

Elephants

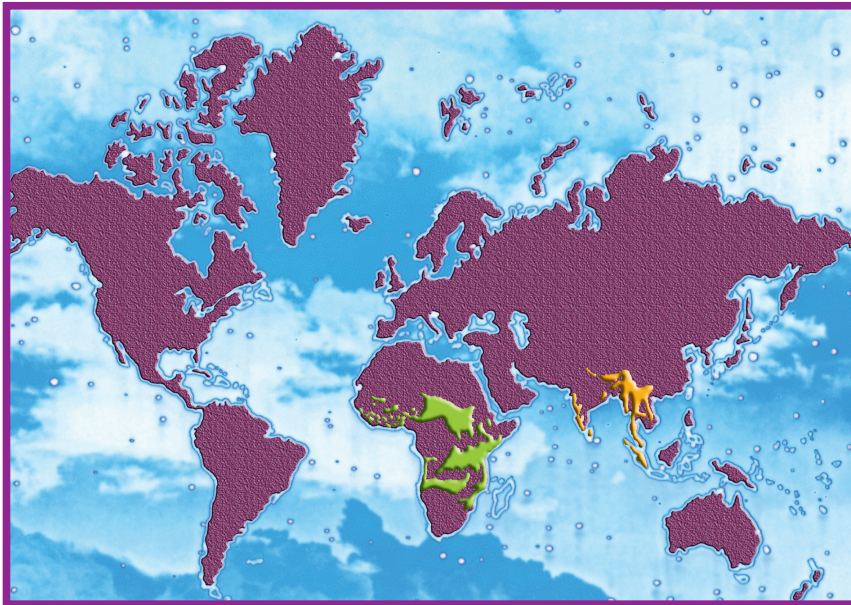


There's nothing like an elephant for teaching the concept of big. Size, of course, is relative. An elephant is **small** when compared to a skyscraper, and little kittens are **big** compared to ants. In addition to looking at **big** and **small** things in these pages, have your child find **big** things as you drive around town. You might respond by saying, "Yes, it is **big**. But is it **bigger** than a . . .?"



Elephants features the "**short e**" sound. This is a tricky sound for preschoolers to master—some kids won't figure it out until first grade. Don't be surprised if your child confuses the "**short e**" sound in the first syllable of elephant with the "**short a**" sound in the last syllable. In some parts of the country, these sounds are nearly indistinguishable. Give credit for both as you hunt for the sound throughout these pages.

Where in the WORLD? ● African Elephants ● Asian Elephants



Reading Resource

Every title in the *Ranger Rick Zootles* series is designed to be used for fun and learning, and as a reading resource as well. The pages are written simply and address various stages of emerging literacy, and they encourage new readers to exercise their new skills at just the right level. Reading *Ranger Rick Zootles* together will provide "together time" for you and your child—and reinforce vocabulary, comprehension, and early reading skills, too.

It's a ZOO out there!

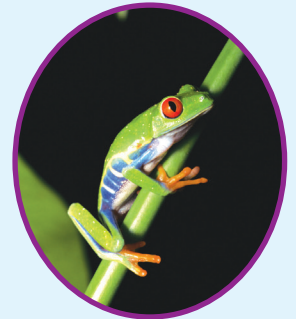
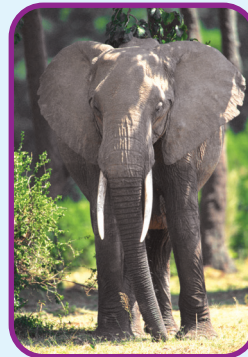
Elephants are wonderful to watch. If you're fortunate enough to live near a zoo or wild animal park that has a spacious and humane elephant habitat, your family may enjoy a trip there after reading *Elephants*. Call ahead to find out if the keepers interact with the elephants at a particular time each day. It's fun to watch them go through their paces. You'll reinforce learning and foster careful observation skills if you look for the elephant features and behaviors mentioned, as well as these others:

- An African elephant will have ears as big as its head and two "fingers" at the end of its trunk.
- An Asian elephant will have ears smaller than its head and only one "finger" at the end of its trunk.
- Count the elephant's "toes." How many are on its front feet and how many on its back feet?
- Watch how an elephant walks. Which legs move together? Is it the same or different than your dog or cat?

