



## Active for Elephants

By Amelia Saris

**Grade Level:** 4-5

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to actively read informational text and understand what it means to be an active reader. They will learn about the ivory trade and understand its implications by reading and focusing on details in non-fiction text.

### Standards Addressed:

Language Arts

Grade 4:

[ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1](#) (Reading Informational Text)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4](#) (Reading Informational Text)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.c](#) (Speaking and Listening)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.b](#) (Writing)

Grade 5:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1](#) (Reading Informational Text)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4](#) (Reading Informational Text)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c](#) (Speaking and Listening)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.1.b](#) (Writing)

**Character Concepts:** Sometimes respect goes beyond what we do for our friends, neighbors, or those in our local community. It is important to show respect for other living beings and this starts with understanding the impact our daily actions can have on the lives and welfare of others.

**Materials Needed:**

- *Kind News*, Aug-Sept 2014, Senior Edition issues for each student.
  - **Note:** if hard copies of magazines cannot be obtained, the article “A Big Problem” can be found in the *Kind News* Archives at the following link:  
[http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/kind\\_news/2014/08-09/a-big-problem-elephant-ivory-trade.html?credit=web\\_vanity\\_kindnews\\_id564298655](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/kind_news/2014/08-09/a-big-problem-elephant-ivory-trade.html?credit=web_vanity_kindnews_id564298655)
- Copies of *Active Reading Graphic Organizer* that follows this lesson for each student
- Sticky notes—two per student (or small pieces of paper with tape stuck on the back)
- Writing utensils for each student
- Projector or blackboard

**Helpful Background Information:**

<http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/elephants/>

<http://blog.humanesociety.org/wayne/2014/02/crushing-the-ivory-trade-in-2014.html>

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Create a K-W-L chart (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) on large poster paper to be posted at the front of the room at the beginning of the lesson.
2. Gather *Kind News* editions. Put one aside for teacher use during lesson and mark article entitled “A Big Problem” (pp. 4-5) for use during the lesson.
3. Copy the graphic organizer that follows the lesson for each student. Put aside a copy to display on projector, or enlarge a copy to display on a blackboard.
4. Gather sticky notes or cut up papers with tape
5. Make sure that each student has a “reading partner” – a person with whom they will discuss their work later in the class.

**Lesson Procedure:****Opening Activity:**

1. Gather students in one area of the room.
2. Elicit from students: “Have you ever been reading something, only to get to the end of it and realize that you have no clue what it said? Yes? Well, today we will work on becoming more active readers.”
3. Distribute two sticky notes to each student.
4. Ask them to write the answer this question on their sticky note: What do you know about elephants? Ask students to share responses. As they share, they can bring their notes to the chart in the front and stick them under the “K” (Know) column.
5. Ask them to answer the next question on their other sticky note: What do you want to know about elephants? Ask students to share responses. As they share, they can bring their notes to the chart in the front and stick them under the “W” (Want to know) column.
6. If students mention the killing of elephants for their tusks, acknowledge that this is an important topic that we will discuss as a class a little later.
7. Tell students that today they will learn more about elephants while learning to be active readers of informational (non-fiction) text.

### **Lesson Body:**

1. Communicate to students that we will be reading an article about a problem for elephants.
2. Read the introductory paragraph of the *Kind News* article entitled “A Big Problem” aloud to students once. Ask students if they remember everything that was said. Remind students that active readers often go back and re-read.
3. Introduce the *Active Reading Graphic Organizer* to the group.
4. Read the paragraph a second time modeling the active reading strategies below:
  - Point out one fact that surprised you: (I.e., “Wow, I can’t believe 30,000 African elephants are killed each year for their tusks! I have a sheet here that you will get as well. I’m going to write that down under What Surprised Me).
  - State a question from the “Want to Know” section of the K-W-L you had answered: (I.e., I wondered what kind of elephants were the biggest on earth. Now I know that the answer is African elephants. I’m going to write that under An Answer I Found on my sheet.)

