

Elephant Families

Living in Herds

- ① Elephants show interesting social behaviors. Female elephants, or cows, travel in groups. The groups are called herds. The oldest female leads the herd. Her sisters and their daughters stay together. They take care of their babies, called calves.
- ② Male elephants leave a herd when they are teens. Adult males, or bulls, usually live alone. But the females in a herd stay for life.
- ③ Living in a herd helps elephants survive. Elephants in a herd learn from one another. And they protect one another.
- ④ Herd members often walk in a line. They follow the leader. A calf might wrap its trunk around an adult's tail. This behavior helps the calf stay with the herd.

Protecting One Another

- ⑤ Elephants don't have many predators. Their size scares most animals. But sometimes a hungry lion will attack. The herd groups together. They stomp their feet. They make loud noises. If necessary, the elephants will charge toward the predator. A thundering herd approaching is a terrifying sight.

Teaching Their Young

- ⑥ Many scientists think that elephants exhibit human-like behaviors. Females in a herd take turns babysitting the calves. These substitute



This elephant family walks together in a single line.

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mothers are called “allomothers.” Older cows teach teens how to care for the calves. The calves learn from them. They watch how the allomothers behave. They learn how to stay safe. Scientists think care from allomothers helps more calves reach adulthood.

Bonding

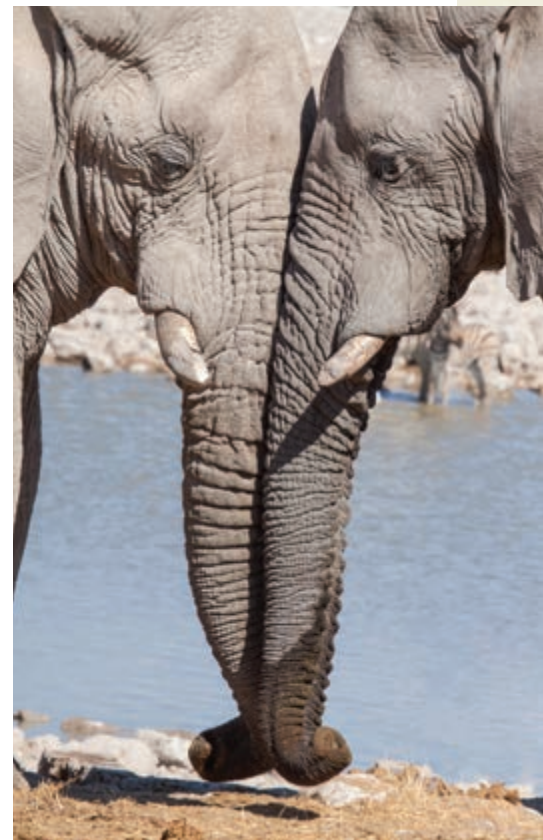
- ⑦ Another human-like behavior of elephants is bonding. Elephants seem to bond with one another. They become close like human friends do. Scientists have observed elephants nuzzling, or cuddling. Sometimes elephants wrap their trunks together to show affection.

Showing Signs of Grief

- ⑧ Some scientists think elephants also feel grief. However, it is hard for scientists to confirm this. Grief is a feeling. And elephants can't say how they feel. But there have been many documented examples of elephants respecting the dead. In some cases, elephants have stood still around a dead herd member. In other cases, a herd has returned to the location where a herd member died. Some scientists think these behaviors are signs of grief.

Communicating

- ⑨ Generally, when elephants show the behaviors described, they communicate while doing so. Scientists have recorded elephants' noises and body movements during interactions. They discovered that elephants use different noises and movements to communicate different ideas. For example, a calf will use a certain rumble to seek comfort. The same elephant may then use a different type of rumble to alert the herd to danger. Members of a herd learn one another's distinct noises. Their communication helps the herd live and work together successfully.



Elephants often display affection.

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“Elephant Families”

Nonfiction Posttest: GRL O

Name _____

1. Complete the *Main Idea and Details Web* on page 168. Tell about the main idea and details of “Elephant Families.”

Answer questions 2–10.

2. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A. where elephants live
 - B. why elephants never forget things
 - C. how elephants behave within their family groups
 - D. what elephants do to communicate with one another
3. Which question can you answer using information from the passage?
 - A. How much does an elephant weigh?
 - B. About how many elephants live in a herd?
 - C. In what ways do elephants take care of one another?
 - D. What type of noise do elephants make when they greet one another?
4. Which statement from the passage gives the author's opinion?
 - A. “Female elephants, or cows, travel in groups.”
 - B. “A calf might wrap its trunk around an adult's tail.”
 - C. “Elephants don't have many predators.”
 - D. “A thundering herd approaching is a terrifying sight.”

5. What is the meaning of the word *confirm* as it is used in paragraph 8?
- A. “to recognize sadness”
 - B. “to prove something is true”
 - C. “to approve a legal document”
 - D. “to admit someone into a club or group”
6. The author wants to add more details to the passage. Which detail would BEST support the main idea of the passage?
- A. An elephant may use its trunk to spray water on itself.
 - B. When a calf is in trouble, herd members will surround it to protect it.
 - C. Elephants spend part of the time they are sleeping in a standing position.
 - D. Some people in Africa take in young elephants that have lost their mothers.
7. With which point of view would the author of this passage MOST LIKELY agree?
- A. Elephants are fascinating animals.
 - B. It is safer for elephants to live alone than to live in groups.
 - C. Female elephants are more intelligent than male elephants.
 - D. Elephants should not turn on a hungry lion that is just looking for a meal.

8. This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

What do scientists think about the noises elephants make?

- A. Elephants use specific noises to communicate with their herd members.
- B. Elephants only use a rumbling noise to alert one another of danger.
- C. The louder the noise, the more upset the elephant is.
- D. Elephants cannot tell each other's sounds apart.

Part B

Which information from the passage BEST supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "Many scientists think that elephants exhibit human-like behaviors."
- B. "Elephants seem to bond with one another. They become close like human friends do."
- C. "Generally, when elephants show the behaviors described, they communicate while doing so."
- D. "For example, a calf will use a certain rumble to seek comfort. The same elephant may then use a different type of rumble to alert the herd to danger."

9. What does “elephants exhibit human-like behaviors” mean?

Name three examples to support the meaning.

10. How do allomothers help young elephants survive? Use details from the passage to support your answer.
