The story

This is an adaptation of a famous Rudyard Kipling story, which explains how the elephant got its trunk. The story is set in Africa, when the world was new and elephants did not have trunks.

The elephant’s child lived with Father, Mother and Baby Elephant. He wanted to know all about the world, and was always asking the other animals difficult questions. They usually told him to go away!

One day, the elephant’s child asked a question that none of the animals wanted to answer. He asked what Crocodile had for his dinner. The animals were afraid of Crocodile. Parrot told the elephant’s child that he must go to the green, green river and ask Crocodile himself.

The elephant’s child set out on the long journey to the river. He took some melons to eat on the way. He met Python on his journey, but when he asked him about Crocodile, Python was afraid, and slithered away.

At last the elephant’s child came to the green, green river where Crocodile lived. When the elephant’s child nervously asked Crocodile his question, Crocodile pretended not to hear clearly. He asked the elephant’s child to come closer. Then he grabbed the elephant’s child’s nose with his teeth!

The elephant’s child squeaked loudly. Python, Parrot and Aunt Hippopotamus heard the noise and came to help him. They pulled the elephant’s child in one direction, as Crocodile pulled in the other. The elephant’s child’s nose stretched as they pulled. It grew longer and longer, until Crocodile gave up and let go.

Aunt Hippopotamus helped the elephant’s child soothe his sore nose. It stopped hurting, but it was still very long. The elephant’s child was unhappy with his new nose. He set off for home sadly.

On his journey home, the elephant’s child discovered that having a long nose was actually very useful – he could flick flies away with it; pick grass with it; squirt mud with it; pick bananas with it; squirt water with it and sing with it!

When the elephant’s child arrived home, Father, Mother and Baby Elephant thought his nose looked very odd. So he showed them what he could do with it – he pulled Father’s tail, poked Mother and picked up Baby Elephant and threw him into a thorn bush! He made lots of trouble with his new nose.

Eventually the family decided that something must be done. They went to see Crocodile. They promised to pick bananas every day for him if he stretched their noses like he had the elephant’s child’s nose! Crocodile agreed.

When the elephants got home, they all lived together peacefully. So now all elephants have long noses.
The Elephant's Child

Introducing the book

The cover

- Hold up the cover. Read the book’s title to and with the class.
- Point to the elephant’s child. Ask *What sort of animal is this?* Elicit from the class anything they already know about elephants.
- Talk about the picture. Ask the class to describe the elephant. Ask *Where is the elephant?* (near a river in a jungle). *What other animal can you see?* (a crocodile).
- Ask *What do you think the story is going to be about?*

The title page

- Ask the children to turn to the title page. Hold up your own book and point to the picture. Ask *What is different about this elephant?* (It hasn’t got a trunk). Ask *What do you think the story is going to be about now?*

The contents page

- Explain that the story is a classic (famous) tale (story) by Rudyard Kipling. Point to his name. Explain that the story has been adapted (made simpler) by another writer. Point to her name.
- Ask the children to turn to the contents page. Explain that the Contents list tells us what is in the book.
- Ask *How many chapters are there?* Read the chapter titles to and with the class. Briefly explain any unfamiliar words (most will be covered in the chapter notes). Ask the children to say what page each chapter starts on.
- Point out that at the end of the book there is a poem (on page 42) and some facts about elephants (beginning on page 44).
- Discuss the pictures on the contents page. Ask *What can you see?*
- Ask questions about each chapter title to stimulate the children’s interest, for example: Chapter 1: Show the cover again. Ask *Who do you think this is?* Chapter 2: *What animal do you think lives at the river?* Chapter 3: *What do you think happens at the river?* etc.
- Tell the children to do the related activity on page 1 of their Workbook.

You can play the story on the audio cassette/CD at any time you choose.
Chapter 1
The elephant’s child
Pages 3 to 6

Active vocabulary
- afraid: point out the ‘ai’, as in rain
- aunt: pronounced like ‘aren’t’
- child: the ‘i’ here has a long sound – unlike its short sound in children
- dinner: both dinner and river (see below) have the common ‘er’ ending
- elephant: the ‘ph’ sounds like ‘f’, as it does in words such as alphabet, photo and telephone
- new: some other ‘ew’ words include: dew, few, grew, stew, crew, threw and drew.
- question: the letter ‘q’ is always followed by ‘u’

Passive vocabulary
- beak
- discover
- feathers
- lived
- melon
- spotty
- true
- world

Before reading
- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see the Teacher’s Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activity on page 2 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 3. Read the Chapter 1 title again. Ask Which elephant do you think is Father Elephant? Which is Mother Elephant? Which is Baby Elephant? Which one is the elephant’s child? Why do the elephants look strange?
- Tell the class to look at the picture on page 4. Ask What animal is the elephant’s child talking to? (an ostrich). Ask the children to describe the ostrich. Discuss how both animals look. Are they happy, sad, angry?
- Ask Where are the animals? (Africa). Talk about what you can see in the background of the picture. Ask What other animal can you see? What is it doing?
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 5. Ask What animal is the elephant’s child talking to now? (a baboon). Ask the children to describe the baboon. Ask What is the baboon eating? (a melon). Does he look happy? How does the elephant’s child look? What other animal can you see in the background?
Tell the children to look at the picture on page 6. Ask What animal is the elephant’s child talking to now? (a parrot). Ask the class to describe the parrot. Discuss how both animals look: Are they happy? Sad? Point out that the parrot has one wing around the elephant’s child’s shoulders in a friendly manner.

