

Think of ONE word that fits into each blank.

Ivory is a smooth material that (1) _____ be found in the tusks of mammals. Elephants, walruses, hippos and whales are the primary sources of ivory. Because it is so valuable and expensive, ivory has been traded around the world (2) _____ centuries.

Egyptian sculptors carved ivory objects for their pharaoh. Ancient Greeks and Romans used ivory to (3) _____ art, religious objects and jewellery.

Even large statues were made of ivory. The ancient Chinese got ivory from traders (4) _____ brought it from India and Southeast Asia. For many centuries it (5) _____ used as a currency.

(6) _____ first people used ivory from Asian elephants but then saw that the ivory of African elephants was (7) _____ to carve. Traders started moving in on Africa and the ivory trade started to boom. Before plastic was invented ivory was used to make objects of everyday (8) _____, like knife handles, piano keys, combs and billiard balls.

The best-known form of ivory is in an elephant's tusks. Such a tusk can grow to a length of over 3 metres and (9) _____ up to a hundred kilograms. The outside of a tusk is often dark, whereas the inside is white or cream-coloured. Ivory is a hard material that can be easily carved (10) _____ different shapes. In many countries handicrafts, souvenirs and jewellery are made from ivory.

Ivory is also preserved in the tundra of Siberia, northern Canada and other polar regions (11) _____ prehistoric mammoths roamed the continents thousands of years ago. Some of the tusks are larger (12) _____ the tusks of mammals that exist today. However, such fossil ivory is harder to carve.

Today trading ivory from elephants and other endangered animals is illegal. During the 20th (13) _____ large parts of the elephant population were reduced (14) _____ of the ivory trade. The poached ivory is smuggled (15) _____ of the country and sold at a very high price.

Since the end of the 20th century governments of African and Asian countries (16) _____ focused on capturing poachers and clamping down on illegal trading rings. Tons of ivory are seized by authorities (17) _____ year. In the last few years these actions have stabilized the elephant population. Some countries have put elephants into reserves, where they can be closely monitored.



*Elephant tusk from the Louvre
Museum in Paris*