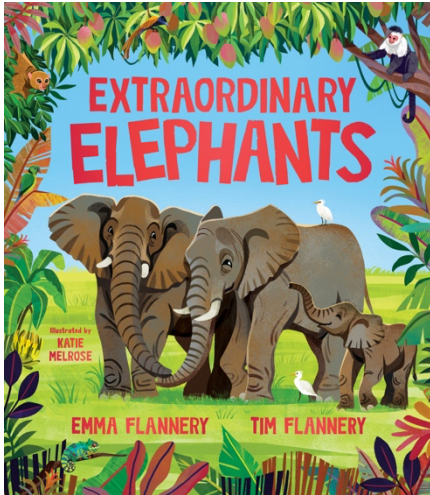


Teacher's Notes



Extraordinary Elephants

Written by Emma Flannery & Tim Flannery

Illustrated by Katie Melrose

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary aged readers (ages 4-8, grades 2-3)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - AC9E2LA03
 - AC9E3LA03
 - AC9E2LY03
 - AC9E3LY03

THEMES

- Elephants
- Empathy
- Environment
- Conservation
- Zoology
- Families
- Humans and Animals

SYNOPSIS

In this incredible follow-up to *Sensational Sharks*, science communicators Emma Flannery and Tim Flannery explore the world of *Extraordinary Elephants*. This book introduces the elephant to readers, from its trunk to its poo, through a series of bite-sized facts and anecdotes.

What would you feed an elephant who came to dinner? How do elephants grieve? How can we protect these beautiful grey giants, and why should we?

Extraordinary Elephants is a fascinating, fact-filled introduction to these unique creatures. This non-fiction picture book series encourages knowledge and empathy towards the animals we share our planet with.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Professor Tim Flannery is one of the world's leading scientists, explorers and conservationists. He has held positions in renowned institutions across Australia and internationally, including Director of the South Australian Museum, Visiting Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University and Distinguished Research Fellow at the Australian Museum. He was named Australian of the Year in 2007. He has published more than thirty books, including the award-winning *Here on Earth* and the best-selling *Explore Your World* series, some of which he co-authored with his daughter Emma. He is a frequent presenter on ABC Radio, NPR and the BBC, and has also written and presented several series on the Documentary Channel.

Emma Flannery is a scientist and writer whose curiosity for the natural world has seen her travel and work in some of its wildest and most interesting places. She has explored caves, forests and oceans across most of the globe's continents in search of the elusive fossils, animals and plants that help us understand our planet and who we are in it. With postgraduate experience in geology, chemistry and palaeontology, Emma's research and writing has been published in scientific journals, children's books and museum-based adult education tours. She has worked for and with universities, government agencies and museums. She is the co-founder of Museophiliac, an independent curatorial service with the aim of bringing science to life for a range of audiences – it has produced programs for the City of Sydney and the Australian Museum. Her passion for science has an infectious and playful enthusiasm that inspires curiosity in children and adults alike. She hopes to continue to create fun and accessible science communication.

Katie Melrose was born and raised along the Southern Californian coast where her love for art and reading was cultivated at a young age by her parents. After graduating with a BFA in illustration from California State University of Fullerton, she quickly delved into illustrating books. Katie is extremely bookish, getting through more than 100 books a year (shout out to audio books!). You'll mostly find her with a brush, but when she's without, she'll be in the kitchen, cooking up a storm and pretending she's a chef – perhaps her second greatest passion in life after illustration.

THEMES

The focus of this book is the extraordinary elephant, but the underlying theme of the series is conservation via empathy and understanding. The more we learn about the animals we share the planet with, the more we'll think about how our actions impact them. Discuss this in particular relation to the final pages of the book.

- What are some of the things that humans do that endanger elephants?
- Why would the extinction of elephants be so devastating?
- What can we do to ensure their survival?



WRITING STYLE

Emma Flannery and Tim Flannery use a variety of writing techniques to convey information. By breaking up information about elephants into bite-sized pieces, they create something that is easy for all readers to engage with. The writers present information in the following ways:

- Facts – straight-up facts and bite-sized pieces of information easy to remember and share. For example: ‘Elephants have the largest brains of any land animal, which weigh up to 6.5 kilograms!’
- Tables – tables are useful to compare and contrast information at a glance, such as when these writers compare African and Asian elephants.
- Hypotheticals – the writers use the reader’s own imaginations to present information in a way that might have more meaning to them. For example: ‘If you touched an elephant’s knees, the skin would feel rough and dry, like the bark of an old tree.’
- Comparisons – comparisons allow writers to emphasise how unique or impressive one thing is by comparing it with another. For example: ‘Some elephants recognise themselves in a mirror. While this might not sound super smart, only a handful of animals can do this, including humans, apes and dolphins.’

