

“T” Time With Elephants

by Guy Belleranti

Three interesting things about an elephant begin with the letter T – trunk, tusk and teeth.

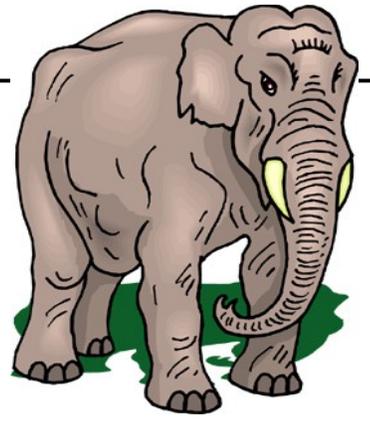
An elephant's trunk has over forty thousand muscles and tendons. The trunk is a combination of the nose and the upper lip. An elephant uses its trunk for picking things up. It also uses its trunk for smelling.

An elephant has two tusks. The tusks are made of ivory. The tusks grow from the elephant's upper jaw. An elephant has these two "teeth" instead of incisor teeth. The tusks grow throughout an elephant's life. An elephant uses its tusks to drill for water and to dig up food.

All African elephants have tusks. Only some Asian male elephants have tusks. Some female Asian elephants also have tusks, but they are very small and hidden inside the mouth.

An elephant also has four other teeth. These teeth are molars. An elephant has one upper molar and one lower molar on each side of its mouth. Because an elephant eats a lot of plants, its molars get ground down. New molars move in to replace the old molars about every ten years. An elephant gets up to six sets of molars over its lifetime.

Name: _____



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1. How many muscles and tendons are in an elephant's trunk?

- a. over 4,000
- b. over 40,000
- c. over 400,000
- d. over 40,000,000

2. What two things does an elephant use its trunk for?

3. What two things does an elephant use its tusks for?

4. What does an elephant use its molars for?

- a. growing tusks
- b. chewing plants
- c. chewing small animals
- d. speaking to other elephants

5. What is one way you might tell whether an elephant is old or young?

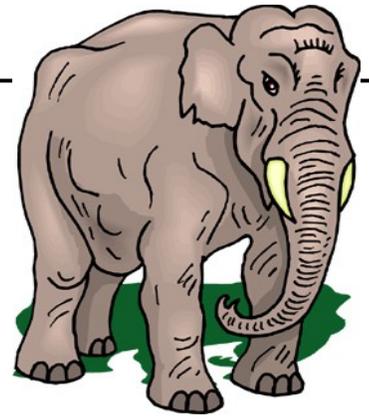
- a. count the number of molars in its mouth
- b. look at its color
- c. measure its height
- d. measure its tusks

6. Copy one sentence from the passage that states the main idea.

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 - b. **over 40,000**
 - c. over 400,000
 - d. over 40,000,000

2. What two things does an elephant use its trunk for?

To smell and to pick things up

3. What two things does an elephant use its tusks for?

To drill for water and dig up food

4. What does an elephant use its molars for?

- a. growing tusks
- b. **chewing plants**
- c. chewing small animals
- d. speaking to other elephants

5. What is one way you might tell whether an elephant is old or young?

- a. count the number of molars in its mouth
- b. look at its color
- c. measure its height
- d. **measure its tusks**

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