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Landmine elephant gets new foot

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30 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Landmine elephant gets new foot

BNE: New developments in artificial limbs means a Thai elephant can now stop hobbling on three feet. Motala, 44, hit the world's headlines in 1999 when she stepped on a landmine while working at a logging camp on the Thai-Myanmar border. The explosion mutilated her front left foot, which veterinarians had to amputate. The surgery left Motala with one leg shorter than the others and she was no longer able to work. For the past six years she has been cared for at a hospital run by the charity Friends of the Asian Elephant. A staff member reports she was a model patient and was rarely cantankerous or moody during her period of recuperation. Apparently, she quickly came to terms with the loss of her foot and got on with life as usual.

The new prototype foot is a sawdust-filled canvas boot and more resembles a sack of rice than an innovation in elephant prosthetics. Vets plan to break Motala in slowly so she can adjust to her new appendage. She will initially wear the prosthesis for just a few hours a day. This will allow her to take her tentative first steps and to psychologically adjust to balancing on all fours again. So far, her vets are delighted she has not rejected the temporary foot. After eight months, the tendons and muscles in her leg should have totally recovered to allow her to walk normally. She will then be fitted with a sturdier, more robust limb made from silicone and fiberglass. This is welcome news for other elephant landmine victims, seventy percent of whom suffer injuries to their front legs.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M AN ELEPHANT: You are now an elephant. Walk around the class and talk with the other "elephants" in your herd. What is your life like? What are your biggest worries at the moment? What are your dreams?

2. LOSS: In pairs / groups, talk about what your life would be like if you lost any of the following.

- A foot
- A leg
- An eye
- Your hearing
- Your sight
- An arm
- Both arms
- Your hair

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

New developments / limbs / elephants / world headlines / landmines / surgery / animal hospitals / moodiness / boots / muscles / silicone / fiberglass / injuries

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ELEPHANT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with elephants. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. SENTENCE STARTERS: Complete the following sentences to make opinions based on the news article. Share and talk about your opinions with your partner(s):

- a. Elephants are _____.
- b. Landmines are _____.
- c. Logging is _____.
- d. Landmine victims should _____.
- e. Working elephants _____.
- f. Losing a limb _____.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think elephants should never be used as working animals. Students B think it's OK to use elephants for some forms of work. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. There have been new developments in artificial limbs for elephants. | T / F |
| b. An elephant's foot was mutilated in a landmine explosion. | T / F |
| c. The elephant was a cantankerous patient while in hospital. | T / F |
| d. The elephant has never recovered from the shock of losing its foot. | T / F |
| e. The innovation in elephant prosthetics resembles a sack of rice. | T / F |
| f. The elephant is now doing balancing acts on all fours in a circus. | T / F |
| g. The elephant will soon have a sturdier and more robust limb. | T / F |
| h. Seventy per cent of elephant landmine victims suffer trunk injuries. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| a. hobbling | hesitant |
| b. mutilated | crabby |
| c. amputate | artificial limbs |
| d. cantankerous | remove |
| e. recuperation | example |
| f. prototype | strong |
| g. prosthetics | limping |
| h. appendage | recovery |
| i. tentative | attachment |
| j. robust | mangled |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a. New developments in artificial | than an innovation |
| b. a Thai elephant can now stop | on all fours |
| c. The explosion mutilated | of recuperation |
| d. moody during her period | to her new appendage |
| e. she quickly came to terms | hobbling on three feet |
| f. more resembles a sack of rice | her tentative first steps |
| g. she can adjust | her front left foot |
| h. allow her to take | more robust limb |
| i. to psychologically adjust to balancing | with the loss of her foot |
| j. fitted with a sturdier, | limbs |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Landmine elephant gets new foot

BNE: New developments in _____ limbs means a Thai elephant can now stop _____ on three feet. Motala, 44, hit the world's headlines in 1999 when she stepped on a landmine while working at a logging camp on the Thai-Myanmar _____. The explosion mutilated her front left foot, which veterinarians had to _____. The surgery left Motala with one leg shorter than the others and she was no longer able to work. For the past six years she has been cared for at a hospital _____ by the charity Friends of the Asian Elephant. A staff member reports she was a _____ patient and was rarely cantankerous or moody during her period of _____. Apparently, she quickly came to _____ with the loss of her foot and got on with life as usual.

