

# *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?: Reading Fluency 2*

In school, children learn how to read and understand new information. Through reading they learn about history, science, and other subjects. Workbook pages, stories, or books that contain **facts** are called **informational text**. *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?* is an example of informational text because it gives children facts about elephants.

To become fluent readers, children should be able to read all types of stories and informational text. They need to read **accurately**, **smoothly**, and at a **good speed**. They need to **understand** the meaning of the stories and books.

To increase fluency, follow these three steps. First, before reading the story, ask questions to help your child focus on it. Second, read the story to your child and then help your child read the story to you. Third, after you read the story, ask your child questions about it.

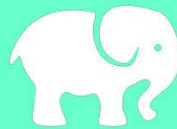
## **Before Reading *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?***

**Three "What" Questions.** Children will pay closer attention if you ask them to think about what a story or book might be about before they start reading. This also helps them **understand** and remember what they have read. Asking three "What" questions can help them know what to look for before they even start reading *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?* Ask these questions:

- What do you think this story will be about?
- What do you know about elephants?
- What would you like to learn about elephants?

You can use these types of questions with any book or story your child is reading. Just follow these three general "What" questions:

- What do you think the story will be about?
- What do you know about the topic?
- What would you like to learn about the topic?





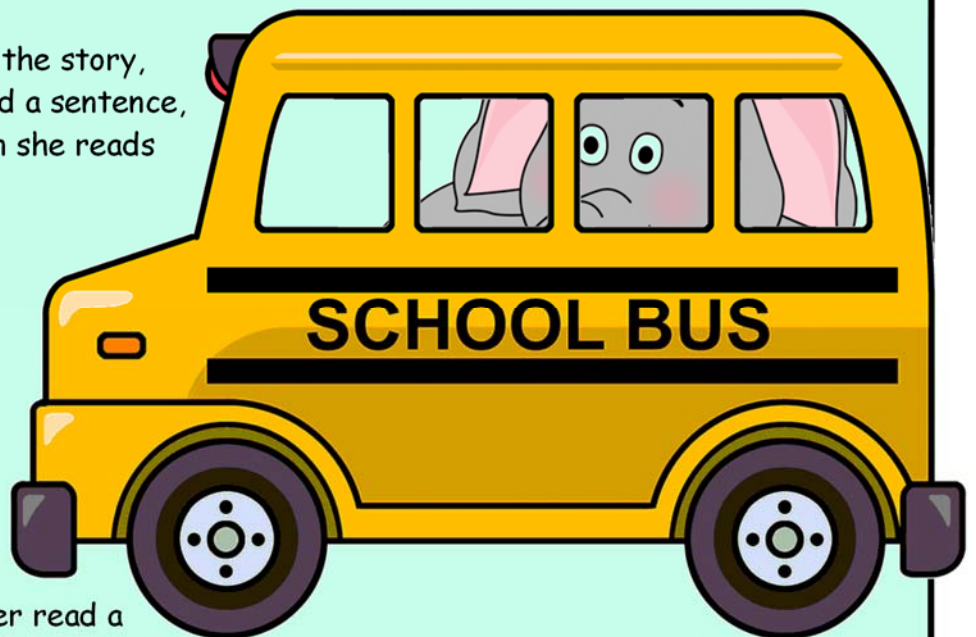
### Read *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?*

Sit down with your child to read *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?* Sit next to your child so that both of you can see the story. Read the story out loud to her. Make the reading fun and interesting by changing your voice. Make it loud or soft or high or low to fit the story. For example, use a "big" sounding voice when you read, "Everything about an elephant is big." Point to the words as you read them. Read slowly enough that your child doesn't get lost or confused. This helps her become familiar with the story and learn new words and how to pronounce them so that she can read smoothly.

When your child is familiar with the story, begin taking turns. Have her read a sentence, then you read the next one, then she reads the third sentence, and so on.

If she has difficulty, read the first sentence to her. Have her be a copycat by reading the same sentence back to you. Go on to the next sentences until you reach the end of the story.

Read the story again and have her read a sentence first and then you be the copycat.



### After Reading *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?*

**Go back to the Three What Questions.** After you have read the story a few times together, ask him if he was right in what he thought the story would be about. Compare his answers to what he said before you started reading *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?* What did he read that he already knew about elephants? Did he learn anything new that he wanted to find out?



## Let's Think Some More

Another way to help your child remember things from the story is to ask him more questions about the story. With informational text and stories, ask specific questions to see what he learned. Have him go back and find the answers in the story if he doesn't know. You can make up questions or ask some of the following.

How much food do elephants eat every day?

Where do elephants live?

Are all elephants the same size?

Why are elephants wonderful animals?

What do elephants do with their trunks?

How many elephants would fit in a school bus? (None—they couldn't get through the door.)



## Have Fun

If you or your child gets tired, stop and come back to the story and activities on another day. The more your child enjoys reading and doing the activities, the more fluent in reading he will become.

Note: You can use these same activities with another story or book. You can follow the same order of activities, or you can change the order or choose the activities that you think will be most helpful and the most fun for your child.



### More Information

*How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?* is the second of three tip sheets for improving children's fluency. If your child has difficulty with the activities in this tip sheet, we suggest that you ask for the first tip sheet on fluency, *The Two Best Cakes: Reading Fluency 1*. After trying the activities in that tip sheet, come back and try this tip sheet, *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?*

If your child is having a hard time with these activities, talk to your child's teacher. There may be another tip sheet or other activities to help. If you enjoy these activities, tell your child's teacher. The teacher may have more ideas to share for learning fun at home.

### Watch Families Doing Activities

To see families doing these activities, please go to: [www.washoestrivingreaders.com](http://www.washoestrivingreaders.com). Next, click on the **Community and Families** tab at the top of the page then select **Family Literacy Videos** from the drop down menu. Finally, scroll down the page and click on the video and tip sheet that fits your family's needs.



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# How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?

There are two kinds of elephants. African elephants are huge. Asian elephants are a little bit smaller, but they are still big.

Everything about an elephant is big. It has big ears. It has big eyes and big tusks. It can weigh as much as a school bus!

Even baby elephants are pretty big. When baby elephants are born they are about 3 feet tall, compared to a human baby that is less than two feet tall.

When you were born you probably weighed about 7 pounds. Imagine 7 pounds of butter. Baby elephants weigh about 200 pounds, as much as a big man!

Because they are so big, they have to eat a lot. Elephants eat roots, grasses, fruit, and bark from trees. They eat 300 to 400 pounds of food every day. It is not easy for them to find enough food, so they have to walk a long way looking for something to eat.

An elephant also has a long nose called a trunk. It uses its trunk to find leaves and fruits to eat. It uses its trunk to breathe and to smell. An elephant can even shower itself with its trunk. It sucks up water and sprays its back. A mother elephant uses her trunk to feed her baby. She can even hold her baby close with her trunk.

Elephants also have tusks. They use their tusks to dig for food and water and to strip bark from trees. Male elephants may use their tusks to fight each other.



Elephants live in families. Families of grandmothers, aunts, mothers, and babies live together in herds. The male elephants leave the herd when they are about 14 years old but the females stick together.

Elephants are very smart animals. They can remember things for a number of years, like where to find water. They even remember who is friendly and who might hunt them. Elephants are wonderful animals.

