

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

The Blind Men and the Elephant

Six blind men who stood by the roadside every day and asked for money from the people who passed. They had often heard of elephants, but they had never seen one. How could they? They were blind.

It so happened one morning that an elephant was driven down the road where they stood. When they were told that the great beast was before them, they asked the driver to let him stop so that they might see him.

Of course they could not see him with their eyes, but they thought that by touching him they could learn just what kind of animal he was.

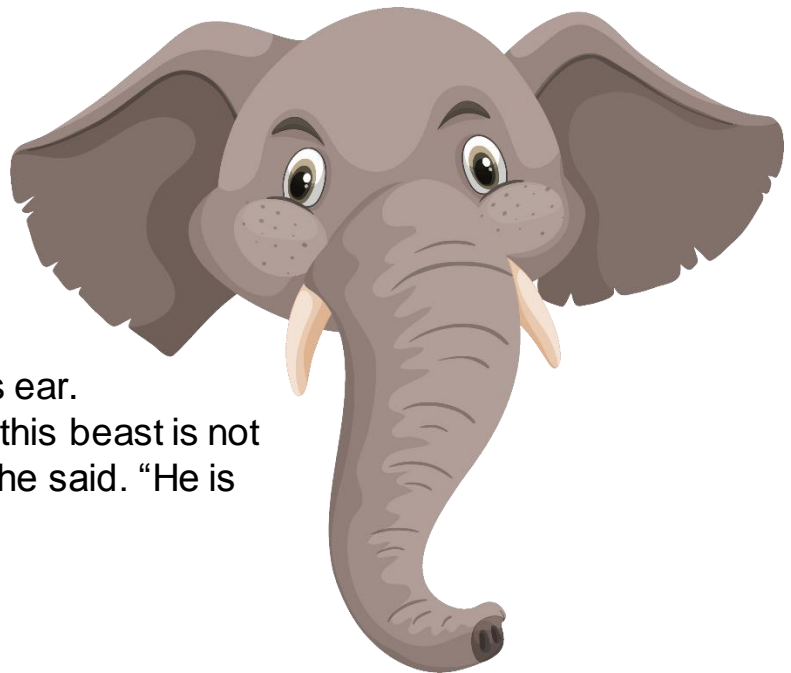
The first one happened to put his hand on the elephant's side. "Well, well!" he said, "Now I know all about this beast. He is exactly like a wall."

The second felt only of the elephant's tusk. "My brother," he said, "You are mistaken. He is not at all like a wall. He is round and smooth and sharp. He is more like a spear than anything else."

The third happened to take hold of the elephant's trunk. "Both of you are wrong," he said. "Anybody who knows anything can see that this elephant is like a snake."

The fourth reached out his arms and grasped one of the elephant's legs. "Oh, how blind you are," he said. "It is very plain to me that he is round and tall like a tree."

