

READ THE PASSAGE Notice how the elephant's keeper made a difference.

Big Artists

Elephants are very smart. They are social, too, and like to live in small groups. An Asian elephant named Ruby came to a zoo in Arizona. She was only a baby. Ruby had no other elephants to keep her company. Because she was bored, she got into trouble. She also liked to do something many elephants like to do. Ruby spent time holding a stick in her trunk and scribbling in the sand.

Ruby's keeper, Tawny, tried to keep Ruby busy. When Ruby was about ten years old, Tawny had an idea. What if she could teach Ruby to paint? Tawny praised Ruby and gave her treats when Ruby scribbled. Soon Tawny taught Ruby to hold a paintbrush in her trunk. Ruby seemed to enjoy it. Not long after that, Ruby began dipping the brush into buckets of colors. She painted squiggles and lines on thick paper.

Ruby soon became famous. People from all over the world came to see the painting elephant. Many people even bought Ruby's paintings!

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. Describe the setting of the text.

2. Who are the main characters? How do they interact?

3. What makes this elephant so unusual?

STRATEGY PRACTICE Share with a partner something you know about training a pet.