

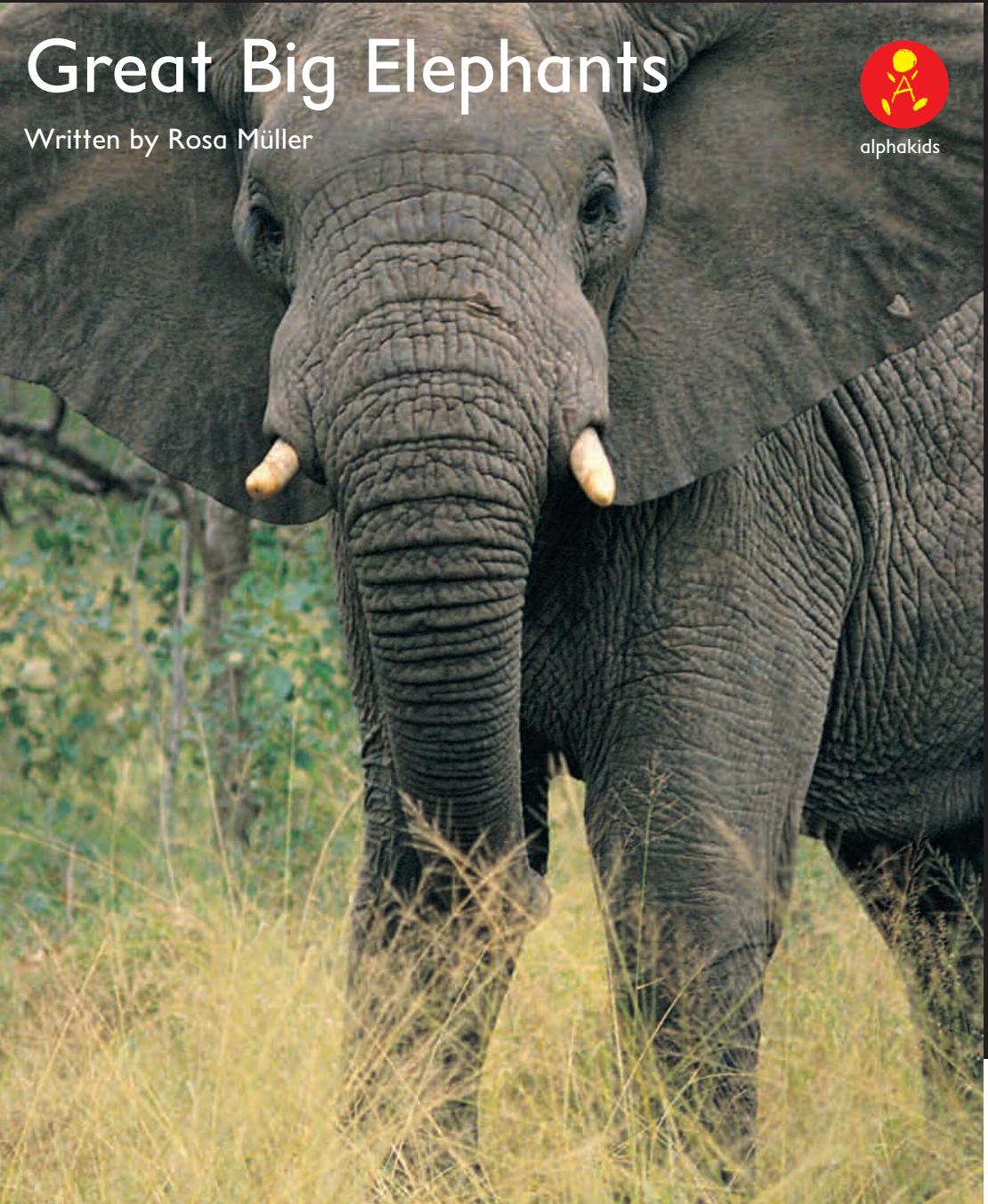
Teacher Edition

# Great Big Elephants

Written by Rosa Müller



alphakids



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Photographs  
© Eleanor Curtain  
Publishing

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## How to use this book

The Alphakids Plus teacher editions support teachers as they guide children's reading and thinking during one or more guided reading sessions. Teachers can observe children as they read and choose from the given suggestions to suit individual needs.

### Before reading

#### Setting the context, front cover and title page:

The suggestions help teachers to set the scene and prepare children for reading the book. Prompts help to determine children's prior knowledge. Where necessary, background information is provided. Teachers are encouraged to check that children understand the vocabulary listed and to discuss the meanings and/or the structures of these words. Previous experiences with similar text types may also be discussed.