Are You a Short-E Expert?

Ee

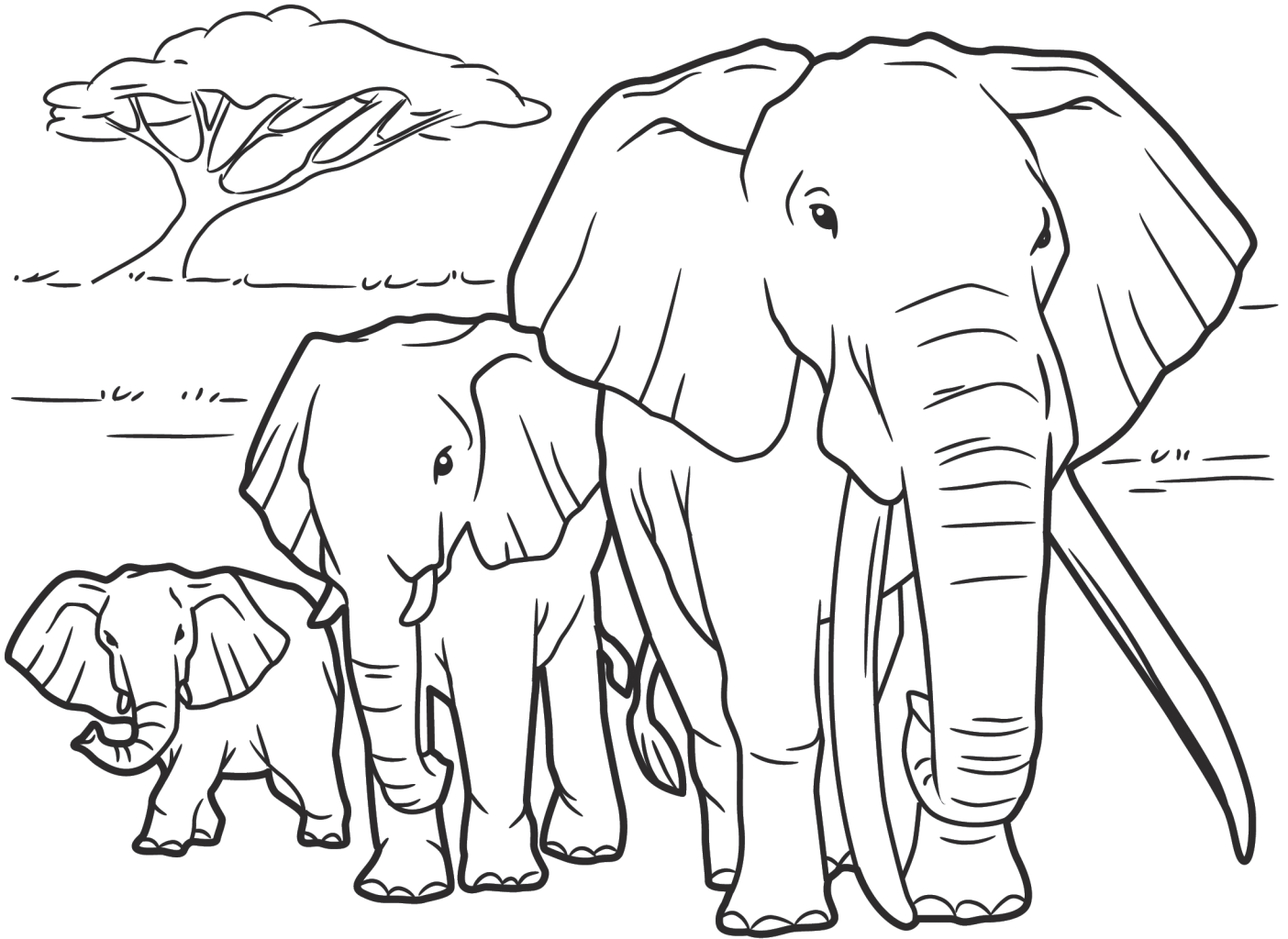
The first "e" in elephant has the "short e" sound. Can you circle five things on this page that have the "short e" sound?



