

AFTER THREE YEARS AT SCHOOL

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“Wild Orphans” by Fiona Cross

This text is levelled at Gold 2.

This report describes how orphaned baby elephants are rescued and cared for by keepers at the Tsavo National Park in Kenya. The keepers teach the young elephants what they need to know so that they can survive when they are returned to the wild.

Students need to identify and make connections between information in the text and their prior knowledge in order to build their understanding about the main reason why some baby elephants become orphans, some ways in which elephants are similar to humans, and how the baby elephants are cared for at their orphanage.

The text includes captioned photographs, subheadings, a text box, and subject-specific vocabulary. Ideas and information are

organised in paragraphs, most of which include a clear topic sentence. There is a variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences.

The following example highlights the sorts of reading behaviours teachers could expect to observe in students who are meeting the standard. Sometimes these behaviours will be in response to teacher prompts and questions, and sometimes they will be spontaneous as the students notice and respond to the ideas in the text. These behaviours may occur during the first or subsequent readings and discussions.

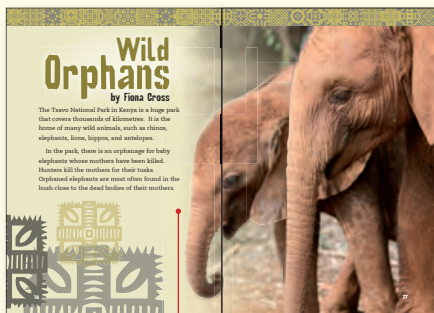
The student notices and uses linking words and phrases such as “as soon as”, “but”, “where”, “because”, and “like”, as well as commas, to help them track the ideas in the complex and compound sentences.

With teacher support, the student makes connections between pieces of information in order to clarify their understanding. For example, they make connections between the subheading “To the rescue”, the captioned photographs, and the information in the body text to infer that Philip and Lucas are rescue workers from the orphanage and Suguta and Kimana are the elephants.

With teacher support, the student makes connections between the information about young elephants in the text and their prior knowledge of how humans grow (and the fact that most human babies rely on their mother’s milk for food) to infer that the orphanage is crucial for these orphaned elephants’ survival.

The student notices that the text box has information that explains the statement on page 16, “Hunters kill the mothers for their tusks.”

The student notices the photograph of the elephant with tusks on page 22 and makes a connection to the definition of “tusks” on page 23.



The student draws on the three references to orphans (“orphans”, “orphanage”, “orphaned”) and the overall context of the second paragraph to build their understanding about what an orphan is.

With teacher support, the student asks questions about aspects of the text that interest or confuse them (for example, “Where is the father elephant?” or “Why do hunters kill elephants?”) and looks for relevant information in the text to answer their questions.

As they read, the student notices the use of the word “like” (on pages 18 and 20) to compare the development of elephants and humans.

The student uses a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. For example, they may break multisyllabic words into recognisable chunks or syllables, they may apply their knowledge of compound words to help them work out words such as “sunrise” or “sunburn”, or they may use sentence context, syntax, and/or illustrations or photographs to work out or confirm word meanings. They notice and use explanations or definitions within the text, for example, “Young elephants are called calves.”

When discussing the text after the reading, the student can make connections between items of information in the text to identify why elephant orphanages are needed.

The student can identify a challenge they had with the text and discuss the strategies they used to address (or attempt to address) the challenge.