### During reading

#### Predict, Read, Reflect:

Questions encourage children to engage with the text by making predictions. They then read a section of the text and reflect on what they have read. The focus is on the content, language and text features of the book.

#### Observe and support:

Prompts help teachers to focus on the strategies children use as they read. Teachers can then select from and adapt the suggestions according to the needs of the individual child. The suggestions aim to develop a child's reading abilities. Interruptions to the child's reading should be minimal.

### After reading

#### A selection of reading and writing activities:

The last pages of the teacher edition provide follow-up activities and include the assessment focus.

## Selected text features

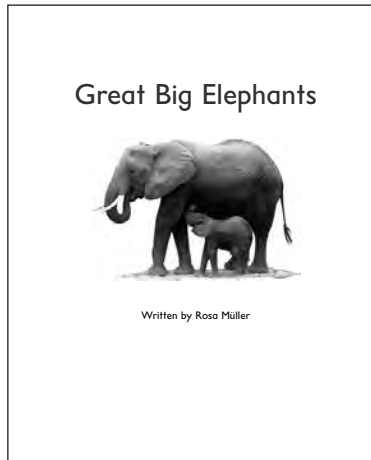
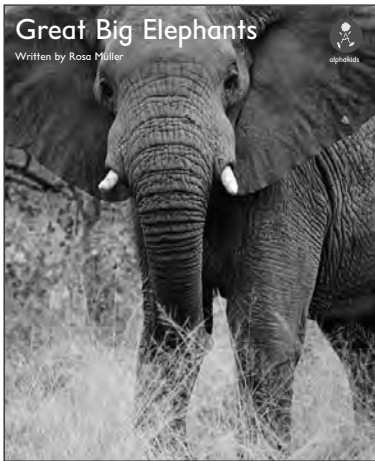
- Similes are used – 'An elephant's trunk is like a nose, an arm, a hand, a shower and a loudspeaker!'
- A labelled diagram is provided

## Vocabulary

African, appetites, communicate, dung, elephants, enormous, great, huge, Indian, kilograms, kilos, loudspeaker, muscles, predators, strong, trunks, tusks, weigh

## Setting the context

Have the children brainstorm everything that they know about elephants. Record this on a chart for future reference.



## Front cover

*This book is called Great Big Elephants.*

Ask the children to consider the photo on the cover of the book.

*What do you notice about this elephant?*

*What parts of it are big?*

Explain that the elephant has big ears, big trunks, big legs and big feet.

## Title page

*This book is written by Rosa Müller.*

*Where could Rosa have learned about elephants?*

## **Predict**

*This is the contents page.*

Read the chapter headings to the children.

*What sort of things will we learn about elephants by reading this book?*

*This page has the heading 'Introduction'. What do you expect the introduction to tell you?*

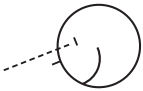
## **Read** to the end of page 4.

## **Reflect**

*The introduction tells us that elephants 'are the largest animals that live on land'. Would an elephant fit in our classroom?*

*What extra information do the captions tell us?*

*Is there any other information we can learn from the photographs?*



## **Observe and support**

Can the child use their knowledge of phonics to work out words such as 'Indian' and 'African'?

At the point of need you might say: *Look at the first two letters. What sound do they make together?*

*Look at the ending of the word.*

*Can you see a small word within the word?*

*What would make sense?*



## Contents

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## Introduction

Almost everything about elephants is big.

They are the largest animals that live on land.

There are two kinds of elephants: the Indian elephant and the African elephant.

The Indian elephant is smaller than the African elephant. It has light grey skin.



The African elephant is larger than the Indian elephant. It has dark grey skin.



4



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## **Predict**

*This heading is 'How big are elephants?' How big do you think an elephant is?*

*The heading on page 7 is 'Enormous appetites'.*

*What does an elephant eat? How much would an elephant need to eat?*

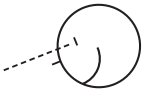
## **Read** pages 6 and 7.

## **Reflect**

*What did you learn about elephants from these pages?*

*What surprised you the most?*

*What other information would you like to know?*



## **Observe and support**

Does the child use a range of strategies to support their reading?

If the child is having difficulty you might say:

*What can you see that might help you work it out?*

*What would make sense here?*

*What sort of word do we need here?*

*Do the pictures help you?*

*What does the word start with? Check the ending of the word.*

### How big are elephants?

A male, African elephant can weigh up to 6000 kilos. That is more than 60 people!

