



Twenty-One Elephants Trivia

Check out these fun facts about elephants, P.T. Barnum, and the Brooklyn Bridge.

True or false...

An elephant weighs as much as you plus 200 first graders.

True! The average elephant weighs 10,000 pounds.

Elephants walk *very* quietly, as if they were on their tiptoes.

True! Despite their great size, elephants walk almost silently. They have tough, shock-absorbing pads on the bottoms of their feet, and the bones inside are configured so that only the tips reach the soles of the feet. So essentially, elephants *do* walk on tiptoe!

P.T. Barnum invented the circus.

False; but he did invent the lively *three-ring* circus we know so well today.

Jumbo the elephant was the most famous elephant in the world.

True! Before coming to America, Jumbo was the star of the London Zoo and the biggest elephant England had ever seen. He was adored by the thousands of children who visited him each year and even rode on his back. When P.T. Barnum bought Jumbo for the Barnum & Bailey circus, letters from English children poured in to the zoo, begging Jumbo not to go.

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We get the term jumbo, meaning huge, from Jumbo the elephant.

True!

Jumbo is the mascot of Tufts University, near Boston.

True! A mascot is a symbol of a place or group and is often meant to bring good luck. P.T. Barnum was an early supporter of Tufts University. After Jumbo's death, Barnum donated the elephant's stuffed hide to the university. Jumbo was beloved by students, who adopted him as their mascot. If you go to a sporting event at Tufts, be sure to cheer on the team with a hearty, "Go, Jumbos!"

The steel wire used to make the Brooklyn Bridge would reach halfway around the world.

True! There are more than 14,000 *miles* of steel wire in the Brooklyn Bridge. The distance around the earth is just short of 25,000 miles.

The Brooklyn Bridge collapsed in 1910 and had to be rebuilt.

False, thankfully! The bridge was built to be many times stronger than it needed to be.