

Grades: 6-8

Nature, “Naledi: One Little Elephant”

Kiti, a gentle elephant in Botswana, was in her 661st day of pregnancy, a normal gestation period, when she finally gave birth to a baby girl. For nearly two weeks, the staff of Abu Camp, a halfway house for orphaned and former zoo and circus elephants, had been passing the time by coming up with a list of possible names for Kiti’s offspring. Perhaps because the calf was born at night, they called her Naledi, which means star in the local language.

Naledi was an instant hit with the Abu Camp caretakers including elephant manager Wellington (“Wellie”) Jana who compared her arrival to getting a new daughter in the family. Wildlife biologist and Botswana native Dr. Mike Chase, who is also tasked with looking after Naledi’s herd, hopes she will have the option to be reunited with her extended family. That’s the aim of Abu Camp caretakers, to release capable animals back into the wild. Mike and Wellie are pleased with how Naledi is being accepted into the herd and the care she’s receiving from her mother Kiti. But six weeks after giving birth, Kiti dies from a prolapse of the large intestine, and Naledi is left an orphan.

How the dedicated caretakers rallied to adopt the baby elephant, save her life, and reintroduce her to the herd that had forgotten her, is the focus of ***Naledi: One Little Elephant, A Nature Special Presentation***.

Another storyline in the film is the gathering of data for the 2016 Great Elephant Census run by Dr. Mike Chase during his time away from work at Abu Camp. Its aim was to count every elephant in Africa to help ensure their long-term survival given that Mike estimates we’re losing 96 elephants a day and between 25,000 and 30,000 annually. The results of the Census, published last year, revealed that 30 percent of Africa’s elephants have been lost since 2007.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- What is the author trying to say through the TV program?
- What is this program “saying”? Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support your analysis.
- How did the caretakers ensure Naledi’s survival?
- Was Naledi’s introduction into the elephant herd successful? Why or why not?
- What is the Great Elephant Census and why is it important for researchers as they work to support long-term survival?
- What is causing the sharp increase in elephant death rate? What is being done to slow it down?

Question Box 2

- What is the most important thing I learned personally?
- What were some of the most interesting discoveries I made while watching this program?
- What were some of my most powerful learning moments in the program and what made them so?
- The care team worked very hard to ensure Naledi's survival. Do you think it is difficult to be one of the scientists?
- How do you think they cope when they lose an animal?
- Have you ever lost a pet? What did you do to grieve?

Box 3 (Tasks)

- Create a timeline of Naledi's young life. Include important events from the episode to show the tragedies and triumphs of her first year.
- Compare and contrast the relationship between a mother and child elephant with that of humans. How are they similar and different?
- Describe the "drastic measures" the caretakers took in order to nurse Naledi.
- Other than feeding, what other steps did the caretakers use to raise Naledi?

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Learn more about Naledi and how she is doing now by visiting <https://www.wgbh.org/program/nature/clip/naledi-one-little-elephant-3>. How has her life changed since the first documentary was filmed?
- Compare and contrast Asian Elephants from African Elephants.
- What other animals are being protected from poachers, and why are they being poached?

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- Research wild animal rescues in California and select one that you find interesting to answer the following questions:
 1. What types of animals do they rescue?
 2. What services do they offer?
 3. Are they open to the public? If yes, what are their hours?
 4. Do they have a volunteer program? How can someone apply?
 5. Do they have an educational program? If yes, describe it.
- Would you consider volunteering for a wild animal rescue? Why or why not?
- What classes have you or could you take that would help you learn about animals?
- Using what you have learned about the wild animal rescue you selected create a promotional brochure to promote their organization.
- What steps are being taken by local and state African governments to stop the poaching of elephants?
- (SEL Connection): Part of having social awareness is the ability to have empathy for other living things. The caretakers in this story showed empathy for the baby elephant as they worked to keep her alive and healthy. Think about a time when you cared for a plant or animal. How did it feel to help them grow and thrive? Write down in your journal your thoughts.