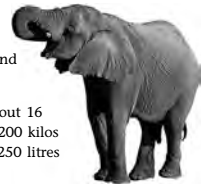
Elephants can be up to four metres tall.



### Enormous appetites

Elephants need to live in very large areas because they eat and drink so much.


Every day, elephants spend about 16 hours eating. They eat up to 200 kilos of food. They can drink over 250 litres of water.



## **Predict**

*This heading is 'Huge ears'. Why might elephants need huge ears?*

*The heading on page 10 is 'Strong trunks'. Look at the photographs. What are these elephants doing with their trunks? What else might the elephant use its trunk for?*

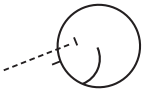
 **Read** to the end of page 11.

## **Reflect**

*How do elephants use their ears to help them in hot weather?*

*What did you learn about an elephant's trunk?*

*What is an elephant's trunk like?*



## **Observe and support**

Can the child read the text fluently?

Model the reading of a passage of the text to the child. Have the child read the text to you.

*Try to remember that you need to make it easy for me to understand all of the information.*



## Huge ears

Elephants have very big, very thin ears.

Elephants use their ears to cool themselves down.

When elephants flap their ears, the blood inside their ears cools down. Then the cooled blood travels through the rest of the elephant's body. This helps elephants to stay comfortable, even in very hot places.



## Strong trunks

An elephant has about 150,000 muscles in its trunk.

An elephant's trunk can smell food, water and predators.

It is strong enough to lift a baby elephant from a mud hole. It is gentle enough to pick a single leaf from a tree.

It can suck up water and spray it over the elephant's body to help the elephant to stay cool.

It can make loud noises to help elephants communicate with each other.

So an elephant's trunk is like a nose, an arm, a hand, a shower and a loudspeaker, all in one!



## **Predict**

*The headings on these pages are ‘Thick skin’ and ‘Massive legs and feet’.*

*Why do you think elephants would need thick skin?*

*What does the word ‘massive’ mean?*

*Why do elephants need massive legs and feet?*

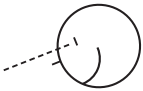
## **Read** pages 12 and 13.

## **Reflect**

*How thick is an elephant’s skin?*

*Why do elephants have wrinkles in their skin?*

*What did the author compare an elephant’s legs to?*



## **Observe and support**

Does the child use a range of strategies to work out new vocabulary such as ‘pillars’ or ‘mosquitoes’?

*How did you know that word? Can you see a smaller word within the word? What things did you check when you worked out the word?*

### Thick skin

An elephant's skin can be three centimetres thick, but many flies and mosquitoes still bite through it.

Elephants coat themselves with mud to stay cool and to protect their skin from sunburn and insect bites.

The wrinkles in an elephant's skin trap moisture so that it does not dry out in the heat.



### Massive legs and feet

Elephants need very strong legs to support their heavy bodies. Their legs are like huge pillars.

Elephants have large pads of fat in the soles of their feet. An elephant's foot spreads out when the elephant walks on it and shrinks when it is lifted. This means that elephants can sink deep into mud pools without getting stuck.



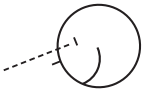
## **Predict**

*The heading on this page is 'Other BIG facts'. What do you think are some other big facts about elephants? Look at the diagram on page 16. What parts of the elephant does this diagram describe? How do you know?*

**Read** to the end of page 16.

## **Reflect**

*What fact about elephants surprised you the most? Why do you think the author chose to include a diagram in the book? How does a diagram help us to gain information?*



## **Observe and support**

Can the child interpret the information found in the labelled diagram?

*What does the diagram tell us about an elephant's trunk? What does it tell us about an elephant's tusks?*

*If you could add a caption to this diagram what would it say?*

## Other BIG facts

Elephants push down trees to eat the leaves on the highest branches.

An elephant can knock down a tree that is nine metres tall.

Elephant tusks are really long, curved teeth.

Elephants use their tusks to dig for food and water and to fight. Their tusks are very strong and sharp.

They can carry a load of up to 900 kilograms. They can pierce the metal of a car.

An adult male elephant produces up to 200 kilograms of dung per day! Birds and animals feed on the seeds in the dung.

