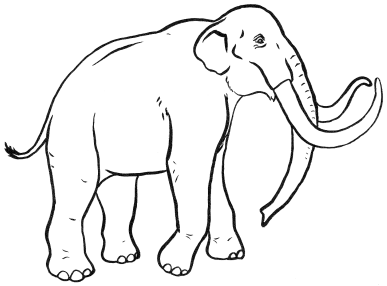
Name: _____ Date: _____

Comparing Cousins

Are Mammoths and Mastodons the Same?

The Pleistocene Epoch (pronounced "PLY–stuh–SEEN EP–uck") is sometimes called the Ice Age. It started 2.5 million years ago and ended about 10,000 years ago. Even though people call it the Ice Age, not all the world was covered in ice. Sheets of ice covered most of what is now Canada and the northern United States, but the lands that became the southern United States and Mexico were not under ice. Mammoths and mastodons lived in North America during the Ice Age. These two types of elephants looked a lot alike, but they were really very different.



Columbian Mammoth

(pronounced "cuh–LUM–be–un MAM–uth")

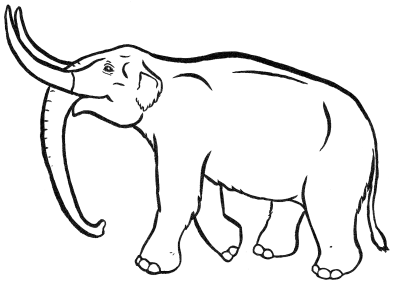
Columbian mammoths were grazers, or animals that eat mostly grass. To make sure they had enough to eat, they lived in savannas ("suh–VAN–uhs"). Savannas are warm grasslands with scattered trees. Their teeth had ridges, which ground up the grass they ate. Their tusks were long and curved.

Columbian mammoths were about 14 feet tall, or 4.3 meters. They also weighed as much as 10 tons, the same as a school bus. Scientists first discovered Columbian mammoth fossils in 1857.

American Mastodon

(pronounced " uh–MEHR–eh–cuhn MASS–tuh–dahn")

Mastodons were browsers, or animals that eat mostly leaves and twigs. They lived in forests or near lakes with a lot of trees. Their teeth had thick points, which could shred pieces of tree bark. Their tusks were almost straight.



American mastodons were about 8 feet tall, or 2.5 meters. They weighed as much as 5 tons, half the weight of a Columbian mammoth. Scientists first discovered American mastodon fossils in 1792.

1. Which animal was bigger, the Columbian mammoth or American mastodon?

2. What does a browser eat?

3. Which animal was discovered first, the Columbian mammoth or American mastodon?

4. Which animal had ridged teeth, the Columbian mammoth or American mastodon?

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