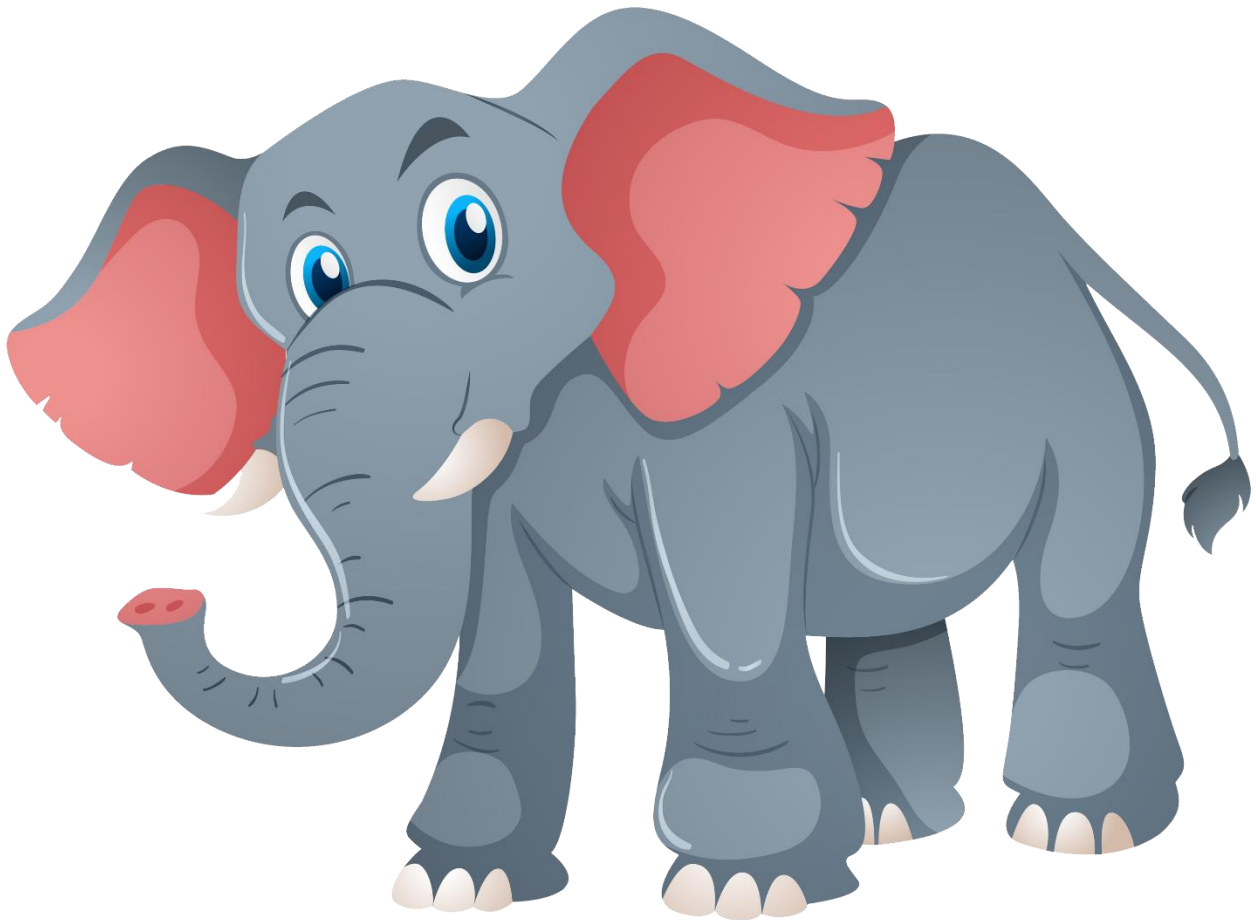
The fifth was a very tall man, and he chanced to take hold of the elephant's ear. "The blindest man ought to know that this beast is not like any of the things that you name," he said. "He is exactly like a huge fan."



It took the sixth blind man some time before he could find the elephant at all. At last he seized the animal's tail. "Oh foolish fellows," he cried, "you surely have lost your senses. This elephant is not like a wall or a spear or a snake or a tree, nor is he like a fan. But any man with any sense can see that he is exactly like a rope."

Then the elephant moved on, and the six blind men sat by the roadside all day and quarreled about him. Each believed that he knew just how the animal looked, and each called the others unkind names because they did not agree with each other.

People who have eyes sometimes act as foolishly.



Questions:

1. Why were the blind men on the roadside?

2. What does the elephant's ear feel like to one of the men?

3. How do the blind men treat one another?

4. What does this passage try to teach us?

Answers:

1. Why were the blind men on the roadside?
The blind men were asking for money from people who passed by on the roadside.
2. What does the elephant's ear feel like to one of the men?
The elephant's ear feels like a fan to one of the men.
3. How do the blind men treat one another?
The blind men quarreled with one another and treated each other unkind.
4. What does this passage try to teach us?
The passage is trying to teach us that we cannot be narrow-minded and take others' point of view into account.