- State a vocabulary word you that was new or interesting, and what you know/ think it means: (I.e., I think the word trinket is cool. Can anyone tell me what it means? Can you guess from the words around it? That's right; it's kind of like jewelry but not exactly, like a small, pretty item for decoration. I'm writing trinket under A New or Interesting Vocabulary Word. Under What I Know or Think it Means, I'm writing "a small, pretty item for decoration".)
  - As you model the above, circle, underline, or write notes in margins to further demonstrate active reading techniques.
5. Tell students that now it is their turn to practice. They will read the article at least twice. As they read it the first time, they will be looking for three pieces of information:
    - One fact that surprised them about elephants or the article
    - One fact that answered one of their "Want to Know" questions, or one of their classmates' "W" questions
    - One new vocabulary word, or if no words were new, an interesting vocabulary word.
  6. Tell students to be ready to discuss the items in their graphic organizer later in the class period. Let them know that they may mark up their magazine and that you encourage them to re-read the article if needed. Distribute *Kind News* and worksheets to students and ask them to get started.
  7. After 15-20 minutes, tell students that they may sit with their reading partners and take turns sharing their facts and vocabulary words.

### **Closure:**

1. After about 5 minutes of partner share time, gather the class again with their articles and worksheets.
2. Ask students to share one fact or word their partner had. Jot down some of these on the overhead or board in the "Learned" column of your chart where you began your worksheet. Help students make connections between the three columns on the student worksheet.
3. Ask students the following questions:
  - a. How does the article make you feel? Why? What in the text was sad?
  - b. What could happen if the ivory trade continues?
  - c. How can people be kind and respectful to elephants?

**Extension:**

1. Ask students to choose one method of spreading awareness about how the ivory trade impacts elephants. For each option, require that students make mention/ display a specific number of facts about elephants and the ivory trade (for example, you might require that they include at least 4 general facts about elephants and 3 facts about elephants and the ivory trade.) They may do one of the following:

- Facts Sheet/ Flyer with pledge: “Did You Know”: Students can bullet point or show their facts in an easy-to read way. At the bottom of the sheet, construct a pledge for people in the school or members of the community to sign promising that they will boycott the purchase of ivory materials.
- Power Point presentation: One fact per slide with clip art/pictures. At the end of the presentation, students could give information about where the audience could go to help fight the ivory trade: (“Want to learn more about the ivory trade and see what you can do? Check out The Humane Society of the United States website at <http://blog.humanesociety.org/wayne/2014/02/crushing-the-ivory-trade-in-2014.html> )
- Poster: Why Should We Save the Elephants? Require that it be colorful and visually appealing to people walking by the classroom. The poster should also include various facts from the story. One idea might be for students to make their posters shaped like elephants.
- Skit/ Commercial: Students can act out why it’s important to care about the well-being of elephants and stopping the ivory trade. One possible idea: a friend telling another friend what they have recently learned about what the ivory trade and its effect on elephants, her favorite animal.

2. Lead a discussion with the class on elephants and the ivory trade (See Discussion Questions page at the end of this lesson). You may choose to have students do additional research before holding the discussion.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Active Reading Graphic Organizer

<u>What Surprised Me</u>
1.
2.
3.
<u>An Answer I Found</u>
1.
2.
3.
<u>A New/ Interesting Vocabulary Word</u>
1.
2.
3.

## Discussion Questions

1. Questions for clarification:
  - Why do many say it's "wrong" to hunt elephants for their tusks? Can you expand on the definition of "wrong" and to whom this definition should apply?
2. Questions that probe assumptions:
  - Why do we refer to elephants as "smart" creatures? What does "smart" mean in this context?
  - Once illegal ivory has already been confiscated, is it the correct course of action for the government to crush it? Why or why not?
3. Questions that probe reasons and evidence:
  - Elephants have a lifespan of 60-70 years, longer than that of most animals. Do you think it is more important to save elephants than it is to save animals with shorter lifespans?
4. Questions about viewpoints and perspectives:
  - What do you think the son or daughter of an ivory trader would say to the idea of boycotting ivory materials?
5. Questions that probe implications and consequences:
  - Does it matter that elephants live in "close family groups", as the article puts it? Why or why not?
  - Do you believe we should fight just as hard for the lives of solitary, less social animals?
6. Questions about the question:
  - Considering that elephants don't live in our country and therefore aren't part of the same ecosystem we live in, why should we try to protect them? Is it our duty? Why or why not? If it isn't our duty, whose is it?