"Red" has a "short e" sound. Which photos have red in them?



Jumbo Sizes



Elephants are really **big**, but even with elephants, some are truly jumbo-sized and others, well, are a bit on the **small** side. Can you color the **biggest** elephant red, and the **smallest** elephant blue? Color the **medium-sized** elephant gray.

What ELSE can we DO?

- **From Tail to Trunk (p. 2–3)** Every part of an elephant helps it survive in the grasslands and forests it inhabits. As with any living thing, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Help your child understand how each part of her body helps her in different ways, too.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Have your child sit very still. Ask her to think just about her eyes. What do eyes do? Then have her move her arms. What can arms do? What can hands and fingers do? Move on to other body parts. The tongue can do lots of different things. When it comes to toes . . . hmmm.

- **There's an Elephant in the Room (p. 4–5)** "At the Watering Hole" helps children learn about size. Although elephants are big, a baby elephant is still small. To appreciate how big something is, it has to be compared to something else.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Help your child measure a length of string or ribbon as long as an elephant—20 feet (try using a foot-long ruler and using a marker to note each foot). Holding the string taut, march around the house to determine if you could conveniently keep an elephant anywhere. How much elephant would fit in the bathtub?

- **Sensitive Skin (p. 10–11)** "Keeping Cool the Elephant Way" shows the many ways that elephants stay comfortable in hot weather, including spraying themselves with their trunks.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Make your own trunk! Next time you're at the home supply store, buy some plastic tubing of different widths. One- to two-foot lengths will be long enough. Use duct tape to secure a couple of funnels to the ends, and you've got some swell trunks for the bathtub. If water gets on the floor, just remember that bath play teaches both physics and natural history.

- **Moving to the Lake (p. 12–15)** Here's something that elephants and humans have in common—families! But when the clan gathers for holidays, all of those people can be confusing for preschoolers.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Gather up photos of all your relatives—or of close friends who often visit. With colored paper, make backings about one inch bigger than the photo for each picture. Color code them by immediate family (Jean, Jerry, and the crew all have red borders, while Kathy and her kids have blue). Help your child sort and name everyone by family before and after the next event.

- **An Eye for Elephants (p. 16–17)** Scientist Cynthia Moss uses her keen powers of observation to help her tell elephants apart. This skill, known as visual discrimination, develops during the preschool years. Have fun and help your child develop this skill with the following activities.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Get some photos of family and friends. Cut them up into pieces and play a guessing game to see which piece belongs to which person. Whose eyes are these? Whose legs? How can you tell?

Make a Cynthia Moss party game! When each guest arrives, take a picture of his ear—masking his hair with a piece of paper. Print them out. Post the pictures on a board, and see if people can guess whose ear is whose.

- **The Adventures of Otto and Allie (Back Cover)** Otto and Allie have discovered that being naturalists isn't always easy. Since elephants are foragers, Otto and Allie have to be on the move, too, giving up some of the comforts of home.

- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Have your child play "elephant" by having her forage for her lunch. Wrap up a peanut butter sandwich and hide it at one end of the house, and hide a piece of fruit somewhere else. While your child is hunting for the food, put the cookies and milk on the kitchen table, safe at home. (So that you don't have an unpleasant surprise, please make sure that all the food is successfully foraged!)

