



# Essential Skills

*Worksheet Set - Reading Comprehension Level 6*

SKILLS COVERED:  
Reading Comprehension  
Word Meanings

[www.essentialskills.com](http://www.essentialskills.com)  
1.800.753.3727

# STORY 1

## Elephants Reading Passage

When Cynthia Moss goes to work, she drives out to the water hole. What will she do out there? Look for elephants! Ms. Moss has been studying elephants for more than 30 years. She wants to learn all she can about how elephants live. She watches where elephants go and what they do. Ms. Moss loves elephants. Even when she isn't working, she sometimes sits and watches elephants!

Cynthia Moss didn't plan to spend most of her life with elephants. She was born in New York state. After she finished college, she worked at a magazine. She wrote articles about the plays in theatres. But then she went on a long trip to East Africa. She loved it there. She decided to move to Africa to study elephants.

Why are elephants so interesting? Cynthia Moss and other scientists learned many things that people didn't know before. For years, people saw elephants traveling in herds. But they didn't know that the herds are elephant families.

An elephant family is made up of a group of female elephants and their babies. Males live on their own, or in small groups with other male elephants. The only spend time with the family when it is time to mate.

Female elephants teach their families many things. They need to teach their babies how to use their trunks to carry water to their mouths. The babies also use their trunks to hold onto the tails of their mothers.

The oldest female elephant is the family leader. Ms. Moss learned that the leader has an important job. The leader remembers where to find food and water. She guides the whole family in its travels.

At first, Cynthia Moss worked with other elephant researchers. Then she set up her own project. She studies elephants in a park in Kenya. With her helpers, Ms. Moss gathered information on every elephant in the park. They tracked families as they moved from place to place. Now there is a database of about 1,000 elephants!

# STORY 1 (continued)

## Elephants Reading Passage

By following elephants, Ms. Moss learned a lot about what they like to do. Elephants are very social. They spend a lot of time with their families. They eat together and bathe together. They play together by wrestling with their trunks. They even talk to each other!

Elephants talk by making many different kinds of sounds. They trumpet, squeal, grown or rumble. Elephants get excited when a member of the family comes back after being away. They spin around, squeal, and flap their ears to greet their friend.

Elephants have close friendships with other elephants in their family groups. If one elephant gets hurt, the others try to help. All the elephants celebrate when a new baby is born. And if a baby loses its mother, other females in the family look after it.

Ms. Moss thinks that elephant friendships are one of the things that make elephants special. Not many other animals have such close families.

Ms. Moss also works to protect the elephants of the world. She tries to show people how interesting they are. She has made three films about the life of elephants. She wants to show people elephants the way she knows them. Elephants are not so different from us. They are smart and caring. And they have friendships just the way we do.

1. Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. Where is the most likely place to find a group of elephants to watch?

- a) in a herd
- b) near water
- c) near a male elephant
- d) near an elephant that is hurt

2. The author of this story and the researcher, Cynthia Moss, have something in common.

What do they have in common?

- a) They both want people to see how interesting elephants are and to care about them.
- b) They both live and work in Kenya.
- c) They both have observed how elephants live in Africa.
- d) They both write articles about plays and films.

3. The article about Cynthia Moss and elephants does not give complete information about elephants.

From this list of headings pick FIVE for which there is NO direct information.

- a) Fun and Games
- b) Habitat (where they live)
- c) Shelter
- d) Leadership
- e) Threats (dangers)
- f) Communication
- g) Food (what, how they get it, how much)
- h) Family Life
- i) Adaptations (special ways they have of surviving their habitat and threats)

4. Cynthia Moss works very hard to reach her goals. Identify four sentences that support this statement.

- a) Ms. Moss gathered information on every elephant in the park.
- b) Ms. Moss has been studying elephants for more than 30 years.
- c) After she finished college, she worked at a magazine.
- d) She has made three films about the life of elephants.
- e) Ms. Moss thinks that elephant friendships are one of the things that make elephants special.
- f) Even when she isn't working, she sometimes sits and watches elephants!

Read each sentence then circle TRUE or FALSE.

The family leader remembers where to find food and water.  
TRUE / FALSE

Elephants trumpet, squeal, moan and mumble.  
TRUE / FALSE

Elephants ignore each other when they meet.  
TRUE / FALSE

Female elephants guide the family in its travels.  
TRUE / FALSE

Elephants are too busy to play.  
TRUE / FALSE

If a baby elephant loses its mother it is left on its own.  
TRUE / FALSE

Elephants wrestle with their trunks.  
TRUE / FALSE

Baby elephants use tusks to hang onto their members.  
TRUE / FALSE

The leader of an elephant family is the biggest male.  
TRUE / FALSE

Elephant herds are families.  
TRUE / FALSE

Read each sentence then circle TRUE or FALSE.

