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Introduction

India is a land with a rich culture. Its population is in excess of one billion. It is struggling with racial and religious divisions, an emerging industrial economy, an enormous population and a host of other problems. As a developing nation, India faces some very tough issues in the twenty-first century.

One of these issues concerns the plight of the Asian elephant, one of India's symbols. Although it is smaller than its African cousin, the Asian elephant is in danger of extinction. It used to roam over most of southern Asia and China. Today, it is limited to isolated pockets in India, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia and Indonesia. The total estimated population is around 50 000. Unfortunately, because many of the elephants are isolated from each other, the total cannot be considered as one viable population.

The elephant is threatened from two directions. The first is the ivory trade. Hunters often would slaughter whole herds for the ivory of a few bull elephants. As not all Asian bull elephants have tusks, hunters have concentrated on illegally poaching the African elephant. Even so, the ivory trade has had a devastating effect on the Asian elephant.

The second threat is loss of habitat. Some of the most densely populated areas on the planet are in the traditional homelands of the elephant. The expansion of farmland to feed a hungry world has isolated the elephant into smaller populations. This isolation has limited the genetic diversity needed for a healthy population. The more the elephant's continuous habitat is separated by exploding populations, the more endangered they will become.

This book is intended to raise our awareness of the Asian elephant and the land in which it lives.



Monsoons

India has a monsoon climate. As a result, it has three basic seasons: hot, wet and cool. During the hot season, temperatures can reach over 49°C. There is little or no rain so the dust hangs in the air like a haze.

When the monsoons arrive, they provide relief from the unbearable heat. However, hot and dusty usually becomes hot and humid. It rains at least once a day in short downpours. This is when farmers

are busiest with planting. Unfortunately, the downpours also wash away homes, roads and railways. Some years, the flooding causes thousands of deaths.

The cool season brings the monsoons to an end. Everything is green and fresh. Temperatures become quite comfortable in some areas. In the north, there is enough snow to support a small ski industry. In the south, it is never really cool, it is just less hot.

Choose one of the cities below. Graph its temperatures and rainfall on another sheet of paper.

Rainfall Data

Cities	January	March	May	July	September	November
Lucknow	2.5cm	1cm	1.25cm	30cm	17.5cm	0.05cm
Kochi	1cm	5.25cm	35cm	72.5cm	23.75cm	13.75cm
Bombay	0.25cm	0.25cm	1.5cm	67.5cm	30cm	2cm
Calcutta	1.5cm	2.8cm	12.5cm	30cm	30cm	3.75cm
Delhi	2.25cm	1.75cm	0.75cm	20cm	15cm	0.025cm
Goa	0.25cm	0.5cm	1.75cm	87.5cm	27.5cm	2cm
Jaipur	1.25cm	0.75cm	1cm	1.75cm	11cm	0.25cm
Madras	2.5cm	1.5cm	4.75cm	8cm	2.25cm	2.75cm

Average High Temperatures (in celsius)

Cities	January	March	May	July	September	November
Lucknow	22	31	42	35	33	28
Kochi	30	30	30	27	27	29
Bombay	28.5	30	32	29	29	31
Calcutta	27	34	35.5	31	31	29
Delhi	20	29	41	34.5	34	29
Goa	30	31	33	28.5	28.5	33
Jaipur	21	30	41	34	33	28.5
Madras	28	33	37	34	33.5	28



Chronology of Events

Use with page 14.

On this page and the following page you will read about major events in India's history. Choose one and draw a realistic illustration of it. Also, refer to these pages when working on the **History Time Line** (page 15) and **Library Discovery** (page 16).

2500 BC	Civilisation flourished in the Indus River Valley. The major cities were Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. They developed sophisticated drainage systems and even systems for garbage collection.		the Hunas, or Huns, invaded. North India broke into several separate Hindu kingdoms which were not united again until the coming of the Muslims.
1500–200 BC	A period of successive waves of invasions by the Aryans. They eventually controlled all of northern India. They introduced Hinduism and wrote the <i>Vedas</i> (sacred Hindu texts) between 1500–1200 BC.	1192	After almost 200 years of raiding the Indian kingdoms, the Muslims made a permanent home in India under Muhammad of Ghor. He was succeeded in AD 1206 by Qutb al-Din Aybak who became the first sultan of Delhi. Even though Muslims ruled India for centuries, only twelve per cent of the current population is Muslim.
500 BC	Buddhism and Jainism arise to present Hinduism with its greatest challenge.		
326 BC	Alexander the Great invades India at the Battle of Hydaspes. Alexander won in spite of the fact that Porus used several war elephants. This marked the eastern limit of Alexander's empire. His soldiers refused to march any further.	1498	Vasco da Gama discovered a sea route around Africa to India.
		1510	The Portuguese capture Goa, which they held until 1961.
		1525–1757	The Mughal emperors ruled India and built some of the most magnificent buildings. The most famous is the Taj Mahal built by emperor Shah Jahan.
321–185 BC	The Maurya Empire rose to fill the power vacuum left by Alexander. Under Asoka, it reached its greatest size. Asoka also adopted Buddhism as the official religion.	1600	The British East India company forms and begins trading with India, in competition to the Portuguese.
AD 320–540	The Gupta Empire is established. This was a golden age for arts and literature. It was ended when	1668	The trading post of Bombay is given to the East India company by the British, who obtained it in 1661.