The new prototype foot is a sawdust-filled canvas boot and more _____ a sack of rice than an innovation in elephant _____. Vets plan to _____ Motala in slowly so she can adjust to her new appendage. She will _____ wear the prosthesis for just a few hours a day. This will allow her to take her _____ first steps and to psychologically adjust to balancing on all fours again. So far, her vets are delighted she has not _____ the temporary foot. After eight months, the tendons and muscles in her leg should have totally recovered to allow her to walk normally. She will then be fitted with a _____, more robust limb made from silicone and fiberglass. This is welcome news for other elephant landmine victims, seventy percent of whom _____ injuries to their front legs.

recuperation

artificial

border

model

run

hobbling

terms

amputate

break

suffer

prosthetics

rejected

initially

resembles

sturdier

tentative

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'artificial' and 'limb'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "ELEPHANTS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about elephants and landmines.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- hobbling
- logging
- mutilated
- shorter
- model
- terms
- canvas
- appendage
- all fours
- tendons
- robust
- seventy percent

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of Motala's story?
- d. Do you prefer this kind of news or more serious, political news?
- e. Do you think elephants should be used on logging camps?
- f. Do you like elephants?
- g. What do you know about landmines?
- h. Are you ever cantankerous or moody?
- i. Have you ever had to come to terms with the loss of something?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think life would be like after losing a limb?
- d. Should something be done about stopping elephants and other animals from working?
- e. Do you think animals should be used in circuses?
- f. Would you donate money towards a hospital for elephants?
- g. If you could talk to elephants, what question would you like to ask them?
- h. What do you think their reply would be?
- i. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MOTALA INTERVIEW: In pairs / groups, write down questions you would like to ask Motala in a press conference. The following words may be useful:

- Childhood

- Human contact

- Logging

- The explosion

- Post surgery

- Hobbling

- Hospital

- New foot

- Landmines

- The future

Take turns in role playing the interviewer and the elephant. Change partners and discuss what you heard from previous partners.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Landmine elephant gets new foot

BNE: New developments in _____ limbs means a Thai elephant can now stop _____ on three feet. Motala, 44, hit the world's headlines in 1999 when she stepped on a landmine while working at a logging camp on the Thai-Myanmar border. The explosion _____ her front left foot, which veterinarians had to _____. The surgery left Motala with one leg shorter than the others and she was no longer able to work. For the past six years she has _____ at a hospital run by the charity Friends of the Asian Elephant. A staff member reports she was a model patient and was rarely _____ or moody during her period of _____. Apparently, she quickly came to terms with the loss of her foot and got on with life as usual.

The new prototype foot is a _____-_____ canvas boot and more resembles a sack of rice than an innovation in elephant _____. Vets plan to break Motala in slowly so she can adjust to her new appendage. She will initially wear the _____ for just a few hours a day. This will allow her to take her tentative first steps and to psychologically adjust to _____ on all fours again. So far, her vets are delighted she has not _____ the temporary foot. After eight months, the _____ and muscles in her leg should have totally recovered to allow her to walk normally. She will then be fitted with a _____, more robust limb made from silicone and fiberglass. This is welcome news for other elephant landmine victims, seventy percent of whom _____ injuries to their front legs.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the charity Friends of the Asian Elephant. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Motala the elephant. Tell her what you think of her experience, her recovery and new foot. Tell her also what you hope for her future. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LANDMINES: Create a poster about landmines. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| a. hobbling | limping |
| b. mutilated | mangled |
| c. amputate | remove |
| d. cantankerous | crabby |
| e. recuperation | recovery |
| f. prototype | example |
| g. prosthetics | artificial limbs |
| h. appendage | attachment |
| i. tentative | hesitant |
| j. robust | strong |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a. New developments in artificial | limbs |
| b. a Thai elephant can now stop | hobbling on three feet |
| c. The explosion mutilated | her front left foot |
| d. moody during her period | of recuperation |
| e. she quickly came to terms | with the loss of her foot |
| f. more resembles a sack of rice | than an innovation |
| g. she can adjust | to her new appendage |
| h. allow her to take | her tentative first steps |
| i. to psychologically adjust to balancing | on all fours |
| j. fitted with a sturdier, | more robust limb |

GAP FILL:

Landmine elephant gets new foot

BNE: New developments in **artificial** limbs means a Thai elephant can now stop **hobbling** on three feet. Motala, 44, hit the world's headlines in 1999 when she stepped on a landmine while working at a logging camp on the Thai-Myanmar **border**. The explosion mutilated her front left foot, which veterinarians had to **amputate**. The surgery left Motala with one leg shorter than the others and she was no longer able to work. For the past six years she has been cared for at a hospital **run** by the charity Friends of the Asian Elephant. A staff member reports she was a **model** patient and was rarely cantankerous or moody during her period of **recuperation**. Apparently, she quickly came to **terms** with the loss of her foot and got on with life as usual.

The new prototype foot is a sawdust-filled canvas boot and more **resembles** a sack of rice than an innovation in elephant **prosthetics**. Vets plan to **break** Motala in slowly so she can adjust to her new appendage. She will **initially** wear the prosthesis for just a few hours a day. This will allow her to take her **tentative** first steps and to psychologically adjust to balancing on all fours again. So far, her vets are delighted she has not **rejected** the temporary foot. After eight months, the tendons and muscles in her leg should have totally recovered to allow her to walk normally. She will then be fitted with a **sturdier**, more robust limb made from silicone and fiberglass. This is welcome news for other elephant landmine victims, seventy percent of whom **suffer** injuries to their front legs.