

MUSICAL ELEPHANTS

- 1 In the town of Lampang in northern Thailand, there is an unusual¹ group of musicians. They play many different kinds of music—from traditional Thai songs to music by Beethoven. Both children and adults love this group. What makes them so
- 5 **popular**? Is it their music? Their looks?² Yes, it's both of these things, but it's also something else: they're elephants.

These musical elephants are from the Thai Elephant Conservation Center (TECC) in Lampang. The TECC protects elephants. It teaches people to understand and care for these

10 **huge**, but **gentle**, animals. And, like many zoos around the world, the TECC **encourages** elephants to paint.

- Richard Lair works with the TECC. He knew that elephants hear better than they see. So he had an idea: if elephants are intelligent and they have good hearing, maybe they can
- 15 play music. To test his idea, Lair and a friend started the Thai Elephant Orchestra.³ During a **performance**, the elephants play a variety of instruments, including the drums and the xylophone. The animals also use their voices and trunks to make sounds.

- But can elephants really make music **properly**? Yes, says Lair.
- 20 They're very **creative**. Humans may encourage the animals to play instruments, but the elephants make their own songs; they don't just copy their **trainers**
- 25 or other people. There are now CDs of the group's music, which **earn** money for the TECC. And the music these **artists** create is pretty amazing.

¹ If something is **unusual**, it does not happen very often or you do not see it or hear it very often.

² When you refer to someone's **looks**, you are referring to how beautiful or ugly they are.

³ An **orchestra** is a large group of musicians that play a variety of instruments together.



Reading Comprehension

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer for each question.

Gist

1. Another title for this reading could be _____.

- a. Teaching Elephants to Paint
- b. Elephants in Danger
- c. TECC Trainers
- d. An Unusual Orchestra

Detail

2. The elephants at the TECC _____.

- a. see better than they hear
- b. are encouraged to paint
- c. cannot create their own music
- d. make their own instruments

Reference

3. In line 4, *them* refers to _____.

- a. children
- b. adults
- c. songs
- d. musicians

Detail

4. Why did Richard Lair start the Thai Elephant Orchestra?

- a. He had heard the elephants playing music.
- b. He needed to make money for the TECC.
- c. He believed elephants could play music.
- d. He wanted to be on TV in Thailand.

Vocabulary

5. In line 17, what does *a variety of* mean?

- a. the same kind of
- b. many different
- c. two types of
- d. too many

Detail

6. Which sentence about the Thai Elephant Orchestra is NOT true?

- a. The elephants dance while playing music.
- b. The elephants use their trunks to make sounds.
- c. The elephants use their voices to make sounds.
- d. The orchestra's CD sales earn money for the TECC.

Paraphrase

7. Read the last sentence in the passage again. What does it mean?

- a. The elephants play great music.
- b. Human artists now play with the elephants.
- c. The elephants are very beautiful.
- d. Human musicians want to copy the elephants' songs.



Did You Know?

In south Asia, an elephant's trainer is known as a *mahout* [ma-hoot]. Here, a mahout in Sri Lanka is brushing the teeth of his elephant.

Identifying Main Ideas in Paragraphs

A paragraph usually has one main idea and some details that support it. Paragraphs often include a topic sentence that describes the main idea. Usually—but not always—a topic sentence is at or near the start of the paragraph, or at the end of the paragraph. One way to find the main idea quickly is to read the sentences at the beginning and end of the paragraph. A paragraph's heading (if it has one) can also give a clue to its main idea.

- A. Multiple Choice.** Read the paragraph. Which sentence gives the main idea? Circle **a**, **b**, or **c**.

In 2005, a dog named Bella met an elephant named Tarra at a conservation center. Dogs and elephants don't usually mix, but this pair soon became best friends. One day, workers heard Bella barking from the room where she was resting. She was communicating with Tarra, who was outside making noises of her own. So someone brought Bella outside to Tarra, who gently touched her friend with her trunk. Over the years, the two animals often slept and had food together. When Bella died in 2011, Tarra carried her body to a place where they often spent time together.

- a. In 2005, a dog named Bella met an elephant named Tarra at a conservation center.
- b. Dogs and elephants don't usually mix, but this pair soon became best friends.**
- c. When Bella died in 2011, Tarra carried her body to a place where they often spent time together.



▲ Bella and Tarra

- B. Matching.** What is the main idea of each paragraph in the reading on page 15? Match each main idea below to a paragraph (1–4). One idea is extra.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1. _____ | a. Richard Lair created the Thai Elephant Orchestra. |
| 2. _____ | b. There is an unusual group of musicians in Thailand. |
| 3. _____ | c. Animals all over the world like music. |
| 4. _____ | d. Elephants really can play amazing music. |
| | e. The TECC works with elephants. |

Critical Thinking Discuss with a partner. Which animal do you think is the smartest in this unit? Why do you think so?

Vocabulary Practice

A. Words in Context. Complete each sentence with the correct answer (a or b).

1. A **gentle** person _____ hurt an animal.
a. wouldn't b. would
2. A **huge** animal is very _____.
a. large b. small
3. If something is **popular**, _____ people like it.
a. a lot of b. very few
4. If you do something **properly**, you do it _____.
a. poorly b. correctly
5. An example of a musical **performance** is _____.
a. an orchestra playing music b. someone learning to play an instrument

B. Completion. Complete the paragraph with words from the box. One word is extra.

artists creative earn encourage popular trainers

In some zoos, 1. _____ show elephants how to hold a paintbrush. The trainers 2. _____ the elephants to choose colors and use them to make paintings. Of course, not every painting is good. Just like humans, only some elephants are very 3. _____. Now, an online gallery sells paintings by these elephant 4. _____. By doing this, the gallery hopes to 5. _____ money to protect elephants.



Courtesy of NOVICA.COM

☞ This painting, called "Green Symphony," was painted by Phong, an elephant at the Lampang Elephant Art Academy.

Word Link We can add -ist to words to form nouns. These nouns often describe jobs, such as artist and scientist.

VIEWING Monkey College

Before You Watch

A. **Labeling.** Label the numbered items in the photo with the words in **bold** from the caption.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

^ A **trainer** in Thailand is teaching a **monkey** how to pick a **coconut**. He ties a **rope** around it and uses this to control and direct the animal up a **tree**.

B. **Matching.** How do you think the trainer trains the monkey? Number the steps in order from 1 to 4.

- _____ The trainer lets the monkey play.
- _____ The trainer lets the monkey pick a coconut.
- _____ The trainer shows the monkey how to spin a coconut.
- _____ The trainer encourages the monkey to spin a coconut himself.

Viewing 19

While You Watch

A. Checking. Check your answers to **B** on page 19. Did you guess the steps correctly?

B. Completion. Complete the word web about the video. Use verbs from the box.
Two words are extra.

buy earn fall have pick produce spin treat use work

How to Train

- show how to 1. _____ a coconut
- encourage the monkey to do it himself
- let the monkey 2. _____ a coconut

Advantages

- if people climb trees, they might 3. _____ and die

Training Monkeys

Importance of Coconuts

- people 4. _____ them on beaches
- used in curry
- farmers can 5. _____ money

Life of Monkeys

- farmers say most 6. _____ a good life
- some people make them 7. _____ too hard
- farmers will continue to 8. _____ them

After You Watch

Critical Thinking. Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. What else do you think monkeys can be trained to do?
2. Do you think it's a good idea to train monkeys to help humans? Why or why not?
3. Which other animals help humans? How?

This pig-tailed Macaque > (Macaca nemestrina) is trained to pick coconuts.