Indian Proverbs

Proverbs are sayings that people use to give advice for life's situations. For example, to encourage people to do things right the first time, someone might say, 'Haste makes waste'. Or if you are always complaining about something and notice that you don't have many friends,

someone may try to give some helpful advice by saying, 'You will attract more flies with honey than with vinegar'. This proverb means: You make more friends (the flies) with a sweet personality (the honey) than with a bitter personality (the vinegar).

Perhaps you know some proverbs used around your house. Write them below and discuss with the class what they mean.

Indians also preserve some of their wisdom in the form of proverbs. Below are listed some Indian proverbs. In the space provided, write what you think each one means.

1. If the heart be impure, all actions will be wrong. _____

2. By words he softens minds, but words will not soften rice. _____

3. Sand sharpens a knife; a stone the axes; good words a good man; a thrashing a rogue. _____

4. The sieve says to the needle, you have a hole in your tail. _____

5. Pull the ear, the head follows. _____

6. Even a holy cow, if found in the company of a stolen one, may be impounded.

7. One knows the horse by his ears; the generous by his gifts; a man by laughing; and a jewel by its brilliancy. _____

8. A hero's word and an elephant's teeth remain fixed. _____



World Records

India holds a lot of records. *The Guinness Book of Records* is one of the best-selling books in the country. Below are listed some of India's outstanding records to date.

Largest Assembly – 15 million at the Kumbh Mela in 1989

Largest Manufacturer of Bicycles – Hero Cycles in Punjab (nearly 3 million a year)

Nonstop Talking – 360 hours

Largest High School – 12 350 students

Continuous Typing – 123 hours

Busiest Bridge – 57 000 vehicles a day

Tree with the Largest Canopy – a banyan tree in Calcutta Botanical Gardens covers 1.2 hectares

Balancing on One Foot – 34 hours

Clapping – 58 hours, 9 minutes

Standing Still – over seventeen years

Wettest Place on Earth – Cherrapunji with 26.46 metres in one twelve month period

Highest Bridge – 5600 metres

Largest Single Employer – Indian Railways with 1 624 121 employees

Nonstop Solo Singing – 262 hours

Whistling – 45 hours, 20 minutes

Crawling – 1400 kilometres

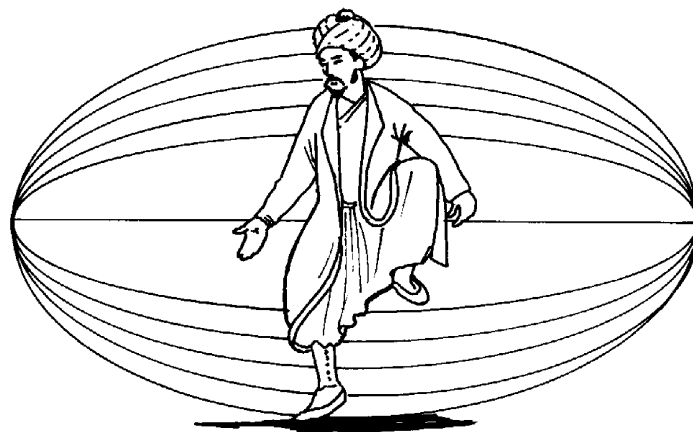
Nonstop Chanting – 10 040 days and still going

Largest Elections – 304 126 600 people voted for 543 seats in 1989

Largest Number of Recordings – Lata Mangeshkar with over 30 000 songs in twenty Indian languages

Tallest Free-Standing Tower – 72.5 metres

Longest Court Trial – a Pune man won a lawsuit in 1966 that had been filed by his ancestor 761 years ago



Activities:

- Pick one of the above records to 'report on' for a local newspaper.
- How long can you whistle or sing nonstop? Try doing this for 15–30 minutes.
- Have a crawling race or a timed balance-on-one-foot contest.