14



15

## Big all over

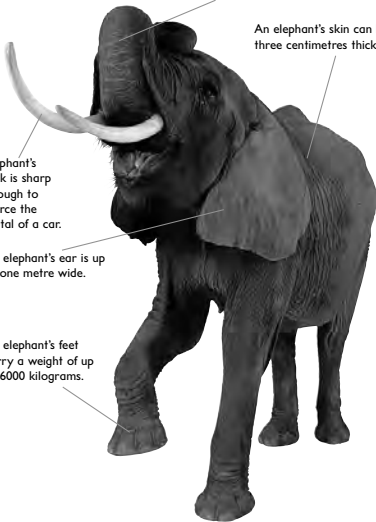
There are around 150,000 muscles in an elephant's trunk.

An elephant's skin can be three centimetres thick.

An elephant's tusk is sharp enough to pierce the metal of a car.

An elephant's ear is up to one metre wide.

An elephant's feet carry a weight of up to 6000 kilograms.



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## After reading

### Being a meaning maker

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions:

*What do elephants eat?*

*What kinds of elephants are there?*

*How are they different?*

*How do elephants protect themselves?*

*What do elephants need to stay alive?*

*Why are elephants important?*

### Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language features:

- synonyms for big: largest, larger, massive
- comparatives and superlatives: large, larger, largest

### Being a text user

Children could explore the similes used in the book: ‘... an elephant’s trunk is like a nose, an arm, a hand, a shower and a loudspeaker, all in one!’ (page 11)

‘Their legs are like huge pillars.’ (page 13)

*Is an elephant’s trunk really a hand? Or a shower? Why does the book say that it is like these things? How do these similes help us to understand what an elephant is like?*

You may like to refer to the chart made before reading the book.

*What things do we need to add or change?*

*What have we learned about elephants by reading the book?*

### Being a text critic

*The author of this book has focused on the ‘bigness’ of elephants.*

*Do you think this is a good way to organise the book? Why?*

*How else could a book on elephants be organised?*

## Responding to text



Children could make a poster showing all of the features of an elephant. Encourage the use of captions and labels. Also encourage children to use a range of synonyms for 'big'.



Children could work in cooperative pairs to write their own similes about the features of elephants. For example:  
Elephant ears are like big fans.  
They keep the elephant cool.



Children could make a list of words that are synonymous with words in the book, e.g. big: largest, larger, massive, huge, gigantic, enormous. Other words to consider: long, thick, strong, heavy.

## Writing links

### Shared writing

Refer to the chart compiled earlier. Read through the information. Ask children if anything needs to be changed now that they have read the book. Invite children to offer new facts that they now know about elephants. Scribe children's ideas onto the chart.

### Independent writing

Children could write a 'What am I?' for different parts of the elephant's body. For example:

I am very thick.

I am covered in dust.

I have wrinkles to keep the moisture in.  
Some mosquitoes and flies can bite through me.

What am I?

(Elephant skin)

You might like to model this writing to the children before they begin writing. Children's work could be collated and made into a class 'What am I?' book.

## Possible assessment focus

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Can the child:

- explain why the text says that an elephant's legs are like pillars?
- explain the similarities and differences between their own body and an elephant's body?



whole text activity



sentence activity



word activity



## Teacher Edition

**Topic:** Elephants

**Curriculum link:** Science

**Text type:** Report

**Reading level:** 23

**Word count:** 438

**Vocabulary:** African, appetites, communicate, dung, elephants, enormous, great, huge, Indian, kilograms, kilos, loudspeaker, muscles, predators, strong, trunks, tusks, weigh

### Possible literacy focus

Exploring the use of similes.

Comparing information in a text with personal experience and knowledge.

### Summary

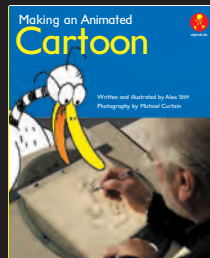
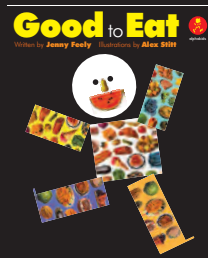
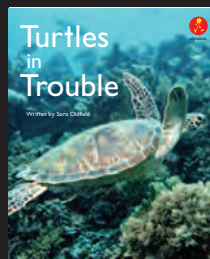
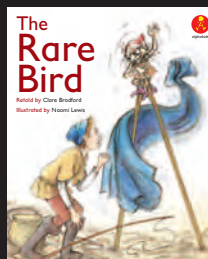
This book describes the features and behaviour of elephants.

ISBN 0-7253-3294-8



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## Other books at this level



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