

Some Facts About Elephants (Part 3)

(Story words: food, bark, shorter)

Elephants have thin ears that look like massive pancakes. While a human may wave his hands to greet a friend, an elephant may flap his big ears. They may do this when delighted to see a pal but also when mad, upset, or stimulated in some way.

Elephants also use their trunks to communicate. They “trumpet” by pushing out air through their trunks. Here again, trumpeting indicates many things. The elephant may be feeling playful, glad, fearful, or mad. An elephant may be calling others to see food or a watering hole nearby.

Elephants have an amazing sense of smell. They can smell water even twelve miles away. An elephant can hold up to two gallons of water in its trunk at one time, and can suck in ten gallons a minute. If they want to clean themselves, they can use their trunks like a spray hose to

give themselves a bath. They can also use their trunks to pick up and grab things, even small things like peanuts.

African elephants have big tusks that protect their trunks. Their tusks evolved from teeth, and elephants use them for many things. They use them to dig for water and to lift objects. Elephants eat bark and use their tusks to scrape the bark off trees.

Most people have a dominant hand, right or left, which gets the most use. It is the same with elephants. They are right-tusked or left-tusked. The dominant tusk will become shorter than the other because it gets much more use.