During reading
- Read the chapter expressively to the class (or play the audio cassette/CD). Do not stop to explain anything or to ask questions. Ensure the children are following in their books.
- Choose whichever of the following options is most appropriate for your class:
  - Read the chapter again and encourage the class to read it with you.
  - Read the chapter again, a paragraph at a time, and ask the class (or individuals) to read each paragraph aloud after you.
  - Do not read again yourself. Ask groups or individuals to read the chapter aloud, a paragraph at a time.
- Read (or play) the chapter again, a paragraph at a time. Explain the meaning and pronunciation of the words listed as passive vocabulary, and any other unfamiliar words.
- Discuss how the pictures can help the reader guess the meaning of the text.

**Stage 1 comprehension (literal)**
Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 3 of their Workbook.

1. Where did the elephant’s child live?
2. Who did he live with?
3. Was the world new or old at this time?
4. Elephants did not have __________.
5. What did the elephant’s child want to know?
6. What did the elephant’s child ask Aunt Ostrich?
7. What did Aunt Ostrich say to him?
8. Who did the elephant’s child go to see next?
9. What did the elephant’s child ask Uncle Giraffe?
10. What did Uncle Giraffe say to him?
11. Who did the elephant’s child go to see after Uncle Giraffe?
12. What did the elephant’s child ask Aunt Hippopotamus?
13. What did Aunt Hippopotamus say to him?
14. Who did the elephant’s child go to see after Aunt Hippopotamus?
15. What did the elephant’s child ask Uncle Baboon?
16. What did Uncle Baboon say to him?
17. What did the elephant’s child want to know about Crocodile?
18. All the animals were __________ of Crocodile.
19. Why did the elephant’s child go to see Parrot?
20. What did Parrot do with his beak?
21. What did Parrot say to the elephant’s child?

- Ask the children to find examples of questions and exclamations in the chapter. Draw attention to their punctuation. Read each one aloud, and draw attention to how your tone of voice changes.
- Point out how the animals’ names begin with capital letters.
- Ask the children to find and read aloud examples of words containing: ‘ee’; ‘ea’; ‘oo’; ‘ow’.
Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

After reading

Stage 2 comprehension (extension)
Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

1. How do you know that the elephant’s child was not the youngest child in the family?
2. Do you think elephants look strange without trunks?
3. Why do you think the elephant’s child wanted to know all about the world?
4. Which animal did the elephant’s child talk to first? Second? Last?
5. Was Aunt Ostrich cross with the elephant’s child? How do you know?
6. Why do you think she sent him to see Uncle Giraffe?
7. How do you know that the elephant’s child had asked the giraffe some questions before?
8. Who did the elephant’s child see before Uncle Baboon?
9. Why do you think the elephant’s child asked Uncle Baboon about melons?
10. Why do you think everyone was afraid of Crocodile?
11. Why do you think Aunt Ostrich said ‘Sshh!’ to the elephant’s child?
12. Why do you think Parrot tidied his feathers with his beak when the elephant’s child asked him about Crocodile?
13. Do you think the elephant’s child was afraid of Crocodile?
14. Do you think he was sensible to go and look for Crocodile?

Write some words from the chapter on the board and ask the children to find any smaller words ‘hiding’ inside each longer word (for example, trunk).

Choose a word from the text and brainstorm as a class other words that rhyme with it. Write the rhyming words on the board and discuss which ones have the same letter patterns and which don’t (for example, true: blue/glue; new/chew; too/zoo).

Ask the class what else they know about the animals mentioned in the text. Ask What other animals might there be in Africa? Ask Are you afraid of any animals? Why?

Ask the children to suggest other questions the elephant’s child might have asked each animal. Ask Do you think the elephant’s child was rude to ask so many questions? Talk about why we ask questions. Discuss the fact that it is quite usual for young children to ask lots of questions about the world. Ask Why do you think this is?

The animals were all fed up and impatient with the elephant’s child. Discuss the importance of being patient with young children (such as younger siblings).

Remind the children that the story will explain how elephants got their trunks. Ask Can you guess how?

If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see the Teacher’s Notes Introduction page 19).

Ask What do you think will happen next? Who do you think the elephant’s child will meet on his way to find Crocodile?