of water a day.

For thousands of years, people have trained elephants as work animals. Long ago in India, elephants wore armor and carried soldiers into battle. Today they help to clear forest land. In Africa, they are used on safaris, or wildlife trips. People ride them where cars can't go, to watch or study other animals. Elephants don't use costly fuel or pollute the air. They also can work longer than many machines. About a third of all Asian elephants are work animals.

Elephants, whether Asian or African, are a big subject!



## Understanding What You Read



Fill in the chart below with information from the article about Asian and African elephants.

<b>Asian Elephants</b>	Tusks: _____ Trunk: _____ Ears: _____ Back: _____ Legs: _____ Used for: _____
<b>African Elephants</b>	Tusks: _____ Trunk: _____ Ears: _____ Back: _____ Legs: _____ Used for: _____

## Tell Your Own Story



Imagine that you have gone on an African safari. What do you think you would see? Write a letter to a friend describing your adventures.