All these words from the story have the vowels i and e side by side.  
In which word can you hear the the separate sounds of both vowels?

- a) babies
- b) scientists
- c) families
- d) tries

Which four words have the sound of sh as in sheep?

- a) scientists
- b) social
- c) researchers
- d) information
- e) friendships
- f) special
- g) teach

Which ea vowel pairs have the sound of long e as in sheep? Pick three.

- a) east
- b) learned
- c) researcher
- d) leader
- e) eat

Which noun does NOT need a capital letter?

- a) database
- b) east africa
- c) kenya
- d) new york
- e) cynthia



Read each sentence then circle TRUE or FALSE.

Type in the missing punctuation. Use commas, periods, question marks or quotation marks.

Elephants trumpet \_\_ squeal \_\_ groan and rumble\_\_

Do you think Ms\_\_ Moss recorded these sounds on her films\_\_

Ms\_\_ Moss answers \_\_ I did tape the sounds\_\_ You can tell how  
an elephant is feeling by the sound it makes\_\_

Match each event (cause) with its effect.

celebrate

information kept  
in a computer

social

rejoice, show happiness

research

observe and study to learn  
more about something

special

unusual

database

safeguard

protect

enjoy company





Read each pair of sentences and circle the sentence in which the underlined word is used with the same meaning as its meaning in the story.

Her project was completed after much work and time.  
Its trunk can project almost two metres from its face.

Its trunk can suck in water and then spray water to keep cool.  
The trunk in the attic contained old photographs.

This article is about elephants.  
This article of clothing is new.

The train went off its track.  
When you track an animal be very quiet.

When I move too fast I get tired.  
When you move to a new place, you have to pack many boxes.

I will guide you to the end of the trail.  
My guide knew the trail really well.

She watches how they behave.  
All watches tell time.

## STORY 2

### Roller Coaster Reading Passage

Wind rushes past your face. Your stomach feels like it has dropped to your knees. You scream. The roller coaster zooms down a hill at top speed. What an exciting ride!

People have enjoyed the thrill of roller coasters for hundreds of years. Roller coaster rides began in Russia. Over 300 years ago, people made slides out of wood and ice for winter festivals. A slide could be as tall as an 8 storey building. At first, people carved seats into ice blocks to make slippery sleds. Then they climbed up a set of stairs at the back of the slide. It was a wild ride. The ice blocks had no brakes. Sand at the bottom of the slide helped to slow them down.

People wanted to have the fun of riding the slides all year round. Someone thought of making cars with wheels. Several roller coasters were built in France. They were the first coasters where the cars were locked to a track. Even so, early roller coasters were quite dangerous. There were many accidents.

The Switchback Railway was built at Coney Island, New York, in 1884. To ride it, people climbed a tower. At the top, they got into a small train. It took them for a ride down a slope for about 600 feet (almost 200 metres). At the bottom, passengers got out, and the driver took the train back up to the top. It wasn't much of a thrill ride. Its top speed was only six miles (10 kilometres) per hour. But people had never seen anything like it. Roller coaster rides sprang up in many places.

As more roller coasters were built, there were many improvements. New wheels stopped the cars from leaving the track. Safety chains kept the cars from rolling backwards. On turns, the track was tilted, or banked, for a faster, smoother ride.

Today, roller coasters come in all shapes and sizes. One of the fastest is the Top Thrill Dragster in Cedar Point, Ohio. It can reach speeds of 120 miles (190 kilometres) per hour. However, it may not be the fastest for long. Amusement park owners are always thinking ahead. Each new coaster is faster and more thrilling than the last.

## STORY 2 (continued)

### Roller Coaster Reading Passage

Designing a new roller coaster can be tricky. The roller coaster has to be safe. It also needs to be fast, with twists, loops and surprising drops. The track is planned carefully. All roller coasters depend on the force of gravity to keep them moving. A roller coaster train, perched at the top of a hill has a store of potential energy. It helps to think of potential energy as energy that is waiting to be used. As the first car coasts over the top of the hill, gravity pulls it downward. The pull of gravity releases the potential energy changing it into kinetic energy. The cars whoosh down the track.

