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Politics

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THE DAY
Build a better world

News Detectives

TODAY'S BIG STORY

'World's loneliest elephant' is NOT a person

After years of fighting, lawyers have ruled that Happy is not a human being. But some judges say it is the wrong decision and that she deserves human rights.



Locked up: Happy was born in Asia but came to the USA as a one-year-old.

Happy the elephant lives all alone in a zoo in New York.

She was born in 1970 in Thailand. When she was just a baby, she was put on a plane to America.

Happy has lived in the **Bronx** Zoo for more than 40 years. Happy has been **alone** in a

small enclosure for 15 years.

A group of campaigners for animal rights wanted to set Happy free.

Elephants are intelligent animals. They live in families and grieve for the dead. They play with toys, spray water at each other and

even hit footballs around with their trunks! The activists wanted the court to recognise Happy as a **person**.

But a court in New York has **rejected** the claim. Happy will not move to a sanctuary. She will stay in the zoo.

You decide: Should elephants have human rights?

YES!

Elephants are incredible creatures. They have been treated badly by humans. If they had human rights, they would be respected.

NO!

Human rights are only for humans. Elephants are not as important as us. We should make stronger laws protecting animals instead.

KEY WORDS

Bronx: New York City is made up of five districts called boroughs. The Bronx is one of them.

Campaigners: The Nonhuman Rights Project

(NhRP) is an animal rights organisation that aims to have at least some nonhuman animals declared persons.

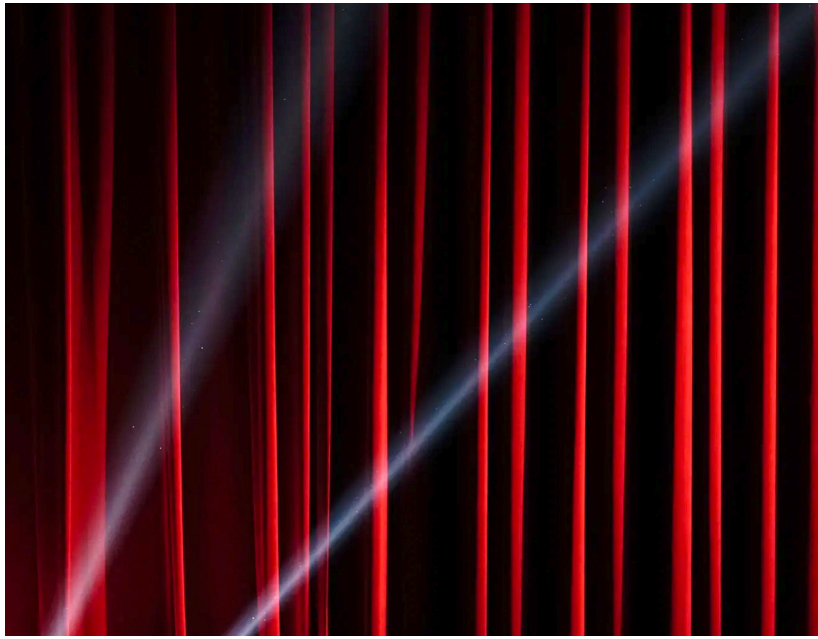
Person: To possess personhood is to hold certain

rights and legal protections against cruel and unfair treatment.

Rejected: The court voted 5-2 to reject the NhRP's argument.

Detective zone

Picture puzzle



Can you work out what this is?

- ☐ Curtains in front of a stage
- ☐ A motorway from above
- ☐ Veins under a microscope

Spot the fake!

Only one of these news stories is fake. Which one?

- ☐ “Tiny, 18mm-long frog species discovered in Mexico”
- ☐ “Revealed: dolphins eat coral as medication”
- ☐ “World’s oldest tortoise, Jonathan, turns 201”



Zoos are important for conservation, but they are not always happy places to live. In this challenge, you will build a toy for an elephant like Happy to play with in her enclosure.

Step 1: Come up with your invention. How will it work? Hint: elephants like all sorts of games. They play football and splash each other with water.

Step 2: Get started! Use whatever materials you like – just make sure you use your imagination to create something that you think Happy would enjoy!

Did you know...?

- Elephants are the world’s largest land mammals and weigh around 6,000kg on average.
- An elephant’s trunk has 150,000 muscles and can be used to pick up and shell a peanut.

Share your genius



Show your work to your class



Upload a photo of your work to the Build the Change gallery by scanning the QR code and have your work displayed to inspire real-world change.

This worksheet is available online every weekday at 6am from theday.co.uk/newsdetectives.
For any feedback or help please contact newsdetectives@theday.co.uk. Thank you.

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Teacher notes

TODAY'S BIG STORY BACKGROUND

Happy the elephant, a long-time resident of the Bronx Zoo, must remain there after a New York court ruled she is not legally a person under US law.



Credit: BBC

On Tuesday, the state's highest court voted 5-2 to reject an animal rights group's argument that Happy was being illegally confined at the zoo.

While elephants are "impressive", the court said, they are not entitled to the same liberty rights as humans.

The animal rights group sought to have Happy moved to an elephant sanctuary. The court dispute centred on whether the legal principle of habeas corpus - which guards against illegal detention - should be extended to emotionally complex and intelligent animals.

"While no one disputes the impressive capabilities of elephants, we reject petitioner's arguments that it is entitled to seek the remedy of habeas corpus on Happy's behalf," wrote Chief Judge Janet DiFiore on behalf of the majority.

"Habeas corpus is a procedural vehicle intended to secure the liberty rights of human beings who are unlawfully restrained, not nonhuman animals."

The decision follows that of lower courts which had repeatedly taken the side of the Bronx Zoo in the case brought by the Non-human Rights Project, a New York-based legal non-profit.

The group had pushed to remove the 51-year-old elephant from the Bronx Zoo, saying she was imprisoned in her one-acre enclosure.

But the Wildlife Conservation Society, which operates the zoo, rejected this description, saying Happy and her fellow elephant at the zoo are well cared for. It did not respond immediately to a request for comment following the ruling. In a statement on Tuesday, the Nonhuman

Rights Project celebrated the decision's dissenting opinions, calling them "powerful" and adding that it planned to use them in another elephant rights case underway in California.

In her dissent, Judge Jenny Rivera wrote: "[Happy's] captivity is inherently unjust and inhumane. It is an affront to a civilized society, and every day she remains a captive—a spectacle for humans—we, too, are diminished."

Happy was born in the wild in Thailand in the 1970s, captured and brought to the US when she was about one. She has lived at the Bronx Zoo since 1977.

She is one of two remaining elephants at the zoo, which has said it will eventually end its captive elephant programme.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Picture this!

Curtains in front of a stage

Spot the fake!

"World's oldest tortoise, Jonathan, turns 201" (*He is actually 190 years old*)



This week's challenge is part of the LEGO® Build the Change programme. It can be done at school or as homework, and parents can help upload photos of pupils' work to the online gallery.



Visit the gallery at <https://bit.ly/btcgallery> and feel free to use it as discussion point in class.

Build the Change is the LEGO Group's learning through play-based sustainability program, encouraging children to become engaged global citizens with voices that are heard.

This worksheet is available online every weekday at 6am from theday.co.uk/newsdetectives. For any feedback or help please contact newsdetectives@theday.co.uk. Thank you.