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Level 4 – 16th February 2026

Elephants have a sixth sense from their whiskers

FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

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Please try Levels 5 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

Scientists have found a previously unknown ability in elephants. It explains why the elephant trunk is so dexterous. The whiskers on the trunk are sensitive enough to feel small and delicate objects. The scientists say the incredible sensitivity of the whiskers makes up for the elephant's poor eyesight. The whiskers help the elephant navigate, find food, and communicate. The whiskers are "smart" and give elephants an added sense of intelligence.

The research could help advance robotics and neuroscience. A researcher said: "Each whisker...acts as a tactile sensory organ." Elephants can pick up a potato chip without breaking it. The research could help increase dexterity in robots. Another researcher said her research could advance neuroscience. She said we could understand more about "tactile perception". It could also help us to understand how the brain helps us to think, feel, and act.

Sources: <https://phys.org/news/2026-02-elephant-trunk-whiskers-material-intelligence.html>
<https://www.popsci.com/environment/elephant-whiskers-smart/>
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/an-elephants-trunk-is-covered-in-whiskers-and-theyre-unlike-those-on-any-other-animal-a-new-study-suggests-180988199/>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Scientists have found a previously | a. navigate |
| 2. the elephant trunk is so | b. delicate objects |
| 3. whiskers on the trunk | c. are "smart" |
| 4. feel small and | d. are sensitive |
| 5. makes up for the elephant's | e. unknown ability |
| 6. whiskers help the elephant | f. poor eyesight |
| 7. The whiskers | g. of intelligence |
| 8. an added sense | h. dexterous |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. advance robotics and | a. understand how |
| 2. Each whisker acts as a tactile | b. without breaking it |
| 3. pick up a potato chip | c. advance neuroscience |
| 4. help increase dexterity | d. more |
| 5. her research could | e. neuroscience |
| 6. we could understand | f. helps us to think |
| 7. It could also help us to | g. sensory organ |
| 8. the brain | h. in robots |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

Scientists have (1) _____ unknown ability in elephants. It explains why the elephant trunk (2) _____. The whiskers on the trunk are sensitive enough to feel small (3) _____. The scientists say the incredible sensitivity of the whiskers makes up for the (4) _____. The whiskers help the elephant navigate, find food, and communicate. The (5) _____ and give elephants (6) _____ of intelligence.

The research could help advance (7) _____. A researcher said: "Each whisker...acts as a (8) _____." Elephants can pick up a potato chip without breaking it. The research could help (9) _____ robots. Another researcher said her research (10) _____. She said we could understand more (11) _____. It could also help us to understand how the brain helps us to think, (12) _____.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

Scientists have found a previously unknown ability in elephants. It explains why the elephant trunk is so dexterous. The whiskers on the trunk are sensitive enough to feel small and delicate objects. The scientists say the incredible sensitivity of the whiskers makes up for the elephant's poor eyesight. The whiskers help the elephant navigate, find food, and communicate. The whiskers are "smart" and give elephants an added sense of intelligence. The research could help advance robotics and neuroscience. A researcher said: "Each whisker... acts as a tactile sensory organ." Elephants can pick up a potato chip without breaking it. The research could help increase dexterity in robots. Another researcher said her research could advance neuroscience. She said we could understand more about "tactile perception". It could also help us to understand how the brain helps us to think, feel, and act.

ELEPHANTS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about elephants in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2602/260216-elephant-whiskers-4.html>

Write about **elephants** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.

[illegible]