



# THE MOST COMMON LARGE ICE AGE VERTEBRATE FOSSILS IN LOUISIANA...MASTODONS!

Link to our exhibit: "Mastodons of Louisiana"

## MASTODONS

Fossils of mastodons are common in Louisiana. Some of the most interesting specimens have been found in our state, often associated with loess sediments. This is not surprising as that type of silty sediment is blown by the wind during glacial periods. Excavations have uncovered mastodons in the Mississippi River Valley at Angola Prison, and beside Bayou Manchac in Ascension Parish. Mastodons have also been found in loess exposures near Tunica Bayou and Little Bayou Sarah in West Feliciana Parish.

Mastodons are sometimes mistaken for two other large elephant relatives. Lets find out who they are and what are their major differences.



**GAME 1:** Cross out all the letters i, u, and r – then unscramble the remaining letters to find out the name of our three mystery animals.

### ANIMAL A

M	O	I	T
I	U	U	R
R	D	S	O
I	A	N	I
S	R	U	R

Scrambled:

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Unscrambled:  
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### ANIMAL B

M	I	U	H
M	U	I	R
M	A	O	R
R	R	T	I
U	I	U	R

Scrambled:

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Unscrambled:  
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### ANIMAL C

E	H	U	N
R	L	U	T
U	R	P	I
I	E	U	R
R	I	A	I

Scrambled:

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Unscrambled:  
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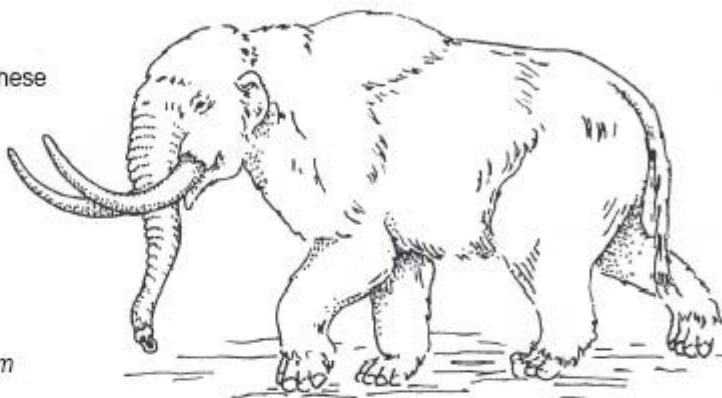
GAME:	ANIMAL A	ANIMAL B	ANIMAL C
Place the remaining letters here	_____	_____	_____
Name unscrambled			
<i>What's the differences between these three large mammals?</i>			
Latin name	<i>Mammuthus americanum</i>	<i>Mammuthus primigenius</i>	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Teeth	Very different and much more primitive. The tooth crown looks like the bottom of an egg carton and the cusps are high and rounded.	Their teeth are more specialized, the crown is much taller and the cusps have been modified into parallel side-to-side rows.	Their teeth are more specialized, the crown is much taller and the cusps have been modified into parallel side-to-side rows.
Food	They use their cusped teeth to crush leaves, twigs of spruce and hemlock trees.	They ate mainly grass.	They eat mostly grasses and shrubs, they also strip the bark off trees with their tusks.
Tusk	They had short, slightly upward curving tusks.	They had the most specialized, much larger and more strongly recurved tusks.	They have smaller tusks.
Environment	They lived in forested lowland areas during the Ice Age. (e.g. Louisiana)	They lived in the more open grassland areas. (e.g. Alaska, Siberia)	Warm, grassland area. (e.g. Asia, Africa)
Fur	Thick fur.	Thick woolly fur.	Nearly naked skin, probably a result of warmer climate.
Ears	They had small ears	They had small ears.	They have huge ears. This is also probably an adaptation to help them cool off by flapping their huge ears.
Phylogeny	Their teeth suggest that this animal is more closely related to modern Indian elephants than to African.		
Extinction	Extinct probably because of lost of habitat, climate change or food source disappearance.	Extinct for possibly the same reasons.	Still living.

This section is based on a museum handout by Earl Manning.

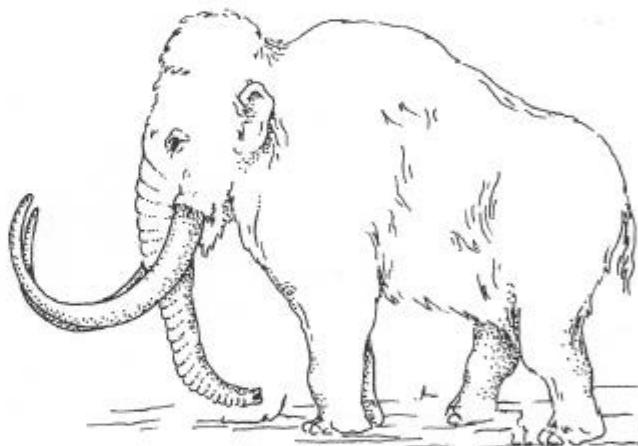




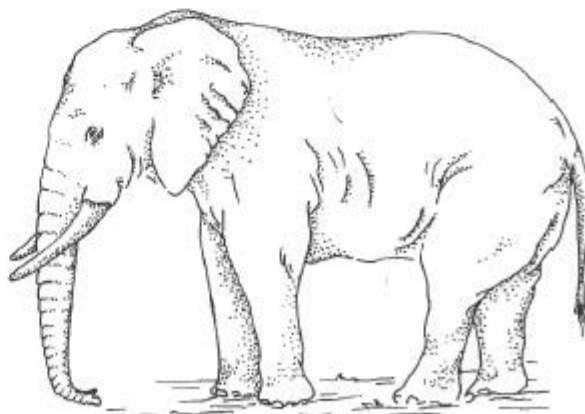
**GAME 2.** Now that you know all about these three big mammals, have fun coloring them.



*Mammuthus americanum*



*Mammuthus primigenius*



*Loxodonta africana*

Illustrations by Mary Lee Eggart of the LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology.

