



Ranger Rick

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2016 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

TRANSLATING ELEPHANT TALK

After students read “**Big Talkers,**” pages 6–11, invite them to act out some of the elephant communications mentioned in the article. Then discuss the following:

- How do you think scientists figure out what different elephant communications mean? How would they know if their interpretations are right or wrong?
- Do people ever use body gestures to communicate?
- What’s an example of an elephant body-gesture that’s similar to a person’s?
- What’s an example of one that differs?

Wrap up the lesson by assigning the Elephant-to-People Dictionary student page.

ANIMAL GROOMING

Before students read “**Spiffing Up,**” pages 14–19, distribute the Wild Grooming Secrets student page. Have students put a check in the “Me” column next to each statement with which they agree. After reading the article, ask students to put a check in the “Article” column next to each statement the article confirms. (*Answers: 1, 2, 4, 6, 8*) Review the statements as a class, enriching each confirmed statement with additional information and tweaking the others to correspond with information provided in the article. Wrap up with a few general questions such as:

- Why are grooming habits important?
- How would you compare your grooming habits to some of the ones in the article?

TEACHER STUMPERS

As students read “**Meet the Beetles,**” pages 20–26, have them compile a list of true and false statements about the beetles they “meet.” Then let children take turns reading their statements and asking *you*—the teacher—to correctly identify each as true or false. Can your students stump you?

IMPORTANT POINTS

Many sea creatures that are not fast swimmers have spines to help protect them from predators. In “**Fishy Puffer-Uppers,**” pages 30–34, students discover that some kinds of pufferfish are covered with stiny spines that stick out when the fish inflate themselves with water or air. Most predators don’t want to gulp down a pincushion and so will not pursue a puffed-up puffer. But if a predator does swallow one, the puffer still has one more chance. Its spines can catch inside the predator’s mouth or throat, causing the predator to spit out its prickly catch.

Divide children into small groups and give each another “spiny creature” to investigate. Each group should illustrate its fish on paper, and under the illustration, in a well-written paragraph, describe how spines help the animal. Possible sea creatures to report on include.

- **Sea urchins and sea stars:** Upper surfaces covered in spines make them an unattractive meal choice
- **Sticklebacks and triggerfish:** Dorsal spines can erect and keep them from being swallowed.
- **Lionfish, scorpionfish, and stonefish:** Venomous spines along their backs warn predators to steer clear.
- **Stingrays:** Poisonous tail darts on their tails deter predators.

ROCK THE HOUSE

The Whizpops is a popular band for children made up of former Montana teachers. Its new album of catchy tunes and clever lyrics is sure to get your class dancing, singing, and caring about endangered species in North America. It’s called *Ranger Rick’s Trail Mix* in recognition of Ranger Rick’s conservation leadership. Some of the album’s proceeds will go toward the National Wildlife Federation’s work to protect endangered species. Listen to the album and purchase it at: <http://amzn.to/1X7BZF4>.

ELEPHANT-TO-PEOPLE DICTIONARY



Now that you understand some “elephant talk,” translate these phrases to make an elephant-to-people dictionary. For each phrase, draw or describe an action elephants might use to express that feeling. Then do the same for people.

PHRASE	ELEPHANT	PEOPLE
“Hello, friend!”		
“Back off!”		
“I don’t forgive you.”		
“I’m happy.”		
“I’m scared.”		

WILD GROOMING SECRETS



In the column labeled "Me," make a check next to any statement that you agree with. After reading "Spiffing Up," pages 14–19, make a check in the "Article" column next to any statement that the article agrees with

ME **ARTICLE**

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1 | Some animals roll in the dust to groom themselves. |
| _____ | _____ | 2 | Some animals go to spas to keep clean. |
| _____ | _____ | 3 | Birds use tree bark to comb through their feathers. |
| _____ | _____ | 4 | Sea otters use their paws to comb through their fur. |
| _____ | _____ | 5 | Geckos clean their eyes with poop. |
| _____ | _____ | 6 | There are places in the sea known as "cleaning stations." |
| _____ | _____ | 7 | Mud cleans away dirt as well as scouring powder does. |
| _____ | _____ | 8 | Some fish like to have their teeth flossed. |