

# Mammoths

## Long Ago and Today

by Candyce Norvell

Our world is full of big animals. Still, no beast on land today is as big as a mammoth. Mammoths lived in the past.

Many mammoths lived during the Ice Age. Much of the land on Earth was frozen. Mammoths had to be tough to stand the cold. They had thick coats of hair. They had body fat to keep them warm. A mammoth weighed about 6,000 pounds.

### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

**Write two details that show that mammoths were large, tough animals.**

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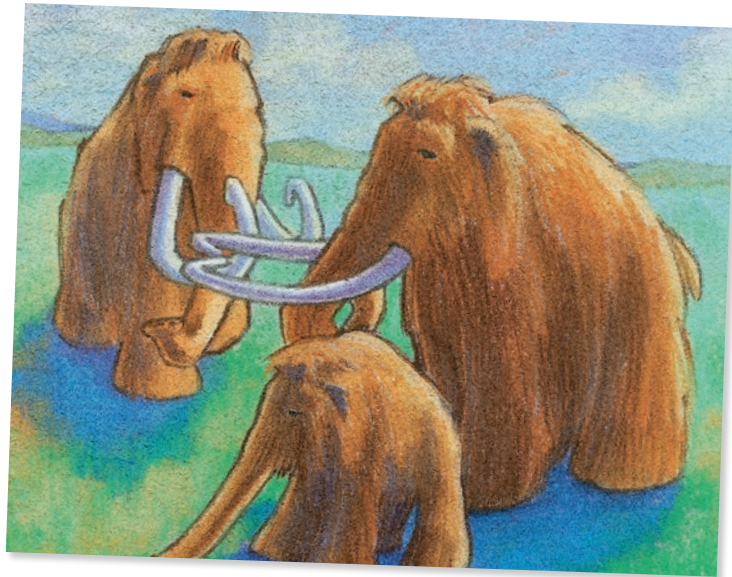
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## Plant Eaters

Mammoths did not hunt other animals. They were plant eaters. They used their trunks to get tree leaves. They pulled plants from the ground, too. They used large, flat teeth to grind up the plants.

A mammoth's trunk had other uses, too. It gave mammoths a great sense of smell. It let them move rocks and trees out of the way. Mammoths may have locked trunks to say hello.



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### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

**How did mammoths use their trunks?**

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## Life in a Mammoth Pack

Mammoths lived together in packs. A pack had several families. Each pack had a leader. The leader was the oldest or strongest mother mammoth.

Mammoths in a pack did not always get along. They could be fierce. Sometimes they fought with their tusks. The tusks were about ten feet long. They were tough weapons. The tusks could also dig through snow to get plants.



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### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

**What do you think is the most important idea on this page? How does the heading help you know?**

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## Mammoths and People

People hunted mammoths. Hunters fought the beasts with stone weapons. They ate the meat. They used the bones to make weapons and tools.

Experts think that hunters prized mammoths. Hunters made paintings of mammoths in caves. The paintings show mammoths as they really looked. This is evidence that hunters knew the animals well.

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### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

**How did people long ago interact with mammoths? How did they feel about them?**

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## A Mammoth Find

Mammoths died out long ago. Even so, we know how big they were. In 1974, a large number of bones were found. They were found in a hill in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Workers wanted to put houses on the hill. They brought in big trucks. When they dug, they found giant bones! They were the bones of mammoths. Experts learned a lot from the bones.



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2 ▼



### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

What did experts use to find out how big mammoths were?

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3 ▶



4 ▶



Long ago, this land was a deep hole. The hole was full of water and sticky clay. Maybe the animals tried to get a drink and got stuck. They tried to get out, but they could not.

Over time, the spring ran dry. The animal remains were buried. Their bones were not found for thousands of years. Now Hot Springs is one of the best places to learn about mammoths.

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**READ & RESPOND**

Central Idea

**Why is Hot Springs one of the best places to learn about mammoths?**

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## Mammoths in Our World Today

The last mammoth died thousands of years ago. How and why did this happen?

Experts think it got too warm too fast. Plants began to die. Then mammoths didn't have food. Perhaps hunters wiped out the mammoths. We may never know.

We study fossils to learn about mammoths. Their story can help us protect animals that live today.



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### READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

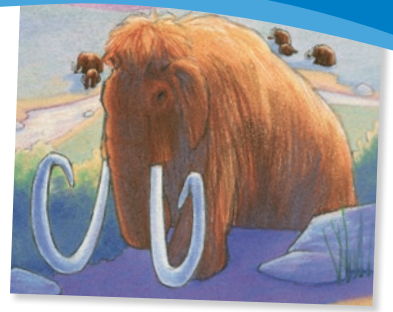
**How are mammoth fossils helpful to experts?**

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# Reread and Respond



**1** State the central idea of the text in your own words.

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## Hint

Think about what the text is mostly about. Use the headings and pictures to help you.

**2** What did mammoths eat? How do you think we know that?

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## Hint

For a clue, see page 131.

**3** The author gives two reasons why the mammoths might have died out. Which reason seems more likely to you? Why?

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## Hint

For clues, see page 136.