When adding hills, drops and curves, the designer needs to think about forces of physics, such as friction. The designer plans and models the coaster on a computer. Then engineers build the ride in parts. Engineers put the coaster together at the park. It is tested over several days before it opens to the public.

A roller coaster ride may only last a few minutes, but creating it takes much longer. It takes about a year to design and build a new roller coaster. Right now, people are working to create next year's thrills.

---

Fill in the blanks.

1. The cars of roller coasters keep moving because of the force of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Cars made of ice blocks slowed down when they hit sand because the sand was not smooth like the icy slide and it created \_\_\_\_\_.
3. To stop cars from falling off, the cars were \_\_\_\_\_ to the track.
4. At the top of a hill a roller coaster has \_\_\_\_\_ energy.

Circle the right answers.

5. Which statement from the story tells you that next year's new roller coasters will outperform the ones that exist now?
  - a) Right now people are working to create next year's thrills.
  - b) Each new coaster is faster and more thrilling than the last.
  - c) Amusement park owners are always thinking ahead.
  - d) It's tested over several days before it opens to the public.
6. Which three sentences from the story show that safety is important to people who run roller coasters?
  - a) New wheels stopped the cars from leaving the track.
  - b) The track is planned carefully.
  - c) It's tested over several days before it opens to the public.
  - d) Each new coaster is faster and more thrilling than the last.
7. Riding a roller coaster is both fun and frightening. Which word does not belong in this list of words related to feelings on a roller coaster?
  - a) exciting
  - b) thrilling
  - c) surprising
  - d) scream
  - e) improvements



Put a number *beside each sentence to show the order they appear in the story.*

Designing twists, loops and drops with safety and gravity. \_\_\_\_\_

Ice blocks on icy slides provided thrills in Russia long ago. \_\_\_\_\_

Dangerous roller coasters on wheels were built in France. \_\_\_\_\_

120 miles per hour is the speed to beat in Ohio. \_\_\_\_\_

Designers make models and engineers build the parts. \_\_\_\_\_

People at Coney Island climbed a tower to ride down a slope. \_\_\_\_\_

Safety chains and tilted tracks were new improvements. \_\_\_\_\_

Match each event (cause) with its effect.

Because they want to  
ride slides all year long

someone made cars with  
wheels to ride down  
slides.

Because safety chains were  
attached to the cars.

it has to be planned  
carefully.

Because a roller coaster needs  
to be fast, even with  
twists, loops and drops,

it wasn't much of  
a thrill.

Because the first ride at Coney  
Island reached a speed of only  
six miles (ten km) per hour,

they couldn't roll  
backwards.

Each word in the list has 3 syllables or beats.  
Write the number of the syllable that is stressed in each word.

improvements \_\_\_\_\_

festivals \_\_\_\_\_

dangerous \_\_\_\_\_

gravity \_\_\_\_\_

kinetic \_\_\_\_\_

potential \_\_\_\_\_

amusement \_\_\_\_\_

passengers \_\_\_\_\_

accidents \_\_\_\_\_

engineers \_\_\_\_\_



Look at the underlined word in each sentence and then circle whether it is used as a NOUN or a VERB.

There were many twists in the track of the roller coaster. NOUN or VERB

The roller coaster track twists and turns along its course. NOUN or VERB

The track loops twice before it goes uphill. NOUN or VERB

The loops in the track frighten the passengers. NOUN or VERB

The steep climb adds suspense to the ride. NOUN or VERB

The cars climb up a steep section of track. NOUN or VERB

The curves in the track are tilted. NOUN or VERB

The track curves sharply and shakes the cars. NOUN or VERB





Find homonyms from the story for the words below.

Write each word in the blanks below.

stares \_\_\_\_\_

breaks \_\_\_\_\_

write \_\_\_\_\_

billed \_\_\_\_\_

kneads \_\_\_\_\_

would \_\_\_\_\_

story \_\_\_\_\_

daze \_\_\_\_\_



What is the base word for each word below?  
Write each word in the blanks below.

improvements \_\_\_\_\_

slippery \_\_\_\_\_

designer \_\_\_\_\_

exciting \_\_\_\_\_

computer \_\_\_\_\_

amusement \_\_\_\_\_



Use these words to answer the questions below:

*potential, releases, physics, friction, kinetic*

What is the name of a science that studies  
energy and matter?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is a word to describe the result of rubbing one thing  
against another?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is a word for something waiting to be used?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is an adjective to describe something in motion?

\_\_\_\_\_