Discuss the way these elements work to keep readers interested in a topic and find other examples of them in the book. Try using these techniques to share information about a topic you’re interested in.

COMPREHENSION

- An elephant is heavy! How many six-year-olds would you need to make up the same weight as one elephant?
- What are some of the ways that elephants communicate with each other?
- How many species of elephant are there? What are some of the differences between them?
- What are some of the things an elephant uses its trunk for?
- Has your opinion about elephants changed by reading the book? How?
- What is the ‘periscope sniff’?
- How many hours of sleep does an elephant need? How does this compare to the amount of sleep you need?
- How do elephants communicate with each other? What was the name of the scientist who discovered how elephants talk to one another?
- What are some of the things an elephant mother might teach her baby?
- What are the two main reasons elephants are endangered?

WRITING EXERCISE

Elephants are known for their long-term memory. Imagine that you’re an elephant and write down one of your earliest memories. Use the facts in the book to help you!



ILLUSTRATION STYLE

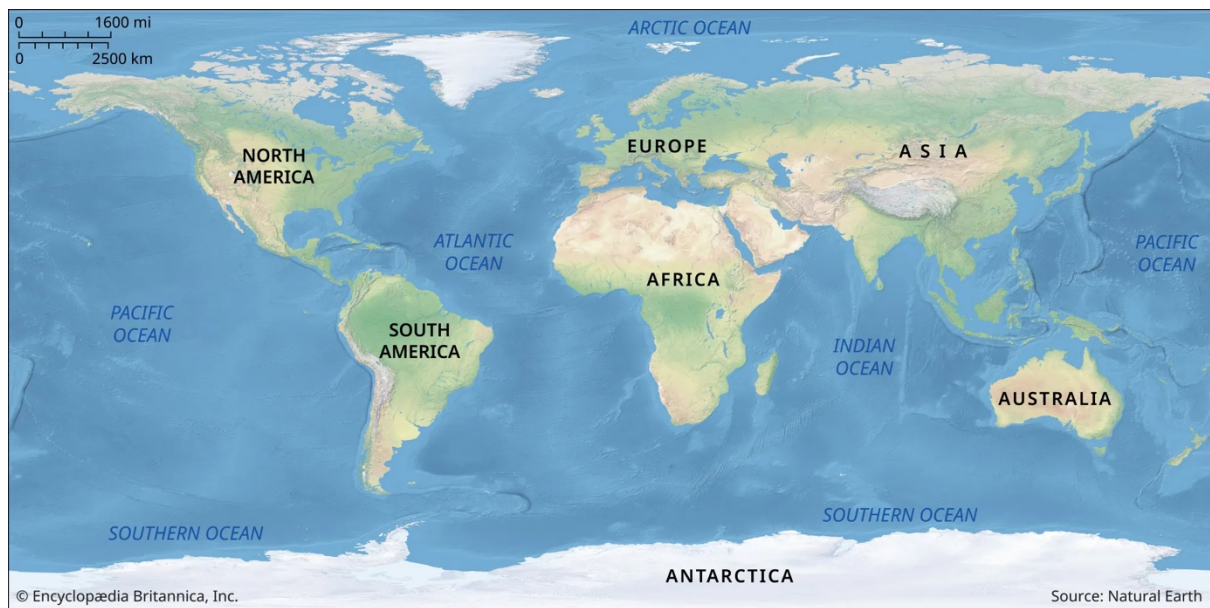
Why do you think the illustrator chose to use more cartoonish illustrations? Some of the elements are realistic, while others (including expression, movement and speech bubbles) are more like a cartoon. How do the expressions make you feel about the elephants?

How might you read this information if it was just text and photos? How are illustrations used to keep readers interested in the topic?

Discuss some of the features that *are* realistic. Why do you think it might have been important to make these elements lifelike?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- On the world map below, colour in all the continents where you might find an elephant in the wild. What kinds of elephant/s live in each place?



- Can you remember what you did a week ago? Try to remember like an elephant does! Make a map of your favourite memory and mark the physical locations where things happened and note any specific smells or sounds.
- What would you use a trunk for? Draw a picture of what you might look like if you had an elephant's trunk, and draw or write down some of the things you could do if you had one.
- Using the information in the book about what elephants eat, create a menu for an elephant.
- Draw a family tree of a typical elephant family. How is it similar or different to your family tree?



RELATED READING

Sensational Sharks

By Emma Flannery and Tim Flannery

Elephants! Strange and Wonderful

By Laurence Pringle

What the Elephant Heard

By Charlotte Guillain

The Elephant

Jenni Desmond

